

Hip-Hop and the Politics of Social Engineering: Lupe Fiasco, Jay-Z and Barack Obama's Inauguration

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One particular story during President Obama's inauguration did not make headlines in the main stream media. Rapper Lupe Fiasco was performing live at the StartUp RockOn concert to celebrate the re-election of President Barack H. Obama on January 21st at the Hamilton in Washington D.C.

Lupe Fiasco (Wasalu Muhammad Jaco) was kicked off the stage by Obama's secret service detail because he was singing Anti-Obama lyrics that annoyed many of the President's Supporters.

He was singing one of his most political songs called "Words I never said" which was released back on 2011.

The lyrics to the song that got Fiasco escorted off the stage was "*Limbaugh is a racist, Glenn Beck is a racist. Gaza strip was getting bombed. Obama didn't say sh*t. That's why I ain't vote for him, next one either.*"

In an article published by the London based newspaper The Guardian who interviewed Lupe Fiasco in April of 2008 called "Lupe's Dreams".

Lupe said "With my mother in the 'hood, it was a house full of National Geographics, political and social discourse and no television," he remembers. "Then all this stuff I would read about in those books, my father would be doing. I saw him shut down crackhouses, open karate schools for free, run non-profit organisations, pass out Black Panther party literature..."

Lupe Fiasco in Washington DC (right)

Lupe Fiasco is not a rapper like Jay-Z or Kanye West.



His parents had positive influences in his life early on, despite living in Chicago, one of the most crime-ridden cities in the United States. In a CBS interview, an online segment called 'What's Trending' with Shira Lazar on June, 8th, 2011, Lupe Fiasco made it known, who he thought was a terrorist:

"My fight against terrorism, to me, the biggest terrorist is Obama in the United States of America. I'm trying to fight the terrorism that's actually causing the

other forms of terrorism. You know, the root cause of terrorism is the stuff the U.S. government allows to happen. The foreign policies that we have in place in different countries that inspire people to become terrorists.”

Lupe Fiasco reiterated his stance on the Obama administration in a Fox News interview with Bill O’ Reilly of the *‘O Reilly Factor’*:

O’REILLY: You know, President Obama is not a terrorist. He’s trying to do what he believes is the right thing to do. The United States is not a bad nation. It’s a noble nation. We’re trying to defend ourselves against people who killed us on 9/11. And then you go out there and you talk to a lot of younger people. And this is what gets me, that your constituency are not exactly political science Ph.Ds, OK? They’re impressionable kids.

FIASCO: I don’t think that that matters. I don’t think you need to have a political Ph.D...



Lupe Fiasco with Bill O’Reilly

O’REILLY: But they listen to you...

FIASCO: ...to understand — to understand politics. To understand politics I don’t think you necessarily need that. And I don’t think that politics are as complex as people like to make them seem or out to be.

Richard Nixon said that, you know, if you — they reduced fear by reducing the causes of fear. And then in that same interview, which I spoke about, you know, calling Obama a terrorist and every president before and after him a terrorist, right? Is that if you’re going to fight terrorism, right? True terrorism, you know, weaponized fear. In defense of ourselves, we’re fighting — actively fighting something else. But if you’re going to fight terrorism, to me, you fight the root causes of terrorism.

Fox news pundit Bill O’Reilly was stating that Fiasco’s fan base were “Impressionable kids” that did not have any sense of politics because they did not have PhDs.

Therefore, Fiasco should not call President Obama a terrorist because it will have a negative impact on how Obama is seen by Hip-Hop fans across the world.

Bill O’ Reilly comes from a news station that had a poll conducted on November 21st, 2011 by Farleigh Dickinson University called the Public Mind Poll with the result that Fox News viewers knew less than people who did not watch any news at all. Lupe Fiasco was correct to point out what President Obama’s foreign policy was responsible for, which includes drone strikes that has claimed many lives in Pakistan and Yemen. In an interview with Philadelphia’s Power 99 with Mina SayWhat in July 2012, Lupe Fiasco explained what President Obama’s Foreign Policy is:

“One hand, you have someone who is a great speaker, but kills little children—our president,” Lupe told Philadelphia’s Power 99. “I’m talking about ordering a drone attack. Ordering drone attacks that go and kill mothers,

innocent bystanders, children. Militants, too, but the collateral damage. You're responsible for that, too.

"Drug dealers can say the same thing, Lupe continued. "I didn't mean to kill all the people in the restaurant. I was just trying to get that one dude who killed my cousin. Just so happened that that little girl was there.' Same thing."

President Obama's foreign policy is the same as that of former President George W. Bush with the expansion of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) where US troops would be stationed in more than 35 African nations. Obama declared war on Libya which led to Muammar Gaddafi's death.



Barack and Michelle Obama dance at the inauguration ball

He continued wars in Afghanistan and maintained a military presence in Iraq and continued war threats against Iran and Syria. Obama is also responsible for the erosion of civil liberties within the United States. Obama has secretly sent US Special forces to more than 75 countries. Obama has signed an agreement with Colombia to open several bases. Obama was instrumental in opening a base in Chile. There are many other actions Obama undertook during his presidency. But there is one important factor to take in consideration, Black America. Under President Obama, the Black population in the United States has witnessed a steady decline in their living standards.

According to the Washington Times, an interview with NAACP President Ben Jealous with Dick Gregory on *Meet the Press*, Jealous said: "The country's back to pretty much where it was when this president started," said Jealous. "White people in this country are doing a bit better. Black people are doing far worse." "The black unemployment rate was 12.7 percent when Mr. Obama took office. While the unemployment rate in the U.S. as a whole is below 8 percent, the Labor Department reported the black jobless rate was up from 12.9 percent to 14 percent for December. The worst during Mr Obama's first term was in September 2011, with 16.7 percent unemployment for blacks — the highest since 1983, the Department of Labor reports. The black teen jobless rate hit a staggering 39.3 percent in July 2012." According to Jealous, African-Americans "are doing far worse" under President Obama than under President George W. Bush. With Obama bailing out Banks and the Obamacare (which imposes healthcare taxes on small businesses will lead to more layoffs) to take effect in 2014, the future for employment within the Black community in America will be bleak.

Corporate Exploitation of the African-American Community

Rappers such as Jay-Z and Kanye West who are supporters of President Obama associate themselves with the political and corporate elites are immune to reality of the problems Black America faces although they both come from inner-city ghettos. Money and influence has corrupted their minds with music that has "dumbed-down" their fan base. Jay-Z (Shawn Carter) actually helped Lupe Fiasco with the production of his debut album in 2008 called 'Lupe Fiasco's *Food and Liquor*'. However, Jay-Z has reached a plateau where he became partners with major corporations. The major corporations include Budweiser, Hewlett-Packard, Coca-Cola, Reebok and Microsoft. Jay-Z collaborated with Coca-Cola, a product that affects the Black community with obesity, diabetes epidemics and high-rates of heart disease.

Jay-Z and Kanye West with the illuminati sign. They are not part of any Secret Society. They are exploited by the elites.

According to the Office of Minority Health (OMH) which is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) stated that *“African American adults are twice as likely than non-Hispanic white adults to have been diagnosed with diabetes by a physician”* and *“in 2009, African Americans were 2.2 times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to die from diabetes.”* The Obesity problem in the United States affects African-Americans more than any other group. The Office of Minority Health also stated that *“African American women have the highest rates of being overweight or obese compared to other groups in the U.S. About four out of five African American women are overweight or obese.”* Coca-Cola has a number of dangerous ingredients in their sodas including Aspartame.

Keep in mind that Aspartame has been linked to hallucinations, diarrhea, seizures, depression, migraine, fatigue and insomnia, tumors, cancer and infertility according to numerous complaints made to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which was submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services back on April 20th, 1995. It was also responsible for having union leaders in Latin America murdered by paramilitary death squads which Coca-Cola denies. For more information watch the 2010 Documentary *‘The Coca-Cola Case’* by directors German Gutierrez and Carmen Garcia and produced by the National Film Board of Canada. Microsoft is another major corporation that Jay-Z represents owned by Bill Gates who has a philanthropy called the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Bill Gates wants to help third world nations with vaccines with the continent of Africa as one of his main targets.

Bill Gates has stated publicly that *“The world today has 6.8 billion people... that’s headed up to about 9 billion. Now if we do a really great job on new vaccines, health care, reproductive health services, we could lower that by perhaps 10 or 15 percent.”*

Major corporations are exploiting many rap stars that target their communities to sell their products which are harmful to Black and Latino communities. Jay-Z also represents Budweiser. Alcoholism is a major problem for the black community. Jay-Z is not the only rap star exploited by corporations. You have hundreds of artists that contribute to the degradation of the African-American, Latino, White and Asian communities such as Nikki Manage, Kanye West, 50 Cent, DMX and many others whose lyrics degrade women and glorify gangsters. They rap about how much money they got and all of the gold chains they possess. These are songs that have a hidden message to consume or to become a “Gangster”. Rap music is a weapon used by the elites to keep certain segments of society in control.

Propaganda Then and Now

Corporations that exploit certain groups of people such as women or the black community is nothing new. Corporations have been interested in finding ways to attract consumers to their products for decades regardless of race or sex. The Psychological use of Rap music to socially engineer Black and Latino Youth to the life of crime which contributes to the Prison-Industrial Complex, consumerism and the mistreatment of women has been in the making since the late 1920’s.

In 1928, Edward Bernays’ *‘Propaganda’* was used as a manual to entice consumers to buy certain products. One of the most known tactics used in the business world was Bernays

use of women for cigarette companies. Bernays used women to show how cigarettes can be made fashionable to the public. Bernays actually helped the smoking industry overcome one of the most problematic obstacles for the cigarette industry which was women smoking in public which was illegal in the 1920's. Bernays used Women models to smoke 'Lucky Strikes' to show the 'Torches of Freedom' to the public. It boosted the profits of cigarette companies since Bernays created a new consumer for their product. Bernays was also involved in politics when he worked under President Woodrow Wilson on the Committee of Public Information in order for America to be involved in the aspect of "*bringing democracy to all of Europe*". In 'Propaganda' Bernays laid out ways how corporations can use 'aesthetic' values in various forms of art:

"In applied and commercial art, propaganda makes greater opportunities for the artist than ever before. This arises from the fact that mass production reaches an impasse when it competes on a price basis only. It must, therefore, in a large number of fields create a field of competition bases on aesthetic values. Business of many types capitalizes the aesthetic values. Business of many types capitalizes the aesthetic sense to increase markets and profits. Which is only another way of saying that the artist has the opportunity of collaborating with industry in such a way as to improve the public taste, injecting beautiful instead of ugly motifs in the articles of common use, and, furthermore, securing recognition and money for himself.

Propaganda can play a part in pointing out what is and what is not beautiful, and business can definitely help in this way to raise the level of American culture. In this process propaganda will naturally make use of the authority of group leaders whose taste and opinion are recognized"

In an *Association for Consumer Research* article published in 1992 by M. Elizabeth Blair and Mark N. Hatala of Ohio University called 'The Use of Rap Music in Children's Advertising' stated that:

"Music in advertising is being studied by marketing scholars in an increasingly diverse number of ways. Initially, there was an emphasis on the measurement of aesthetic qualities of the music (Holbrook and Huber 1979; Holbrook and Bertges 1981). In these studies a number of semantic differential items were factor analyzed and the factors were given names that corresponded with certain qualities of the piece of music (e.g. activity, coolness, heaviness, and sadness). Several years later, Gorn (1982) stimulated interest in the use of music in the background of advertisements. This study provided evidence that preferences for products could be classically conditioned through the use of music. Bruner (1990) recently reviewed the diversity of ways in which music has been studied by marketing scholars and, like the Holbrook studies cited above, emphasizes the decomposition of the music into components such as time (includes rhythm and tempo), pitch and texture. A new rhetorical approach to the study of music in advertising was introduced by Scott (1990). This article criticizes previous music-in-advertising research for ignoring the cognitive involvement of the listener. It is emphasized that music can be informative or affective, and should not be separated from its social context and meanings that are culturally shared. Culturally-shared meanings in music have been largely ignored in previous studies and the current research is one of the first to examine advertising music from an anthropological/ sociological perspective.

Rap music, with its boastful rhymes and synthesizer-created claps and pops,

has moved out of the ghetto and into the mainstream of popular culture. In rap music, African-Americans have found a powerful expression of their culture. Some rap artists have attempted to use this force to bring about social change, for example, by speaking out about black-on-black violence. Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola and the British Knights athletic footwear company have all signed popular rap artists to promote their products. Rap's rhythmic chants and hip style fit the image of products like sneakers and soft drinks, especially with young consumers. Because children and teens are the major consumers of rap music, it is only logical that rap should be used to promote products to these age groups. Advertisers believe that rap music facilitates memorization of the product information and creates excitement (Barber 1987). Rap music also allows more lyrics per 30 seconds than any other form of music (Winters 1990)"

Corporations have been using Edward Bernays model to gain advantage on what consumers would desire instead of what they need. Rap music is a tool used by corporations to sell their products or services. Many artists were signed with major record companies in the 90's including Jay-Z in 1996 with 'Reasonable Doubt' with a single 'Can't Knock the Hustle' about drug dealing and life on the street. Rap Music does not cause crime per se as much as the Columbine massacre in Colorado was not caused by the music of Marilyn Manson who was blamed for the incident. It is fair to say that there are other factors that contribute to crime such as poverty and the *War on Drugs*. However, Rap music is persuasive towards consumerism. It glorifies women as sexual objects or as "Strippers". Gangster Rap songs involve drug dealing and foments rivalries between gangs and regions (East Coast vs.

The West Coast rivalry of the 1990's). The history of Rap music dates back to the 1970's in New York City when block parties in African-American communities were popular with DJ's and rappers who created Hip-Hop music. Corporate interests and the globalist elites turned Hip-Hop into a negative genre not just for the black community but every other community that listens to Hip-Hop. Lupe Fiasco is positive especially towards Women where many rappers call women "Bitches". In one of his singles "Bitch Bad" about how the word "bitch" is normalized among youths when they are talking about women. In comparison to many rap artists who call women "bitches" is accepted as normal. This type of influence on youths will have a negative perception of women. They will be seen as sex objects, not worthy of respect.

Will the FBI consider Lupe Fiasco a "Security Threat" to the United States?

In 1956, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had files on Elvis Presley due to an extortion case involving Elvis's safety and his performances. J. Edgar Hoover received a letter from Army Intelligence that stated Elvis Presley's performance was a danger to the United States because his *"actions and motions were such as to rouse the sexual passions of teenaged youth."* Imagine Lupe Fiasco's criticism of Barack Obama and several other rappers that are in the same category such as Mos Def, Taleb Kweli, Immortal Technique, Calle 13 (Puerto Rico) and London-based rapper Lo-Key. Lupe Fiasco would be targeted for criticizing the President and can be labeled a terrorist himself.



Elvis Presley

Anything is possible in the United States, especially after Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2011.

Can Rap Music bring change to Urban Youths?

Hip-Hop music can be used in a positive direction to spread awareness on many issues, including drugs and crime. Lupe Fiasco has demonstrated that his music can be a positive force for the youth in the United States as well as the World. Rap music including “Gangster Rap” is a mind control mechanism that allows youths to be controlled by corporate interests to become consumers or to be used by political interests through the influence of Rap stars such as Jay-Z and Kanye West. Rap music can be used in a positive direction in terms of educating the public or by informing them on what the real issues are. One thing is for sure, as long as the Music industry continues to reap billions of dollars in profits with Hip-Hop music that involves gangsters, drugs and sex, youths in America and throughout the world will continue down a path that would not benefit their families or communities.

Jay-Z and all other rappers who are exploited by the elites will continue their talents that will only benefit corporations and the elite that own them. Who knows why Obama invited Lupe Fiasco to the inauguration event. Maybe Obama never heard Lupe Fiasco’s music. If he did, Obama would have never invited Lupe Fiasco in the first place. At least one thing is certain, as they say in the world of Hip-Hop, Lupe Fiasco is keeping it “Real.” Maybe other rappers would wake-up one day and create music that inspires, not music that destroys the mind. Then maybe urban youths would be interested in knowledge, not gold chains and fancy cars to pick up the “Bitches”.

Then hope for a better life out of the ghettos can become a reality.

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