

Harlem renaissance assignment

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As a result of the movement, African Americans were able to move on to higher heights in the realm of art, experience some sense of interracial relations which they had not before and they were able to build from this arts driven movement into a full-fledged Civil Rights movement. “ The major political theme of the Harlem Renaissance was the rebirth of a people, the creation of the New Negro. “[3] This use of art forms as a means to express, uplift and motivate still plays a major role in today’s African American society.

While literature has taken a back seat to hip hop and African American produced films, these art forms continue to give voice to African Americans who would otherwise be left silent. The fight for African American equality in the United States has been a slow and arduous process. One of the key steps in the progression towards equality was the Harlem Renaissance, a time of great social and creative activity among African Americans during the 1920s and 1930s. The Harlem Renaissance, also referred to as the Black Arts movement made significant contributions to the movement of art and literature at the time.

Thus, the presence and purpose of the works were felt outside of the black community. “ There is general agreement... That the Harlem Renaissance is crucial to the understanding of all 20th-century American art and culture. [5] The writers, musicians and artists during this time saw their art form as a means of expression; an opportunity to speak out against the mistreatment and discrimination they faced. The Great Migration had recently taken place in which African Americans from the South moved up North in droves to

escape Jim Crow racism, search for better employment opportunities and a new beginning.

Unfortunately, when many African American arrived in the North, they were faced with many of the same racial discriminations they had faced in the South. “ Social attitudes of the early 20th century forced these black folks to settle in segregated urban housing. So, they created bustling black metropolises cities within cities. “[6] “ The addition of thousands of southern blacks to these once miniscule communities was immediately accompanied by intensified levels of prejudice and discrimination against blacks, as both newcomers and long-time residents were quickly perceived by northern whites as serious competitors for Jobs and housing. [7] With the migration to a new place and the realization that there were still barriers resulting from discrimination, artistic creativity became a meaner for expression, growth and entertainment. This caused a erred of remarkable artistic and intellectual activity in New York City’s African American community, leading to the Harlem Renaissance. “[8] Some argue that the Harlem Renaissance was pointless and had no immediate effects on society in terms of the betterment of African Americans. However, there was a significant change in the way African Americans viewed themselves.

There was a surge of pride that permeated the African American community as a result of the art that was present at that time. “... The Harlem Renaissance benefited future African Americans by helping to establish black pride. Renaissance writers such as W. E. B Du Bois influenced future artists like author James Baldwin and activists like Martin Luther King, Jar. These individuals and others like them would help initiate broader social change in <https://assignbuster.com/harlem-renaissance-assignment-essay-samples-5/>

the sass's and However, the establishment of Black Pride did not improve the living conditions of many African Americans.

This was the concern of a lot of critics and historians, as they “ worry that the emphasis on a celebration of black cultural achievements overlooks the difficult living conditions of most African Americans in urban Embracing the artistic expression of the time individuals like “... W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Arthur Schoenberg, began to reflect on how cultural activity might aid the African American community in its struggle to better its situation.

In the pages of The Crisis, the magazine of the NAACP, Du Bois and novelist Jessie Faucet encouraged conversation about how creativity in the arts might contribute to a better understanding of and respect for the African American experience. “[11] The unchanged living conditions of African Americans in northern cities, some decades later, ultimately gave birth to the Hip-Hop movement. “ Before the sass, there were only a handful of books by African-American tutors. At that time, most black characters in literature were written by white people.

There was little authentic, or true, discussion of what it meant to be black in America. “[12] This was so even when white writers interviewed many of the emancipated slaves. Instead of telling their stories in the way it was told, many of the writers saw it as an opportunity to make light of the way they pronounced and enunciated words, which helped most readers easily miss the point of the interviews. However, “ In this cultural moment black writers experienced and expressed a sense f self-worth and self-empowerment that

underside all subsequent declarations of black political and aesthetic pride.

[13] Longboats Hughes was “... One of the leading and most famous writers and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance... Known for using Jazz rhythms in his poetry and for his colorful, insightful portrayals of the lives of ordinary African-Americans. “[14] Hughes made an interesting point in his essay *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain*, published in 1926 in a magazine called *The Nation*, which gives readers insight on the mindset of the majority of Harlem Renaissance artist. He declared, “ We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame.

If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly, too. The tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure does not matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain free within 5] Hughes endorsed the idea that the arts could have a positive role to play in the betterment of the black community. He insisted, however, that the work produced must embrace the whole African American and not merely mimic white standards, styles, and expectations.

Much like during the Harlem Renaissance era, disenchantment with society is still expressed through movies, music, art and literature. This statement is even more relevant when we consider the Hip Hop culture of today that also expresses its disenchantment with society by using music, movies, art, literature, dress and dance. “ Hip hop has rejected and now replaced the pious, sanctimonious nature of civil rights as the defining moment of

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Blackness. In turn, it offers new ways of seeing and understanding what it meant to be Black at this pivotal time in history. [16] Although appreciative of the progress made by the Civil Rights Movement, the early Hip Hop artist viewed the obtaining of civil rights as nothing more than a bone that was pitched to blacks to keep them quiet. These artists were voicing their frustration with what they perceived to be the unfair treatment of their people. The frustrations of the early hip-hop artists can be heard in the lyrical poetry of their songs. For instance, Grandmaster Flash wrote a song called *The Message*, and the first verse says, " Broken glass everywhere
People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care

I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
Junkies in the alley with the baseball bat
I tried to get away, but I couldn't get far
Cause a man with a tow-truck repossessed my car
Another example of a rap artist speaking out on the condition of blacks and encouraging them was the song " Keep Yah Head Up" by Outpace who said, " Ahoy, I remember Marvin Gay, used to sing
TA me He had me feeling like black was that thing to be
And suddenly that ghetto didn't seem so tough
And though we had it rough, we always had enough..

While the rich kids is driving Benz I'm still trying to hold on to my surviving friends
And it's crazy, it seems it'll never let up, but please... You got to keep your head up. "[18] Like the artist of the Harlem Renaissance era, the early Hip Hop artist wanted to shine a spot light on what was going on within a black community that the majority did not seem to care about. " Hip hop

redefined the presence and vitality of black youth culture in the popular cultural landscape.

More important, it forged new territories and spaces for African Americans to assert greater control over the shaping and reshaping of the popular culture scene. [19] In his poem “New Song” Hughes says, “I speak in the name of the black millions Awakening to action. Let all others keep silent a moment I have this word to bring, This thing to say, This song to sing: Bitter was the day When I bowed my back Beneath the slaver’s whip. That day is past. When I saw my children unschooled, My young men without a voice in the world, My women taken as the body-toys Of a thieving people.

That day is past.” Here we see a setting quite similar to that of the aforementioned Grandmaster Flash song. Hughes describes the past condition of African Americans. He described what e saw and goes even further as to say, no more. He makes a stance against the condition of black people and while doing so encourages a change in action and attitude. In an attempt to redefine their own culture, the Harlem Renaissance also reshaped literature and the art forms represented during the movement. Jazz is a great example of this, “... New type of music called Jazz, which quickly became popular throughout the world and is recognized as the first distinctly American musical form.” [20] For the first time, African American voices were being heard throughout the nation and the world as a result of the literature that was being reduced during this time. Jean Toner’s *Cane* was one of the first African American novels to receive mainstream recognition and acceptance from white audiences and led to the publishing of other

African American novels. Hip hop has also had a worldwide effect on not only music, but culture as a whole.

In telling the stories of their communities, African Americans have caught the attention of other audiences with this musical form just as they did with jazz and literature during the Harlem Renaissance. “As an art form, Hip Hop has reached out beyond its urban roots to gain a growing acceptance among diverse audiences. [21] There are Hip Hop a-Boy crews in, Japan, France South Korea, and the Brainwashing, Germany. Halifax Summer, a lecturer in African American Studies at US Berkeley, was quoted saying “Hip-hop has become a global culture.

It began in black and Latino American communities, but you can't go to any youth culture in any capital city on the globe today where you won't find rappers talking about their normalization using similar lyrics, similar music and similar dress. “[22] Hip hop is used for the same manner in other countries. Thousands of organizers from Cape Town to Paris use hip-hop in their communities to address environmental justice, policing and prisons, media justice, and education. In Guttenberg, Sweden, nongovernmental organizations (nags) incorporate graffiti and dance to engage disaffected immigrant and working-class youths. [23] Any movement is going to have its critics. Harlem intellectuals criticized the movement but it remained popular with the working class and those that understood the meaning behind the messages. Longboats Hughes was criticized greatly as many professed that he focused on furthering an unfavorable image of African Americans and perpetrating stereotypes of the black race. To that criticism Hughes said, “I felt the masses of our people had as much in their lives to put into books as <https://assignbuster.com/harlem-renaissance-assignment-essay-samples-5/>

did those more fortunate ones who had been born with some meaner and the ability to work up to a master's degree at a Northern college.

I knew only the people I had grown up with, and they weren't people whose shoes were always shined, who had been to Harvard, or who had heard of Bach. But they seemed to me good people, too. "[24] Rap music or hip hop music if you will, receives much criticism for its sometimes materialistic and sexist messages. " But rap music is only a part of the movement, and if you look beyond stereotypes, it's clear that hip-hop culture has become one of the most far-reaching arts movements of the past three decades. [25] In the last few years hip hop has been one of the highest grossing music forms in the world and though the elitist shove its significance, much like they did writers like Hughes during the Renaissance movement, hip hop music has transformed into a culture beyond the music playing on the radio. " Hip-hop matters, quite simply, because it is the voice of the streets. And that remains true today, regardless of whether it's the poor youth in the suburbs of Paris or indigenous people fighting for their dignity in Colombia.

Hip-hop has connected with the powerless in a way that no one could have predicted or, now, can control. "[26] Hip hop is a style of dress, a style of dancing and walking, a form of music and even language. " Although " hip-hop" is generally used as a referent to urban music that replaces singing with poetical prose, it has emerged as a framework of understanding youth culture between 1979 and 2010. The common activities of hip-hop include Digging, Rapping, Dancing, and Graffiti art. Those cultural activities have opened the doors for political thinking and cultural behaviors that can be considered ' hip-hop'. 27] And though hip hop started as a form of music <https://assignbuster.com/harlem-renaissance-assignment-essay-samples-5/>

used by African Americans as a means of expression, it is no longer defined by race or made up of only African Americans. In fact just a few years ago Black Entertainment Television named Eminem, a Caucasian rapper, as the number one rap artist for that year. This simply shows the grave impact that hip hop has had on culture. The same way white America was drawn into the music, literature and art of the Renaissance movement, just about all cultures have embraced hip hop, its music and culture. The cosmopolitan nature of hip-hop includes people from backgrounds other than Black American and makes it clear that in hip-hop, one's kin are not just those related by blood, but those related by experience. This is particularly the case if the shared experience is of oppression at the hands of the same institutions and the same political and social economies that exclude a particular set of people from fully participating in the activities within a particular social race alone does not bring people together in a movement, experiences and even trends do. ... It's not just working-class whites, but also affluent, suburban kids who identify with this USIA with African-American roots. A white 16-year-old hollering rap lyrics at the top of his lungs from the driver's seat of his dad's late-model Lexus may not have the same rationale to howl at the moon as a working-class kid whose parents can't pay for college, yet his own anguish is as real to him as it gets. What attracts white kids to this music is the same thing that prompted outraged congressmen to decry jazz during the sass... Fife on the other side of the tracks; its "cool" or illicit factor, which black Americans, like it or not, are always perceived to possess. "[29] Afrika Bambaataa is credited with having started or founded hip hop by some and even he saw that it could evolve into a movement. Having visited Africa he began to take on the idea of fighting

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with love not war and in doing so wanted to bring forth a manner of social change. “ Bumboat had this vision of hip-hop as a force for social change.

He had the history and street credibility to make this narrative acceptable to even the hardest of hard-heads He was the guy who articulated that hip-hop could be a cultural movement. ” [30] From its inception, hip hop was positioned to be more than just music. Similarly, with the Great Migration that had just transpired and the seeking of employment and a break from the chains of Jim Crow, a movement of sorts was definitely on the horizon. While Hip Hop may have started on a small street corner in Bronx, New York, the impact of those humble beginnings were eventually felt globally.

For instance, at a local mall one might observe hip hop dress; a Hip Hop culture that has impacted not only the ghetto street kid in the hood, but also the kids living in suburban and rural areas alike. At a car dealership, one might see that the cars on the showroom floor are outfitted with 20+ inch rims, a major part of Hip Hop culture. Like it or not, Hip Hop is here to stay. However, had it not been for movements like the Harlem Renaissance, other movements like: the Civil Right Movement, Black Pride Movement, and today’s Hip Hop Movement would have never existed.

For the movement taught blacks, and those that experience oppression of any sorts, to believe in themselves, and to see themselves not as inferior, but equal to. It is often under the subjection of great stress that movements are born. Those that traveled North during the Great Migration had every opportunity to fold and give up, but they didn’t. Instead they decided to use whatever talents and gifts they had to create movements like the Harlem

Renaissance, which defied the odds and finally gave black people a voice in a sea of white voices.

It provided an avenue for African Americans to pick themselves up notwithstanding the discrimination they had to face on a daily basis from those in society. As a result of the Harlem Renaissance, African Americans were able to move on to greater heights in the realm of art, ultimately giving birth to today's Hip Hop culture. Bibliography " A Walk Through Harlem. " Scholastic Scope (February 2010). Bailey, Cat. Noises of the Harlem Renaissance. " Scholastic Scope 51 no (February 2003): 14. Barron, Desman. 1995. " Longboats Hughes: ' The negro artists and the racial mountains. ' . " World & 1 10, no. : 410. Boyd, Robert L. " The Northern ' Black Metropolis' of the Early Twentieth Century: A Reappraisal. " Sociological Inquiry 81, no. 1 (February 2011): 88-109. Brown, Bryan. " Hip-hop as a resource for understanding the urban context. " Cultural Studies Of Science Education 5, no. 2 None 2010): 521-524. Education Research Complete, Obscenest (accessed September 24, 2012). Change, Jeff. " IT'S A Hip-Hop World. Foreign Policy no. 163 (November 2007): 58. Masterful Premier, Obscenest (accessed September 24, 2012). Ending, C. (2010). Science education for the hip-hop generation.