

Blurred Lines

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There has been a great deal of outrage from the feminists about Robin Thicke's video of his song *Blurred Lines*. Student Unions all over good old liberal Blighty have been banning it. For once I can agree that it is a revolting thing and the world would be better off without it. I'm not in favour of banning things, though. Where would you stop? Hey, I'd ban most of so-called popular culture once I got started - anything that continues the downward ratchet of intellectual standards. Best not go there I suggest.

The *Blurred Lines* video consists of virtually naked women cavorting and lyrics which are the usual rap-type stuff. Not nice. One issue is who is exploiting whom here, but I'll take up that theme elsewhere. What is amusing is that the video was made by a woman, director Diane Martel. And Martel's intentions were not at all to denigrate women, but to denigrate men. So, oddly, the controversy is effectively between the feminists objecting to it and its misandrist director.

Martel is no ingénue. She has been making half a dozen or so pop videos per year for the last twenty years. She knows exactly what she's about, and she knows the market. This is what she had to say about the video. "*I directed the girls to look into the camera. This is very intentional and they do it most of the time; they are in the power position. I don't think the video is sexist. Look at Emily Ratajkowski's performance; it's very, very funny and subtly ridiculing. The lyrics are ridiculous, the guys are silly as fuck*". So, there you are. It's not sexist, but it deliberately set out to make men look silly and women seem powerful. One day people will see that the last sentence is a contradiction - but not today, unfortunately. The video was intended to be misandrist, but it still caused outrage amongst the feminists.

This strange phenomenon seems to be on the increase. Compare, for example, the response to the recent Miley Cyrus *Wrecking Ball* video, in which she appeared nude. The feminists seem very divided in regard to whether they support Sinéad O'Connor's criticism of it, or, on the contrary, regard the O'Connor line as restricting women's right to be sluts. The same issue arises in the context of Lily Allen's new video which parodies black women in pop music videos.*

The root cause of these controversies is an intrinsic hypocrisy. On the one hand feminists regard it as their right to deploy their sexuality without restriction, however sluttish that may appear to others. This is one aspect of their freedom, they would argue, and is exemplified, perhaps, by Elina Desaine⁽¹⁾. On the other hand, feminists will not stand for this unfettered sexuality being displayed by others. The traditional objection is that female sexuality is exploited by men. But the recent phenomenon of girl-on-girl arguments gives the lie to men being relevant to the issue. The actual problem is that women want the freedom to behave as sluttishly as they might wish, whilst at the same time forbidding anyone (of either sex) from *regarding* them as sluttish.

*I acknowledge Dorian Lynskey for the observations in this paragraph.

⁽¹⁾See <http://redpilluk.co.uk/LetsHearItForSharking.pdf>