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11.07.2013

Politics of Hip-hop

Professor Love

Midterm Essay

When talking about the culture of African Americans in the United States during enslavement we must first define the meaning of culture. What can be considered a culture? Culture can be described as a set of customs, traditions, patterns, and habits common in a particular group of people in a specific environment. This encompasses all characteristics from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and the arts. In a new foreign land with unfamiliar language, religions, traditions, we as humans start looking for some familiarity, and this is where our cultural backgrounds come into play. LeRoy Jones, helps us understand how the first African Negros emerged. He explains that technically any African who was brought here and had no chance of leaving and from the very moment when his residence and life had being changed irreversibly can be considered an American Negro. Jones continues by explaining that, when the first slaves were brought to the New World, their customs, traditions, and habits we are not abandoned and left behind in Africa but rather helped shape and heavily influence a new culture, a culture for Africans in the New World or the United States of America, this now known as the African American culture. (Jones, 1)

One of the beginnings of African Negros in America is the introduction to blues, the reaction and subsequent relation of Negro’s experience in this new country in his own English is the beginning of Negro’s conscience in the American scene (Jones xii). It is important to stress here that the Blues genre was not part of the culture brought from Africa, but rather a new hybrid genre of music that was developed here in the Americas by combining the nature of traditional West African music where, there is a leader and a chorus, and the structure of the music is very similar to the Blues AAB pattern and the broken English language learned by the African-Negros. Through enslavement this combination of West African music of shouts, hollers, yells, spirituals, and ballets and European practices evolved into the Blues closer to what we know it as today.

- The interactions between owners and their slaves is what really caused the combining of