

THE DISENT CONTROLLED

THE POWER OF DISSENT

In any functioning society, dissent is vital. The ability to use your voice to expose injustice and unfairness is what makes us able to progress. No matter your views on government or how it should be run, the freedom to critique that government (or whatever is in its place) is fundamental.

In a capitalist profit-driven society, one where corporations and the richest individuals depend on the current system staying stagnant (i.e. without changes to labor laws or climate regulations, things that would hurt profit) it is tempting to stifle dissenting voices that call for changes in that system they benefit off of. However, most industries have realized the most obvious path to stifle dissent is not the best one.

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CONTROLLING DISSENT

It is far more powerful than suppressing dissent to control it. When you suppress dissent, it will eventually come to light what you're doing. If you can control the dissent instead, it's much harder to tell, and therefore much harder to fight against.

Ultimately, though, how do you tell the difference between controlled and uncontrolled dissent? Let's compare two examples. Both pretty recent. Chappell Roan's speech at the 2025 Grammy's, and Zül-Qarnain Nantambu at the 2025 Super Bowl. Before we go any further, anything said here is the opinion of the writer and you are of course free to hold whatever opinion you want.

Dissent, dissent, dissent.

There is so much hope in this world, and it's not going anywhere.

No matter what, dissent is essential.

in good faith.

The best people to trust are the people in your community, not celebrities with a million reasons to sell their ideology to the highest bidder. Go to your local library, talk to the people there. Volunteer at soup kitchens or homeless shelters. Knit blankets for the cold and make sandwiches for the hungry. Meet your neighbors. Talk to your coworkers. Build connections and be there for each other. When something is wrong, speak up. Don't expect celebrities or billionaires or politicians to do it for you. They won't, and if they do, it likely won't be in good faith.

CONCLUSION



During Chappell Roan's 2025 Grammy acceptance speech, she took the time to call out the music industry and how they handle healthcare. How can we tell this is controlled dissent? Two things.

- 1) Chappell Roan is never stopped during her speech. It is non-disruptive and easily ignored by those in the industry who would disagree. In a way, the idea of change is presented as just that. An idea.
- 2) Chappell Roan never attempts to disrupt the industry elsewhere. She's content to go along with terrible companies when it suits her, like Sephora and Roblox.

popular for a reason.

The struggle of one is the struggle of all, but not everyone is speaking up for the same reason. Movies like the Matrix and the Hunger Games are

consumerist hellscape we're trapped in. brands that use marginalized identities to sell more products and ultimately perpetuate the attention to the companies and trying to deceive you and make you think they're on your side. Pay attention to who speaks up and where. Pay attention to who might be more important to pay attention. Acknowledgement. However, it's Palestine and that is worthy of also spoken out in support of Chappell Roan or her music. She has This is in no way saying can't like

CLARIFICATION



During the 2025 Superbowl half-time show, Zül-Qarnain Nantambu, one of Kendrick Lamar's backup dancers held up joined flags of Sudan and Palestine. How can we tell this is NOT controlled dissent? Two things.

- 1) Nantambu is escorted by guards and apprehended by authorities.
 - 2) The message isn't a universally accepted truth like "music industry bad" it's a cause that's been poorly represented in the media, almost entirely from one side.
- And the best part? While the police tried desperately to charge him with a crime, Nantambu did nothing illegal, so they had to let him go.