Twitter Thread by DOCTORA Malka Older

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I'm so angry that when I was a kid, all I knew about Dolly Parton was the size of her chest. And her hair color, I guess. Imagine taking all that talent and decency and goodness and organization -Imagination Library!!!- and reducing it, dismissively, to jokes about her appearance

I don't even know where that impression came from - movies? comedians? other kids? -but I remember it. And yeah, she hadn't done everything then that she has now, but that kind of proves my point: you focus on appearance, you miss what someone has done AND what they're capable of

AND she had already written Jolene and I Will Always Love You among many others. Why wasn't her main reputation, the first thing you learned about her, that of a major songwriter like Dylan or Paul Simon or ..?

(I know why)

this makes me furious because it's such a clear example of what our society is CONSTANTLY doing to women, people of color, fat people, disabled people, anyone who doesn't fit the image that we're sold of what power, cool, artist, genius, look like.

and because those people who don't fit get dismissed, we only see that narrow segment of appearances representing those categories, that image is reinforced over and over again. I hope it's starting to change, a little.

When I was growing up I never thought my face looked intelligent. I am very intelligent, and I knew it, but every representation of intelligence I saw on a screen was either male or sharp-nosed, high-cheekboned, perfect tendrils of hair.

How hard do you have to push this shit so a kid thinks you can see intelligence in the shape of a face??
That's how hard they push it. And usually in the same stories that claim their "moral" is "don't judge by appearances."

Can you imagine "writing" that book? Can you imagine publishing it? Buying it?
Meanwhile this woman is over here writing incredible songs, teaching a nation of kids to read, and turning down medals of freedom because that's how much class she has. https://t.co/5L0R2DA8Qs

> When I was a kid, my cousins had this dirty-joke book w a whole section on Dolly Parton, & every single joke was about her boobs. This was the 1st time I realized Polly Darton on Sesame Street was based on a real person - so the sum total of what I now knew about her was boobs \U0001f926 https://t.co/IerNMMZ0W1
>
> — Rachel L. Beitsch (@RLBword) February 2, 2021

Think of some comemierda making money off that book next time someone tries to tell you we live in a meritocracy

I'm getting a lot of replies along the spectrum from "she said it too!" to "that was part of how she controlled her image". I'm not disparaging her appearance or her choice of it. I'm angry that was ALL I saw, that I missed out on the rest. She may have played into that look but

1) she did not take it to that gross place.
2) she may have allowed or encouraged a focus on her appearance, but I can't believe she intended it to erase her musical talent.
3) she was responding to a culture and an industry with those priorities.

And again, I don't remember exactly where I got this impression. I'm not pointing to one person being evil in this way. But that very fact - and that a lot of replies agree with me - shows how widespread this erasure of everything but appearance was.