

IDEA 62 What is hip hop?

When Public Enemy first came out we used to say "Public Enemy, we're agents for the preservation of the Black mind. We're media hijackers." We worked to hijack the media and put it in our own form...Every time we checked for ourselves on the news they were locking us up anyway, so the interpretation coming from Rap was a lot clearer. That's why I call Rap the Black CNN. Rap is now a worldwide phenomenon. Rap is the CNN for young people all over the world.

~ Chuck D with Yusuf Jah, *Fight the Power: Rap, Race, and Reality*, 1997

When we ask, what is the state of Hiphop?, the quick answer is that Hiphop (the community) must mature to a level of self-government where it creates, regulates, and profits from its own elements, resources, and intellectual properties. The state of Hiphop is that Hiphop is being negatively exploited by the recording industries of America who manipulate its public image to sell the fantasy of pimpin', thuggin', hoein', flashin', flossin', and ballin' to predominantly young White Rap fans that are impressed by such behaviors. On the one hand it is Hiphop's rebellious image that attracts young people to it. However, on the other hand, the real lives of those that live around pimps, thugs, whores, drug dealers, etc., are far from being just fantasies of defiance that you can turn off and on when you want to feel sexy or macho! The real lives of those that are affected by injustice, lawlessness, and corruption created (and continue to create) Hiphop as a way out of oppression.

~ KRS-ONE, *Ruminations*, 2003