

BEATS, RHYME, AND CULTURE FALL 2003

Assignment 2 Due Monday October 20, 2003

In class we have looked at the early stages of Hip-hop and especially focused on the fact that there was very little 'supervision/control', as the culture began to emerge. Unlike the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Power movement, those in power did not embrace Hip-hop, forcing the culture to find its own way. In the early 1980s, graffiti began to capture the ire of NYC officials and measures were adopted to slow down that element of Hip-hop. Arguably, this was the inauguration of external forces attempting to clamp down on Hip-hop.

Your assignment is to write a paper which describes the effect external forces had on the early development (up until 1982 with NYC's attempts to end graffiti on subways) of Hip-hop. Be sure to describe the economic and social decisions made by NYC officials in the late 1960s and 1970s which spawned the birth of Hip-hop, as well as any major events in the early years which had a great impact on Hip-hop, but were not initiated by someone who was a practitioner of the movement. Finally, decide (and thoroughly defend) if the external influences you describe helped or hindered the early progress of Hip-hop. Would Hip-hop have survived, or even evolved, if not for the 'black sheep' stigma which subsisted in its early years?

Please note: **Your assignment is not to regurgitate the facts laid out in class**, but rather to tie in these ideas with 'value added' (i.e. original thought) using the videos, class discussion, and especially the readings, to construct a unique argument.

There is no page limit for this assignment. However, it is expected that you provide a succinct response to the above questions, without attempting to write a thesis on this subject. There are journals which are willing to accept such treatise on this topic -- I'll be glad to help you pursue such an undertaking.

PLEASE BE SURE TO E-MAIL me a copy of this assignment.