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### **Kanye Doesn't Provide Keys**

Popular rap music star Kanye West's new release, "New Slaves," is capturing vast attention.

For some, it is Kanye's "Marvin Gaye moment"; i.e., he may be transitioning from typical Hip-Hop music about sex, drugs, murder, and bling to musical expressions of social consciousness.

"New Slaves" highlights the predicament in which many Black Americans find ourselves: Being exploited as consumers and as prisoners in a horrific industrial complex.

What does Kanye offer as a response? "Going Bobby Boucher." Sexually abusing "Hampton spouses." And "tear xxxx down."

In our view, these are unsophisticated responses to a very complex and sophisticated problem. We are now at the end of a nearly 50-year transition from Jim Crow America (especially in the South), which was viewed by many as an extension of slavery, to a point of severe economic inequality today where many at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy view themselves as slaves.

Instead of off-the-cuff Hip-Hop aphorisms, why didn't Kanye offer sound keys that Black and other Americans can use to mitigate current economic inequality in the nation?

Actually, the latter question opens up a broader question.

Why don't Hip-Hop artists generally now use Kanye's "Marvin Gaye moment" to turn Hip-Hop music away from the mundane jabber about sex, drugs, murder, and bling and toward more meaningful vibrations about the importance of knowledge and learning, retaining wealth in the Black community, and generally creating more opportunities for economic independence?

As you know, it is one thing to open a can of worms, look into it, and describe the contents. It is another thing altogether to assess the can of worms and determine how to transform the worms into a profitable venture. Do we use them as fishing bait, do we use them to aerate the soil to grow better crops, or do we perform research on them and uncover a new and innovative way to use them?

Kanye has merely opened the can of worms. In the process, however, he has opened the door to more socially conscious rap music. Our hope is that other Hip-Hop artists will find the keys to compose socially conscious music that provides specific directions and instructions on how to

help the young and old alike move Black and White America toward a more economically equitable, and less of a slave, society.

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