



RAVI GOVENDER



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Jaden, gender neutral child of Jada and Willard, heir to the Smith family empire. At age eleven he stole fire from the Gods, bottling and pricing it at its source, using some of the proceeds to pay Atlas to fix decaying infrastructure. It was during the water crisis in Flint, Michigan when some noticed 'JUST' - Jaden's water company. Flint, a whole community guilty of being black, was on the receiving end of General Motors pissing lead into their drinking water. Obama either as crisis actor or LARPing as humanitarian, showed up for a Town Hall to purse his lips against a glass brimful of Flint-on-tap only to swallow his own saliva and declare the water fit for consumption as a gang of working class spectators watched on in awe. In the ensuing aftermath Jaden brought more than 'just' bottled water to Flint, his team created 'water-box' which was a mobile system capable of filtering out lead pollutants from contaminated water so locals could fill by the gallon.



The Water Box © 501CTHREE www.501ctthree.org



Barack Obama drinks Flint water © The Independent. www.independent.co.uk

Intergenerational wealth has at least one cheek on the seat of this story and what rests against the back and arms is philanthropy. Philanthropy is great at appearing good. As an ontology it thrives only in an economically disparate world. Where depressing conditions persist people like Jaden can as well function to help provide temporary relief. Lately a weird synergy has developed between philanthropy and libertarianism as if we've been shot through a tunnel at high speeds into a period of late-philanthropism. These philanthropic flames burn more brightly than before, fueled both by libertarian affiliation and ecological catastrophe. Jaden's relationship to TESLA not unseemly mirrors that of [an influencer's to product placement](#), we have after all followed his instagram as he seeded us his journey into adulthood whilst simultaneously witnessing his optimization.



Elon Musk © Mark Braker | Getty Images

What is queer about this is that we need to understand the space... lets call it "x" for simplicity's sake...so space "x", that TESLA operates within as affiliate to Jaden and as tech-solutionist. Affiliate to Jaden on instagram uses the current ecological crisis as a site to mercurially seed consumer products through the platform. New highly-reflective zero-carbon-emitting technologies for the rich makes this solutionism. Musk who over the course of the last few years has publicly displayed a more reckless nature often seen taking his hands off the wheel of a self driving car to tweet and or [smoke blunts on Youtube](#) with inner-city shaman Joe Rogan. Its hard to know whether Musk is more Mercury, Icarus or surrogate father, but whats important is how Jadens relationship to him and TESLA helps commodify the point of climate change.

In Capitalist Realism Mark Fisher elaborated on Lacan's concept of 'Responsibilisation' framing it as the outsourcing of responsibility by a global elite onto the individual i.e you and I. He proceeded to use the example of recycling as ones duty to mankind in order to lower our individual footprints because it is essentially up to you and I to save the world. The crux of the issue has and always will lie within the hands of the very same global elite who've successfully guilt-tripped you and I into making sure we separate our card from our plastic. The elite still contribute some seventy percent of the total global carbon emissions just from the vast amounts of pollution their various companies spew out on the daily. Point being that its not about making an argument against an individual's point-one percent contribution but rather making an argument about the point-one percent's contribution. With late-philanthropy comes late-responsibilisation.

Jadens philanthropic endeavors and libertarian affiliation create an uncanny resemblance to 'new green colonialism' as they only strengthen an existing hegemonic order. If working class black families didn't face repression from automotive monoliths, if their only option wasn't just waiting in a queue for drink stamps perhaps maybe we wouldn't be out here leaving fire emojis in the comments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ravi Govender is part of CUSS Group.



Jaden Smith on a flying Tesla at Coachella Festival 2019 © Spencer Miller

Appendix Crisis-Actor-Network Theory (CANT)

The meaning of Obama as 'crisis actor' is based on recontextualising the term commonly applied by right wing conspiracy theorists against socially orientated people. The term functions to smear a persons genuine intent for good by positioning them as duplicitous in nature. Obama in this case was the great black hope and Flint, Michigan your archetypal black American community. To further look at the American electoral system as bipartisan has often lead to questions arising within the commons of exactly how different the Democrats are from the Republicans. When Obama arrived in Flint to downgrade real civil exigency with such disdain, it was not dissimilar to that of a Republican / Democrat Venn diagram where **THE CENTER**, the overlapping between the two circles, displays the intensification of the unifying ideology of power. What we are left with is Obama as a Republican crisis acting as a Democrat / President while lobbying for the side of power.



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