

Factual: What social circumstances led to the development of the Hip Hop style? / What has influenced the evolution of Hip Hop? (Not to modern hip hop)

Hip hop began in the 1970s and is one of the most lasting and influential art forms. At that time, South Bronx in New York City was ravaged by more than 12,000 arson fires a year, causing a slew of people to leave the city. The place was devastated by burned-down houses, and trash accumulated on the streets was never collected, which led to bad hygiene. As a result, the city transformed into a place called a ghetto, where minority gangs began roaming around the city, resulting in an upsurge in the number of violent cases.

This continued until 1973 when one person stood up to change the course of history; Afrika Bambaataa, who was a DJ from the South Bronx. He formed the Universal Zulu Nation (hip-hop awareness group), intending to elucidate the incidents occurring in the 'dark and hidden' side of America, such as discrimination, prejudice, marginalization, and racism against minority groups (Black and Latino people). The establishment of the group rendered a positive effect on the city; people started competing with dance and music rather than with violence. Thus, the high spirit led to the birth of hip-hop.

What did hip-hop give to people?

Hip-hop gave minorities the opportunity to freely express themselves, or in other words, they found the meaning of their existence. Their freedom wasn't guaranteed, so they created their own form of freedom through hip-hop.

The creation of hip-hop was also a way to rebel against the politics and society that desperately covered up the shadows of America and turned a blind eye to them. It was a platform to make people realize that those people are deluded by the ideal America, and need to face the reality of America.

As hip hop evolved, four elements came to place; graffiti painting, deejaying, MCing, and break dancing (B-boy, B-girl).

First came deejaying; it allowed the audience to engage in direct and regular interactions. It created a solid relationship between the DJ and the audience.

Next came the MCing or rapping, which is considered the most powerful element out of the four. Through spoken word, MCs have often conveyed messages about political, cultural, and social issues pretty directly without ambiguousness.

Third, came the graffiti painting, or “tagging” to be specific, which have arisen also from the Black and Latino neighborhoods in the New York City, alongside music and rapping. The main purpose for the minority taggers was to “tag their name” as many locations as possible to show people their existence and tell people, “I am here!”

Last came break-dancing. It started as a contest held on streets where people of different races showed off their dance moves and the person who had the coolest and complex moves was the winner. Breaking increased social interaction between different ethnicities, and allowed them to enjoy dancing without being concerned about the looks of each person.

Although all four elements already existed independently, the advent of hip hop has allowed people with all sorts of talent and vulnerable positions to come together and create the strongest culture.

Conceptual: Has there been a shift in the focus of hip-hop culture?

The culture of “hip-hop” was created by people who didn’t fit the stereotype of New Yorkers.

In the old-school era of rap, even the most financially stabilized rappers incorporated honesty in their songs. They would talk about the story of the ghetto life and the anthem of gangsters, which prevented hip-hop from joining the mainstream. They would also talk about what they are experiencing right at that moment as well as incidents occurring around them. For instance; violence, drug intake, poverty, crime, and abuse. At this time all rappers worked as a team even when they were not mutually connected, as they had the same solid goal to desperately achieve.

A few decades later, each rapper and its lyrics started gaining individuality. They no longer needed to write about issues or on their harsh life, but have started writing lyrics that addressed their desire in life; money, popularity, love, etc for instance. As hip-hop music greatly influenced the certain community and the world, there was no need for rappers to write about their ghetto life, as the concept “hi-hop music” successfully dispersed to a lot of countries and many white communities.

I have also noticed that not only that the rappers in the old-school era are conveying messages about the social, political, and cultural issues in their rap songs, but they are

also trying to introduce to the world what hip hop is, through using ambiguous, or sometimes obvious words. An example would be a phrase in "Fight The Power" by Public Enemy. "Music hittin' your heart 'cause I know you got soul!" "As the rhythm's designed to bounce" These phrases are describing what hip hop music is, and is depicting that the groundbreaking rap has got a lot of rhymes to increase rhythmicity.

Additionally, with rapid growth in social media and internet usage, rappers and artists gained the opportunity to keep in contact with their fans and followers around the globe, allowing them to know their preferences in music genre and the message conveyed in the song. This almost forcibly modified the rapper's soul and intention towards creating songs within his creativity and uniqueness, and he began worrying about the reputation of his followers or the popularity of his songs. As people began benefiting from the fact that they can reply to posts anonymously, they started criticizing what they thought was wrong, including rap songs as well. This then caused anxiety within rappers, which their purpose of rapping gradually changed to the desire of being liked by more and more people, plus gain admiration within his listeners. Everything was about how well a track's message resonates with the typical person, which leads to an increase in acceptance.

Dance:

People back then had block parties for dancing or most commonly, conducted hip-hop dance competitions on the streets. This not only was to complete the level of dance, but to show their identity and their style. Furthermore, because those dancers only cared about showing off their skills, their movement was off the beat of the BGM. On the other hand, modern dance happens to be danced on the stage and screen, and it became more of a dance style that the audience favors.

Debatable: Is hip hop today used for expressing one's self or for fame and fortune?

Hip-hop today is used for fame and fortune. Hip-hop in the old-school era served as a platform to communicate messages that *had* to be spread around the world, and that was the most powerful way that those people could think of. In this digital era, we have smartphones, mass media, and there are hundreds of ways to share or accumulate information. If I was to share a story and send awareness about discrimination, I simply have to type a persuasive story, click, and the story is posted on any social media. There is a possibility that the story will go viral, and therefore the platform "hip-hop"

became unnecessary and antiquated for the public. However, as hip-hop truly is cool and influential in a lot of ways, people still make use of it to brag about money, love, relationship, etc, or to gain popularity for the sake of money.