

**The
BLACK
C o M M e n t a t o r**

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on issues affecting African Americans
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**Stupid American Videos or "Is Our Children Learning?"
Represent Our Resistance
By Dr. Lenore J. Daniels, PhD
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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But we are unbelievably ignorant concerning what goes on in our country - to say nothing of what does on in the rest of the world - and appear to have become too timid to question what we are told.

- James Baldwin, [Nothing Personal](#).

History as record embraces the monuments, documents, and symbols which provide such knowledge as we have or can find respecting past actuality. But it is history as thought, not as actuality, record, or specific knowledge, that is really meant when the term history is used in its widest and most general significance. It is thought about past actuality, instructed and delimited by history as record and knowledge - record and knowledge authenticated by criticism and ordered with the help of the scientific method. This is the final, positive, inescapable definition. It contains all the exactness that is possible and all the bewildering problems inherent in the nature of thought and the relation of the thinker to the thing thought about. Charles A. Beard, [Written History As an Act of Faith](#).

In the U.S., the rulers dishonor the human intellect. Scammers and schemers - they are non-thinkers. The "war" on King George's mind symbolizes the extent to which this nation-state is committed to destruction and death. The rulers employ non-thinkers to produce slogans, and the politicians memorize and recite them. It's better to install politicians who have memorized the slogans and recite them.

Meanwhile, corporate media teaches: Freedom is stupidity. Stupidity is honorable. Feed the body. Adorn the body. Above all look sexy for the eyes of others. Rank high in the sexy category, the only category outside the Forbes list of Most Wealthiest Americans that matters. Hit the lotto jackpot one day and maybe you too can be among the most valued American citizens. The wealthy and the pseudo-intellectual (non-thinker) are the elite.

Americans of all shades are taught to HATE the intellect!
Fascists fear the intellect!
Thinking is not welcomed here.

The intellect will be uncomfortable in this environment.
So we have the You Tube "Stupid American" videos.
A friend from Ethiopia, currently living in Canada, told me about these videos.
The You Tube videos are all the rave elsewhere.

Viewing these videos gave me an excuse for spending time on You Tube. It's about culture, I said to myself. In fact, it *is* about the American culture. Since so many Americans have never read Whitman or Hemingway or Morrison. Many have limited knowledge of Frederick Douglass, Cesar Chavez, or Sitting Bull. Since most don't read and have never read a novel and others can't tell the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Of the 158 countries in the United Nations, writers Morris Berman, the U.S. ranks "forty-ninth in literacy." 60 percent of the American adult population "has never read a book of any kind, and only 6 percent reads as much as one book *a year*, where a book is defined to include Harlequin romances and self-help manuals." Berman's research also discovered that 120 Americans are illiterate or "read at no better than a fifth-grade level." It's no wonder that most American citizens can't tell the difference between thinking and non-thinking.

For most Americans, American culture is McDonald or Nike.

This attack on thinking *is political*. It *is* about the freedom to revel in stupidity - the American way! And by doing so, the rulers accomplish the dissolving or denigration of the American culture. These Anglo-American rulers manage and bankroll what comes to stand for the "American culture," a culture limited to smelling itself until its own Self comes to represent the whole humanity. It is Narcissus in love with his white image. For the rulers, it keeps the American citizenry busy with its Self, that is, this image of itself as "superior."

And the world is laughing at this figure.

Among the You Tube videos showing Americans struggling to provide answers to general knowledge questions are a series called "Stupid Americans" in which two young Australians ask simple questions of average Americans.

In terms of the "War on Terror," what country should the U.S. invaded next?

"-Italy!"

"-France! They didn't support the war!"

They were shown a world map. When asked to place pins on these European countries, the two American citizens, the one who answered "Italy" and the other who answered "France," placed the pins on a clearly marked country of Australia.

For the woman who answered "Sri Lanka," again, the pin was placed on Australia.

"Kofi Anon is a drink: True or False?"

-A coffee!

-A law firm!

Tony Blair is "an actor."

-Perhaps "Linda Blair's brother."

"What are the countries in the 'Axis of Evil'?"

-I know Germany is one of them.

-California.

-Florida.

-Fella with the turban head. I call a diaper head.

"Who was the first man on the moon?"

-John Glenn.

"What is a mosque?"

-An animal.

"How many kidneys does a person have?"

-One.

"How many world wars have there been?"

-Three

Stars Wars, the film, is based on a true story?

-Yes!

Shown a picture of the Eiffel Tower, a Black woman said it's located on the West Bank.

Another person said it's in New York.

And the Taj Mahal is in Australia too.

"Oh, Okay."

And there are several Eiffel Towers!

"Oh, Okay."

And the original Mount Rushmore is in Australia!!

"Oh, Okay."

The Leaning Tower of Pizza moved from Italy to Australia, according to white American citizen.

Nagasaki and Hiroshima, for one American man, are known for Judo wrestling.

The president of Al Queda is Yassir Arafat.

The main religion of Israel is "Muslim." But another American citizen said it was "Israeli."

"What country starts with the letter 'U'?"

-Utah.

-Fidel Castro is now a "singer"!

Further evidence of a politically induced stupidity from the top down (but perhaps not so funny) is witnessed in the need for the sick and elderly to travel, if possible, to the Canadian border to purchase prescription drugs at reasonable prices.

Or witness the acceptance of an economic system that depends on average Americans spending money they don't have rather than saving the money.

Or witness the rulers, year after year, stealing the resources and funds of others while practicing suppressing dissent and then brags about its wealth and dominance and "hard working" Americans.

Or witness the rise in economic inequality since 2000. According to a United Nations Report, major cities (New Orleans, New York, Washington D.C., for example) rival cities in Africa in terms of income disparity, health care, and living standards.

Or witness the insistence that the young American, distinct from an older "civil rights era" Black or White, has no issue with race! At what educational institution has the young white student had the history of U.S. violence (genocide and slavery) present to them in ways in which they could confront, engage, and then begin to transcend the issue of race? The playing field is not level, and whites and Blacks are without a sense of history, lacking the knowledge in which to compare, let alone analyze intelligently and without fear, the role white privilege still plays in the political, cultural, and social spheres of our lives. The young are taught to solve a problem by denying it or ignoring it. The young, particularly the young white generations, learn to "play stupid" when it come to race.

This and more is evident of the reign of stupidity and indifference. And it really isn't funny!

"How precarious real intelligence is in the world of Oprah & Chopra, in a world where the dumb and the titillating have become the standard of value!" writes Berman.

The expression "dumbing down" means just that. This so-called democratization is not an attempt to get the less able to stretch themselves a bit; rather, it is a reduction of everything to the lowest common denominator and the regarding of that as some kind of political triumph.

Say the word "patriotic" or "terrorist," point to any country outside the U.S. border, create a narrative justifying violence, and the collective begins its chant "kill, kill, kill", without thought. They don't need to know what they don't need to know.

Fascism becomes the norm.

Journalist Chris Hedges recalls a conversation with his professor years ago, in which his professor spoke of the complicity of the media and institutions of higher education in the formation of a fascist state. Hedges writes:

His [Professor James Luther Adams] critique of the prominent research universities, along with the media, was no less withering. These institutions, self-absorbed, compromised by their close relationship with government and corporations, given enough of the pie to be complacent, were unwilling to deal with the fundamental moral questions and inequities of the age. They had no stomach for a battle that might cost them their prestige and comfort. He told me that if the Nazis took over America '60 percent of the Harvard faculty would begin their lectures with the Nazi salute.' This too was not an abstraction. He had watched academics at the University of Heidelberg, including the philosopher Martin Heidegger, raise their arms stiffly to students before class.

We are already witnessing the corruption of media and other institutions as they adjust the truth to comply with the goals of a neo-fascist state here in the U.S.

Narcissus as a studious "intellectual" academic, politician, lawyer, journalist, consultant, lobbyist is intense, but he is intensely focused, nonetheless, on himself! Americans can't find the U.S. on a map! Narcissus can't find his own behind! He is so lost in his image that he is out of touch with his physicality. Even the model of an "intellectual" is screwed!

How are our children expected to learning in this environment?

"It will take time to restore chaos," said the King!

So imagine a huge screen and viewers from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia just watching and laughing their hearts out. Americans have become the best show on Earth.

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The BlackCommentator Readers' Corner Blog

BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, Lenore Jean Daniels, PhD, has been a writer, for over thirty years of commentary, resistance criticism and cultural theory, and short stories with a Marxist sensibility to the impact of cultural narrative

violence and its antithesis, resistance narratives. With entrenched dedication to justice and equality, she has served as a coordinator of student and community resistance projects that encourage the Black Feminist idea of an equalitarian community and facilitator of student-teacher communities behind the walls of academia for the last twenty years. Dr. Daniels holds a PhD in Modern American Literatures, with a specialty in Cultural Theory (race, gender, class narratives) from Loyola University, Chicago. Click [here](#) to contact Dr. Daniels.

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