

# Harlem renaissance and the hip hop movement essay sample

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The Harlem Renaissance and the Hip-Hop Movement are a culmination of co-related cultural art forms that have emerged out of the black experience. White people understood black people more through their expression of art during both movements. Both movements brought about a broad cross-racial following and, ironically, in both instances brought about a better understanding of the black experience for white America. The bridge between Be-Bop and Hip-Hop was made by Quincy Jones with the “ Back on the Block” project; which featured such artists as Dizzie Gillespie, Miles Davis, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, Tevin Campbell, Ice Tea, Big Daddy Kane, Al B Sure, Barry White and many others. The artistic elements of both movements include literature, art, music, dance, musical theatre, film etc. Both movements were born out of a desire to find the best possible way of expressing their humanity.[1] The Harlem Renaissance

The 1920’s usually stir up images of speakeasies and flappers, but for one group of Americans the decade became a time of rebirth known as the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance or Negro Renaissance is the term applied to the movement of Black Americans from the South to the North during the 1920s and 1930s. The Harlem Renaissance, which is also known as the Black Literary Renaissance and The New Negro Movement, began in the neighborhood of Harlem in New York City in which the spirituality and potential of the African-American community was articulated through different forms of artistic expression. The Harlem Renaissance was one generation removed from the Civil War. This time period coincided with black migration to the northern cities to look for employment opportunities that became available after World War I because these types of

opportunities were not as readily available to blacks in the South. In the Southern states there was a lack of freedom of expression for African Americans because it was generally demoralized by the Caucasian citizens of the South, with their repressive attitudes and mandates of the old Southern order (black art and other forms of creative expression in black culture was simply censored or manifested itself in an underground forum).

The migration to the North, more specifically Harlem, led to African Americans finding an outlet for group expression and self determination as a means of achieving equality and civil rights. This era impacted literature (poetry and prose), music (jazz played in the notorious Cotton Club and elsewhere), visual arts (painting), and acting in musicals. In social clubs like the Cotton Club, African Americans entertained on stage and waited the customers, while they catered only to white patrons. These “white patrons” would often travel to Harlem for the “exotic entertainment.” [2] Until the 20’s, Harlem was home mostly to Irish immigrants. When they moved to the upper tip of Manhattan in the Inwood Section, however, the plentiful housing was made available cheaply, and became a magnet for the migrating blacks. Though racism subsequently caused the monthly rent rates to rise unfairly, Harlem was now a metropolis for blacks. The scales of the economy were unbalanced based on race, so black people had to be creative.

Although the Harlem Renaissance demonstrated the creation of a national black culture, during the Harlem Renaissance, African-Americans did not control their economic circumstances. As a result of their lack of control over rent policies, small businesses, banking, and mortgage loans, Harlem

became a ghetto. [2] [3] To deal with the poverty that was very real, even before the Depression, Harlem neighbors would often host house rent parties in their railroad flats. Perhaps, considered the most innovative form of black entertainment and an institution created in response to the sorry reality that Harlem's inflated rents (\$12 to \$30 a month) were higher than in other areas of Manhattan. Salaries paid to African Americans were lower than those of their white counterparts, the average Harlem resident spent 40 percent of his or her income on rent and if it wasn't paid by Sunday, the landlord put the furniture out on the street on Monday. Rent parties allowed for the residents of Harlem and other poor ghettos to pay their rent on time and avoid eviction. The rent party also represented the way that African-Americans overcame the oppressive surroundings of the ghetto.

For example, in "Rent Party Jazz", written by William Miller, a jazz musician gives a rent party in order to raise money for a certain family in need. In this way, rent parties not only assisted people in paying the rent, but it also helped the growth and development of jazz as a music genre. Through jazz music and the celebratory nature of the parties, a community was built. [3] [4] The Harlem Renaissance arguably lasted about 15 years and is said to have ended with the onset of the Great Depression. The European American infatuation with the Negro declined in the 1930s, in large part due to the collapse of the stock market. Also, the depression exposed the economic vulnerability of Harlem, given that much of the real estate in Harlem was owned by European Americans; and when the depression hit, African Americans lost their jobs at faster rates than European Americans, caused

foreclosures on mortgages, evictions from rental properties, and a depression and alienation from the American Dream that was expressed violently in the first modern race riot, the Harlem Riot of 1935. For some, that riot symbolized that the optimism and hopefulness that had fueled the Harlem Renaissance was dead. The end of the Harlem Renaissance was a personal event occurring when he or she consciously disassociated from the movement.[4] The Hip-Hop Movement

The Hip Hop Movement was born out of poverty in New York (more specifically the boroughs of NYC), racism in America, a need for a voice in the Civil Rights Movement, presence of the Black Panther Movement, declined importance of the Church, heroin/crack epidemic, growing gang influence, loss of fathers in the home, loss of jobs, loss of community support and an extreme feeling of hopelessness. Music is the most powerful means of human expression. It personifies love, anger, disapproval, happiness and life-experience; music speaks to us because it comes from us. Music allows us to express our feelings about life and it allows us to convey political messages. Each person, in each phase of the human experience in history has instinctively and systematically changed the music of the past to represent the realities of the present. In this century, black music, more specifically Hip Hop/Soul music, has been the music that has brought evidence of our humanity, hope, hurt, joy and passion - in such a way that the world had no other choice but to feel its power and be in awe of its brilliance.

When one discusses the relationship between Hip-Hop music and the Harlem Renaissance we begin to see some similarities and some differences. [5] What do people think of when they hear the word hip-hop?? What do you think?? Usually people will think of a style of music, generally rap. Hip-hop, however, is more than just music; it is a way of life, a culture. Hip hop as a cultural movement has gone through an independent sequence of movements or changes that manifested itself in “ B-boying” known as break dancing, free-styling, scratching, beat boxing, graffiti writing, DJaying and Emceeing. DJ Kool Herc is credited with originating Hip Hop in Bronx, New York. It started as an artistic commitment used to free the participant from oppressive social conditions in the African American, Afro-Caribbean and Latino American communities of New York City in the late 1970s (with the South Bronx being the epicenter - meaning the very center of Hip-hop or the focal point).[1][2][3]

It was DJ Afrika Bambaataa who outlined what he called the five pillars of hip-hop culture Emceeing, DeeJaying, breakdancing, graffiti writing and knowledge. In 2003, the Oxford English dictionary added “ phat,” “ jiggy,” “ dope,” and “ breakbeat” to the online updates of its dictionary. Slang terms like “ bling” and “ baby mama” are now so conversational that you can hear them spoken on the news. Clothing trends like tracksuits and hoodies are no longer limited to rappers’ gear, but are worn by everyone. [5]6[7][8] Other elements include beat boxing, hip hop fashion, and slang. Since first emerging in the Bronx, the lifestyle of hip hop culture has spread around the world.[9] When hip hop music began to emerge, it was based around disc

jockeys that created rhythmic beats by looping breaks (small portions of songs emphasizing a percussive pattern) on two turntables, which is now more commonly referred to as sampling. This was later accompanied by “rapping” (a rhythmic style of chanting or poetry more formally in 16 bar measures or time frames) and beat boxing, a vocal technique mainly used to imitate percussive elements of the music and other tricks of the trade.

An original form of dancing and particular styles of dress arose among followers of this genre of music. These elements experienced considerable refinement and development over the course of the history of the culture. Some rappers today use violence and other offensive subjects in the lyrics of their rap music. Gangster Rap is a form of rap expression that became popular during the late 80’s to mid 90’s with the insurgence of groups like NWA (Niggers with Attitude) from the west coast. Gangster rap would express hate towards police and women and glamorized drugs and murder. This was the ultimate reason for the deaths of two of the greatest rappers of the hip-hop era, Tupac Shakur and Christopher Wallace known as The Notorious B. I. G. Since the deaths Gangster Rap has died down a bit but can still be heard on radio and seen video to date. However, recently there has been a lot more peaceful rap songs’ emerging because of very real subjects such as wars, poverty and terrorism - subjects that everyone can relate to in times like these. [5] Hip-hop has changed dramatically since it originated in the early 70’s. It has changed from a way to express ones feelings into a business that has everything to do with making lots of money. Most of the

lyrics in today's hip-hop music reflect lines about drugs, violence, and mistreating women.

We will take a look at the impact that Hip-hop era had on fashion, movies, literature (poetry), music, visual arts (painting), and acting. [9] Hip-hop is a multi-million dollar industry that changed the face of fashion. Russell Simmons is one of the most important businessmen in the history of rap music. As co-founder of the Def Jam label, Simmons' street-friendly demeanor and marketing savvy helped bring hip-hop into the mainstream of American culture and mass media. He's often been compared to Motown trailblazer, Berry Gordy, but there's one huge difference: Berry Gordy looked for ways to make the music that he was producing (R&B) cross-over so that it would be considered respectable by pop audiences and mass media, Simmons ensured that his artists remained as uncompromising and as rebellious as possible. That attitude made hip-hop music of choice for a generation of teenagers simply by staying true to its roots. In fact it is a multi-cultural phenomenon that

succeeded on its own terms, thereby, crossing over without making the effort to do so. Russell Simmons went from producing rap music to putting poetry and comedy on television and in theatres. [10] In 1999, Simmons sold the remainder of his 40 percent share of Def Jam to Universal Music Group for a reported 100 million dollars, staying on as a nominal chairman. He remains one of the most respected figures in the rap business, and continues to take an active interest in shaping the culture's future direction. [10] One of the many positive side effects of the hip hop culture is that it encourages



corporations to recruit a diverse group of individuals. Recruiting minorities who have the pulse of this culture becomes an imperative because the African American market alone has \$325 billion in buying power. A multitude of organizations that appeal to the hip hop culture have diversified for competitive advantage, it makes good business sense. For example, half of Universal Music Group's employees are minority.

This organization is number one in market share in the U. S., Europe, Latin American and Australia. The record label's overall market share is 23 percent globally and 25 percent in the U. S. [11] There are various Crossover examples during the Harlem Renaissance and the Hip Hop Movement.

During the Harlem Renaissance there was a marked increase of writers, musicians, and visual artists in New York City; this sparked interest in black culture, especially among upper-middle class white New Yorkers, who came uptown to "experience" black life. This led to significant relationships between black artists and whites like Carl Van Vechten who sought to promote the artistic work of blacks. It also sustained nightclubs like the Cotton Club, which had floorshows that often portrayed blacks as primitive. Black people were forced to portray themselves a certain way in order to be deemed employable.

Often time's blacks of a very fair complexion would pass for white in an effort to assimilate amongst the white population, gaining access to clubs like the Cotton Club as a patron. The crossover elements of Hip Hop include sitcoms such as "Fresh Prince of Bel Air", Movies like "New Jack City", weekly series like "New York Undercover", Publications like Vibe magazine,

Talk shows like “ The Arsenio Hall Show”, and Comedy shows like “ Def Comedy Jam.” The Arsenio Hall show gained popularity in the late 80’s and got cancelled because of his decision to have the controversial Louis Farrakhan as a guest on his show. The Hip Hop movement started in the 1970’s and continues to be an ever evolving art form that has the potential for unyielding longevity. I would say that the Harlem Renaissance did not end; it evolved into other forms of black artistic expression that exists today. It is quite possible, that the Hip Hop movement may not have come into being had it not been for all of those talented black people who migrated from the South to Harlem, NY.

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