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OWNING MY MASTERS: AN ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

Hip-Hop Studies, while pushing boundaries in many respects, particularly the intersections of many different disciplines, reproduces certain forms of—and assumptions about—knowledge production. Additionally, some conventions in the discipline and certain types of scholarly performances of Hip-Hop scholarship render blackness pathological – even in the service of combating what might be understood to be anti-blackness, by virtue of attempts to confront the notion that Hip-Hop culture is, in fact, deviant, bad, or unworthy of study – and are complicit in the denial of what P. Khalil Saucier and Tyron Woods describe as “black sentient humanity and the complex interplay between culture and historical context[1]” in the field [276]. “Owning My Masters: The Rhetorics of Rhymes & Revolutions” – delivered entirely in audio form as a collection of rap and spoken word recordings – serves as one of many possible explorations and analyses of this broader problem. Some important questions to consider are:

1. What are the roles of Hip-Hop performance in knowledge production and what types of ideological work is being done by scholarly engagements with Hip-Hop Performance?
2. How can Hip-Hop performance resist [push beyond] the limits set upon it by academic convention?
3. How does one more effectively approach Hip-Hop academically in a manner that speaks through [one of] its form[s] and doesn't reinscribe the “oppression” the form seeks to subvert?
4. How can we responsibly deal with the issue[s] of access for producers of cultural products like Rap music/lyrics?
5. How should [or How/Should] our considerations of responsibility regarding access change if the aforementioned cultural products are created by people who have not achieved the notoriety of Nas and Jay-Z – artists whose works are studied in academic institutions but would likely not qualify to study or teach at those institutions [both men dropped out of high school before their rap careers began]?

Work Cited

Saucier, P. Khalil and Tyron Woods. "Hip Hop Studies in Black." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* vol. 26 Issue 2-3 (2014): 268-294.

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