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SLAVERY, LIKE ABUSE, IS NEVER A CHOICE: How Kanye West missed the point while trying to solicit a Message of Empowerment

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By **Nefferr Kerr**, May 2, 2018 at 5:01 pm



When I first heard some of things Kanye had been saying leading up to the



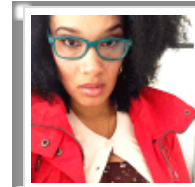
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Nefferr Kerr

I write, which means I will live forever. So basically that makes me a vampire.

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infamous [“slavery was a choice”](#) comment, I initially just chalked it up to him using shock value as a marketing strategy. You know, the normal attention grabbing shit (good or bad) that’s done to get mass anticipation for something. However, after taking a moment to think deeper on this, I came to the conclusion that there may have been more to this. What is the objective? What could he possibly be trying to convey?

I used to pride myself on the ability to emotionally detach with ease. Now, while that may not have always served me well in my personal and familial relationships, it has given me the uncanny ability to remove personal experiences, opinions, and feelings about something, in order to consider a situation from all angles objectively. Maybe it’s that, or maybe it’s because my father made sure I knew how to play chess (which requires looking at all variables). Who knows? However, I do recognize that there is value in being able to mentally process things that many find infuriating, disrespectful, disappointing, and painful while removing emotion from the equation. So, bear with me as I attempt to dissect the dichotomy of that statement made by Kanye West.

I believe Kanye was trying to say that mental slavery is the main reason black people operate the way we do now. And why we seem to be in a stagnant space as a collective. It appeared that he also tried to draw similar parallels to actual slavery (past) while comparing and juxtaposing those thoughts about mental slavery to present times. His stance basically became that no matter the era or situation, we all had/have a choice (mentally), so therefore “slavery was a choice” as well. **And THAT is where he fucked up.** People often use the expression, “Don’t shoot the messenger”, when delivering important information that should not be missed out on (despite not liking who it is coming from). I can see him wanting to inherently shift a collective paradigm. However, Kanye actually shot himself with his own message. His bullets being delivery, tone, and the verbiage used. Which is why the message was lost in translation and all hell broke loose.

“Slavery was a choice?!”

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“Slavery was a choice?! Did that muh’fuckah REALLY just say that?” was the collective cry heard globally the moment he said that shit. And rightfully so. Now, while I understand the metaphors and comparisons he was attempting to make in regards to mental slavery, he seemed to forget about a few key historical and psychological elements that prevented certain collective behaviors. He made that comment based on how he feels

things should have been (therefore suggesting that what was endured by our ancestors was a choice). Slavery, which is something he, nor any or us, has never experienced, and mental slavery (or the perception of it) are two very different things. This is despite the fact that you must mentally enslave a person or people in order to keep them physically enslaved. The two are connected, but they can also exist independent of one another (which is what he was alluding to in terms of present day mental slavery). However, physically enslaving a human is done by torturing and brutalizing a person or people to the point where they become ‘broken’ mentally. Psychologically, the natural innate will to simply survive (self-preservation) becomes the default mode of operation, and it is quickly learned and understood not to deviate in any way when your existence is threatened. This is how you break down and control an entire group of people. And this is what was done to our ancestors, Mr. West. It wasn’t a matter of just choosing to ‘opt-out’. Especially, when through no fault of their own, many were unable to reverse the trauma-based conditioning and psychological damage to simply ‘choose’ differently or fight back.

“Was Slavery was a choiceless choice”



To say that *“slavery was a choice”* is highly disrespectful and offensive, not

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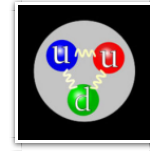
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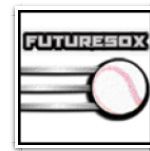
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only to those of us who are descendants, but to our ancestors who actually had to endure the shit. The road to hell is paved with the best of intentions. So, despite the actual message of ‘*wake up black people*’ that Kanye wanted received, using the phrase ‘*Slavery was a choice*’ immediately made any valid argument he may have had null and void. Those four words made it apparent that Kanye was showing his lack of historical context and level of ignorance as it relates to the psychology of enslavement.

“*Slavery was REAL... we now have a choice to move differently*”

Slavery was very real. The residual effects of it are still real. It is the foundation of institutional racism, socio-economic barriers, and is responsible for the disparity in how people of color are treated in this country (and worldwide). However, knowing what we know now, we have the choice to operate differently as a group to garner different results. Maybe that is what Kanye was trying to say, despite failing miserably (because of his word choice and the fact that he is already grossly misunderstood). At least that is what I am hoping for. That maybe he is trying to use radical thinking and behavior to upset the status quo and force more of our people to use their pain, anger, and rage to think and move differently. Maybe that’s it, maybe he’s an agent provocateur...or, maybe he’s just a n*gga who has been in Paris too long.

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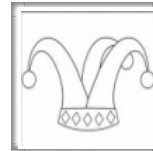


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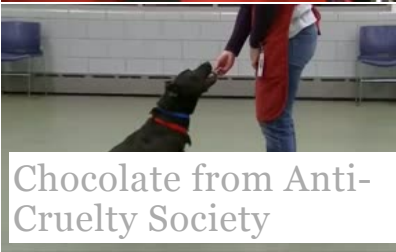
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