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*African Americans Struggle for  
Equality:  
Hip Hop as a form of Resistance*

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Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Literature  
And Civilization

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated to our parents for their  
endless love, support and encouragement;  
unfortunately, they don't understand English so they  
won't be able to read our work.

Thanks, God!

## **Abstract**

Africans in the land of freedom of Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness struggled ages to be considered as Americans. Therefore, they were forever cruelly discriminated and segregated for one reason that is their "Dark color of skin». Thus, the white supremacy over the black African Americans caused the latter ones to make political and cultural movements including Civil Rights Movements, Black Panther Party and the Harlem Renaissance to gain the equal rights of freedom as the whites. Music as well was a means by which the African Americans protested against the inequality and injustice in white America, precisely Hip Hop music.

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## **List of Acronyms**

AAVE: African American Vernacular English

BPP: the Black Panther Party

CORE: Congress of Racial Equality

DJ: Disc jockey

FBI: Federal Bureau of Investigation

KKK: Ku Klux Klan

MC: Master of Ceremonies

NAACP: National Association for the Advanced Colored People

NOI: Nation of Islam

R&B: Rhythm and Blue

SCLC: Student Christian leadership Conference

SNCC: Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee

US: United States

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION



## General Introduction

Being African American has never been easy in a country that believes in the white supremacy. From their first arrival, African Americans faced a numbers of obstacles and challenges served by the white American to keep them at the bottom of American society. In response to the oppression as well as the discrimination, the blacks fought in both using violence and nonviolence political movements and protesting to get their rights and freedom. The cultural rebellion was another form of resisting used by blacks to show their own distinct identity, which can be seen in their: language, fashion, literature, and cinema, however, the most prominent one is music.

From the beginning, black music provide a unique perspective on the meaning of being black in the United States, starting with the slave spirituals and work songs that help the slaves to communicate with each other and led some of them toward freedom, followed by different and range genres that show and reflect the black identity within .however the most powerful black music genre that reflects the lives of African Americans and described their daily struggles is Hip Hop music.

This study makes a broad attempt to answer the following questions:

- ✓ How were black Americans oppressed by the whites Americans?
- ✓ How did African Americans resist and fight for their equality and freedom?
- ✓ How Hip-Hop music reflect the African Americans struggles?

In order to answer the questions above, this work was divided into two chapters:

The first chapter will start with tracing back the origins of African Americans, their lives during slavery, the racial segregation that they faced after the abolition of slavery and how they were brutally abused by the whites. In addition, the chapter will look at the political movements done by blacks to gain equal rights and how blacks used culture to fight back against white America.

The second chapter will start with a historical background of African American music, secondly, it will study hip-hop music and its role in resisting racism and brutality, thirdly, the chapter will analyze some rap songs that reflect the struggles of African Americans, finally, it will give the impact of hip-hop on Black Americans.

This study has two purposes, the first one is to show the racial oppression faced by African Americans from their first arrival to the United States as slaves until the present day, and the fight that the blacks had to retain their freedom and be treated the same way as the whites. The second purpose of the work is to recount the history of African American music while focusing on Hip Hop as the leading tool that reflects the lives of African Americans.

**CHAPTER ONE:**

**STRUGGLES OF BEING BLACK IN WHITE**

**AMERICA**

# **Chapter 1: Struggles of Being Black in White America**

## **1.1 Introduction:**

The life of African Americans in the United States was and still is very challenging and hard. From their first arrival to the new world as slaves, African Americans struggle with all types of discrimination, racism, and brutality by the white Americans. In this first chapter, the reader will be firstly provided with a historical background of the origin of African Americans, a review of slavery, racial segregation, and violence confronted by them. The second part of the chapter shows how African Americans revolted against white Americans to gain their identity, firstly politically, by showing the African Americans movements and political activists, and the second is cultural, by giving an insight to African Americans language, music, cinema, fashion, literature and the Harlem Renaissance Movement.

## **1.2 Slavery in The United States:**

Slavery was a brutal and dehumanizing system that African Americans faced in their first arrival to the American land, where they faced all types of racism and discrimination from white Americans.

### **1.2.1 The Origin of African Americans:**

African Americans also referred to as “black Americans”, “colored”, “people of colors”, and “Negros», the ethnic group are living in the United States and descended from families that have a total or partial ancestry from Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of African Americans were slaves who brought to the New World mainly from Africa, including, Senegambia (the coast between present day Senegal and Gambia), the Upper Guinea Coast (Sierra Leone, Guinea), the Gold Coast (Ghana), the Bight of Biafra

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<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "African Americans," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia,[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=African\\_Americans&oldid=836367017](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=African_Americans&oldid=836367017) (accessed April 14, 2018).

(eastern Nigeria, Cameroon), and west-central Africa (Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon).they were brought to against their will and forced to leave their home land ,families, and culture to become slaves for the white Europeans in the 13 colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Today the African Americans According to the US Census Bureau's represent approximately 12, 6% of the US populations which make them the largest minority group after the white Americans.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.2.2 The Emergence of African American Slavery and the Reason behind It:**

Slavery had existed since the early history of humankind, from ancient civilizations including Rome, Greece, Egypt, and China to the present day, all these states practiced slavery in one form or the other. Slavery played an essential part of human life especially once people began to form permanent agricultural societies, which led them to search for forced labor to do the hard work.<sup>4</sup>

In 1492, Christopher Columbus, An Italian adventurer, discovered America. Soon after, numerous Europeans took a trip to America where they found a rich and productive land, and that led them to settle and build a nation there. As they started practicing agriculture, they realized that they needed a workforce to help them. At first, they started using the Native Americans to work in fields and mines but this didn't last too long, because most of the "Red Indians" were dying from Europeans diseases or escaped due to their knowledge of the terrain, and that led the Europeans to search for another source of labours, and the Africans

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<sup>2</sup> Walter C Rucker, *The River Flows on: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America (Antislavery, Abolition, and the Atlantic World)*,(Louisiana State University Press,2006), 157.

<sup>3</sup> United States Population 2018, *World Population Review*, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/united-states-population/>, (Date Accessed: April 14, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Steven Mintz, *African American Voices*,( Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons,2009),2.

were the perfect choice since they had protection from diseases, used to a tropical climate and had agriculture experiences, and that was the beginning of slavery in the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Slavery in what would become the United States started in 1619 when a Dutch ship brought about twenty enslaved Africans to the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia. Over the next 200 years, more than 350,000 slaves were captured and transported to the American colonies; they were mainly used in order to work in the production of tobacco crops and cotton. The demand of enslaved extremely increased throughout the 17th and the 18th centuries with the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 as well as the growing demand for the product in Europe. Slavery became hence the central economic foundation of America, especially in the southern part.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.2.3 The Living Conditions of Slaves in America:**

The period of slavery was a very difficult time for the African Americans; they were treated brutally and degraded by their own masters. Their sufferance started when they first stepped foot on the slave ships coming to America and continued during their whole life.

The working conditions of slaves was a complete torture, the field slaves were forced to work more than 14 hours a day, from sunup to sundown, where they picked cotton, sugar, rice, and tobacco, and at harvest time, they toiled 18hours a day. For house slaves, things were somehow better than the one of fields' workers, they did the domestic work where they took care of the master house and his family by babysitting, cooking and cleaning but this was not easy at it seems since they did this all day long with no rest.<sup>7</sup>

The slave housing conditions were not good either. Most of them lived in over crammed rooms with little or no furniture, beds were usually made out of straw and old rags with one

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<sup>5</sup> Steven Mintz, *African American Voices*,14.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 15

<sup>7</sup> Deborah Gray White, *Let My People Go: African Americans 1804-1860*, (New York [u.a.], Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 27-28.

blanket for covering. Slaves usually ate the meager rations mostly of cornmeal, pork, and molasses, they were barely supplied with decent cloth, and with that, slaves were forbidden to learn how to read and write.<sup>8</sup>

Slaves were mostly punished by their owners both mentally and physically for a variety of reasons, such as trying to escape, not working hard enough, talking during work or using their native language, stealing from their masters and sometimes they were punished just because they were slaves. The punishment included, whipping, gagged, branding, being sold or being hung and left to die and much more, for female's slaves they were constantly raped and sexually abused.<sup>9</sup>

The life of African Americans slaves was filled with unending hardship, suffering, pain, and poverty ever since they were brought to America. But this anguish did not last long where a group of activists started a movement to change the situation and put an end to enslavement.

#### **1.2.4 The Abolishing of Slavery in America:**

From the first days of slavery in the United States, Slaves did not accept the dehumanization that they were subjected to by the whites. In one form or another, they showed a resistance toward slavery and slave owners but their resistances mostly end up with failures until the emergence of the Abolitionist movements.

During the period between 1830s until 1870s, the abolition movement also known as "the antislavery movement" was born to eradicate slavery in the United States, led by free blacks as Frederick Douglass who is well known for his speech "What to a slave is the 4th of July?" where he pointed out to the differences between blacks and whites in America, and

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<sup>8</sup> The Living Conditions of Slaves in the American South, History on the Net , <https://www.historyonthenet.com/living-conditions-of-slaves/>,( Accessed April 14, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Slave Punishments in the Antebellum American South, History on the Net, <https://www.historyonthenet.com/black-peoples-of-america-slave-punishments/>, (Accessed April 14, 2018).

white supporters such as William Lloyd Garrison, the founder of the abolitionist newspaper called “*The Liberator*”( 1831) that educated Northerners about the slaves conditions in the south, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of the famous novel “*Uncle Tom Cabin*”(1852) which gave a further insight to what was really happening to the African American slaves. These abolitionists as they were called had the same goal which was giving a complete and immediate end to slavery and gave the African Americans the basic liberties that the whites had.<sup>10</sup>

The Abolition Movement ideas turned out to be increasingly prominent and accepted in the North which supported the abolition of slaves unlike the South was against it. This contributed to regional conflicts between North and South leading up to the Civil War. During the Civil War (1861-1865)., President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) established the “Emancipation Proclamation” on the first of January, 1863, a document that gave freedoms for all slaves, in which he declared that “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free”.<sup>11</sup> Even though this did not free all the slaves immediately, it set the precedence of enslaving blacks. On December 6, 1865, the Congress added the 13 amendment to the American Constitution to eradicate slavery from the Americas.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Walter Hazen, *The Abolitionist Movement: American Black History*, (n.p: Milliken publishing company, 2015) 15-16.

<sup>11</sup> 1862 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lincoln-issues-emancipation-proclamation> (Accessed Mai 5, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Abolitionist Movement, History Net, <http://www.historynet.com/abolitionist-movement>, (accessed April 16,2018)



### **1.3 African Americans in the Post-Abolition Era:**

After the abolition of slavery in 1863, life did not get better for freed slaves. Whites were against the idea of being equal with the African Americans, which led them to form laws to limit the right and restricting the freedom of African Americans, the Black codes and Jim Crows laws were among them, discrimination laws were not the only challenge that the blacks faced, the white also formed a supremacy group called the Ku Klux Klan to attack the Freed slaves soon after the white adopted police brutality as new means for oppressing blacks.

#### **1.3.1 The Black Codes:**

After slavery and the Civil War were over and the Freedmen's Bureau emerged<sup>13</sup>, the South felt that they would lose control on the freedman, so they created the black codes to keep control over the black Americans.

The black codes were a series of laws passed by the legislatures of the Southern states of America like Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, between 1865 and 1866 during the presidency of Andrew Johnson(1808- 1875). They included laws of segregation, regulation, owning property and criminal punishment.<sup>14</sup>

Each state in America had its own laws and some laws were common, among these states. The freedmen could not assemble without the presence of a white person that means when a free black American wanted to meet in any place even in churches there must be a white person among them. Another law defined "Race by blood"; where the presence of any amount of black blood made one black i.e. Any African American or African American by blood must obey the rules of the Black Codes. Another law segregated Public facilities, where blacks were widely prohibited from entering hotels, restaurants, parks, and they were

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<sup>13</sup> The Freedmen's Bureau also recognized as the Bureau of Refugees was a government organization set up on March 3 1865, to help freed slaves get education, job, HealthCare, and homes.

<sup>14</sup> Linda, Alchin. Black Codes, American-historama.org, <http://www.american-historama.org/1866-1881-reconstruction-era/black-codes.htm>,(accessed April 17, 2018).

excluded from other public spaces. Reading and writing also were not allowed for free blacks. Freedmen were assumed to be agricultural workers and their duties and hours were tightly regulated. And the violators of these laws were subjected to whipping or branding, and every person infringed these laws got punished.<sup>15</sup>

Even the Southerners did their best to keep freedom far from the African Americans the Black Codes lasted about two years and ended after the 14th and 15th amendments were added by the Congress.

### **1.3.2 Jim Crow Laws:**

The origin of the name “Jim Crow” goes back to the 1800s, when a white actor named Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice mocked the African Americans by playing the role of an old black man by blackened his face using burnt cork and dressed up in tattered cloth and started singing and dancing in a foolish way to an old African song called “jump, Jim crow”. His act soon became known among the whites who started using the term “Jim Crow” to insult the blacks, soon after the Jim Crow laws spread.<sup>16</sup>

The Jim Crow Laws were a series of segregation laws and customs that were practised mostly in Southern America between the end of the Reconstruction Era<sup>17</sup> and the mid-1950s; they were formatted to enforce the racial segregation and required the separation of the whites from the blacks in public places such as schools, restaurants, buses, and waiting rooms, and it was completely forbidden for the blacks to go to beaches, swimming pools, parks and nearly all hospitals.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, Earl Lewis, *To Make Our World Anew: Volume I: A History of African Americans to 1880* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000), 218.

<sup>16</sup> Leslie V. Tischauser, *Jim Crow Laws*, (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2012), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> The Reconstruction era: refers to the efforts made by the United States between the period 1865 and 1877 to reform the political, legal, and economic systems in the states that had break away from the Union and help the South become part of the union again.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 1

### **1.3.3 The Knight of the Ku Klux Klan:**

After the Civil War ended, Slavery was officially abolished and many freedmen got the same right as the white people, this triggered outrage among the white Southerners who believed in white supremacy which led to the creation of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

The KKK was founded in Pulaski, Tennessee in December 1865, by six Civil War Veterans including, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Richard R. Reed, and John B. Kennedy. Who started the white supremacy group and called it the Ku Klux Klan. The first Klansman started wearing masks and went in night rides to scare citizens by pretending to be the ghosts of dead Confederate soldiers, Soon after, the group grew in members, and soon spread to almost every Southern state. The activities of the new members went beyond scaring people mostly African Americans; they started using violence against them.<sup>19</sup>

The KKK soon became the African Americans new nightmare, and started treating the safety of the blacks outside and even inside their home. They used also different types of violence against the blacks, such as beating, whipping and torture; and worse of it was lynching, after that, they hanged the dead body in the town as a message for the others. Furthermore, the Klansmen used to burn and bomb the black churches and property. The bloody organization committed many massacres in history; for example On Sept. 15, 1963 bombe that caused the death of four black girls in Birmingham, and also on June 21, 1964, the white knight murdered one black man and two civil right workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi.<sup>20</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan is one of America's most seasoned and dreaded gangs driven by the fantasy of a world with just a single race. They have been for more than 130 years, and go on in America's society nowadays.

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<sup>19</sup> Ann Heinrichs, *The Ku Klux Klan* (Chanhassen, MN:Child's World, 2003), 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> Ku Klux Klan: A History of Racism, Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/20110228/ku-klux-klan-history-racism>,(accessed: April 17, 2018)

### **1.3.4 African Americans Facing the Police Brutality:**

Even after the slavery was abolished, the life of African Americans did not change for the better as they wished. Blacks still confront prejudice as an interminable issue in America; blacks were treated unfairly, especially by the law enforcement. However they were more likely to be targeted and badly treated by the police than the whites.

Throughout time, the racial disparities towards the African Americans grow whilst police officers used undue forces when they caught a black person even if the charge did not need such forces. The police brutality increased more and more in the twenties century. In addition to the beating and the harassment; they started to use deadly forces; in fact, the racist thinking led them to murder the innocent blacks, even children who did not commit crimes,<sup>21</sup> and the best examples that show the injustice of policies are the death of Tamir Rice a little boy of twelve years old who was playing alone in the snow with a fake gun, he suddenly got fired by two police officers, on November 22, 2014, and died on Sunday, November 23.<sup>22</sup> Also, the murder of Deaunta Terrell Farrow, a black kid of 12 years old too, from West Memphis, Ark. the boy was out with his cousin when he died after receiving two bullets because he was carrying a toy gun.<sup>23</sup>

To conclude, the injustice of police against African Americans existed before and kept on increasing throughout years showing the hatred that some white people have against the black Americans.

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<sup>21</sup> Renita, Seabrook, Wyatt-Nichol, Heather, *The Ugly Side of America: Institutional Oppression and Race.* "Journal of Public Management & Social Policy": (University of Baltimore, 2016) 10.

<sup>22</sup> Tamir Rice: police release video of 12-year-old's fatal shooting – video, the Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2014/nov/26/cleveland-video-tamir-rice-shooting-police>, (Accessed: April 17, 2018).

<sup>23</sup> West Memphis, Arkansas: Police Killing of 12-Year-Old DeAunta Terrell Farrow, Revcom.us, <http://revcom.us/a/096/deaunta-farrow-en.html>, (accessed April 17, 2018).

## **1.4 African American Fight for Freedom:**

From the first days of slavery period, the white forced the African Americans to give up on their language, behavior, rights, and culture, basically creating a slave person with no identity. After the abolition of slavery, black Americans led a revolution against the white, both politically and culturally to gain right and to build their own identity.

### **1.4.1 Political Movements:**

African Americans organized two famous political movements that helped them to achieve to some extent equality with the whites. The first one was the Civil Right movement, which believed in using peaceful protesting to gain equality, and the second one was The Black Panther Party that used violence or threat of violence to accomplish their goal.

#### **1.4.1.1 Civil Right Movement:**

After 100 years from the Emancipation Proclamation, the African Americans life had not changed from the slavery period. The white continued to consider the African Americans as second-class citizens and the Southern state government passed the Jim Crow laws that impose the racial segregation on the black. Eventually, decided to take a stand to maintain their right and that led to the birth of the civil right movement.

The whites treated the slaves as “inferior” and that led the blacks to form organizations to achieve their goals, such as the ”National Association for the Advanced Colored People” (NAACP) in 1909, the “Congress Of Racial Equality” (CORE) in 1942, and, “Student Christian leadership Conference” (SCLC) in 1957, than the “Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee” (SNCC) in 1960. This radical modification in African American’s life called The Civil Right Movement.<sup>24</sup>

The Civil Right Movement rose almost, one hundred years after the Civil War nearly in the 1950s and 1960s. It was the period when African American s consciousness rose and

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<sup>24</sup> Jill Karson, *The Civil Right Movement*, (Farmington Hills, MI:Greenhaven Press,2005),19-128.

began the fight for equality. However, the main causes that led to the emergence of this movement were a series of events. Among them, Linda's brown matter a black girl who wanted to attend white school instead of black ones where there are a better opportunity, it was known by "brown vs. board of education 1954" in the same year the supreme court eliminated public school segregation.

The other one was the "Montgomery bus boycotts 1955", because of the arrestment of Rosa Parks, a black tailor who rejected to give her seat to a white person. As a reply to this, racial rule African Americans and their allies began the Montgomery bus boycott and refused to use it. This campaign ended after a year and 20 days until the segregation on buses made illegal on December 21, 1956.

Another civil right movement showed up, which was the Civil Right Act of 1964 signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973); this act prohibited segregation, Jim Crow laws, racial and gender discrimination, this act was a push to the NAACP and other organizations; it helped to ban discrimination in courts. Voting rights act of 1965 came out with the idea that citizens cannot reject the right to vote according to their race.<sup>25</sup>

The turning point in African Americans life was due to the direct actions and the nonviolent methods they used to attain their object, they gain people's attention and motivated them to participate in the civil right movement, the movement for which they have achieved many victories, from desegregation to suffrage without obstacles.

#### **1.4.1.2 THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY:**

During the Civil Right Movement, African Americans saw that Martin Luther King, JR nonviolence strategies was not too successful in getting their right, therefore, some decided to create an organization that uses violence to gain freedom it was the BPP.

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<sup>25</sup> Karson, *the Civil Right Movement*, 11, 13-14.

The Black Panther Party of self-defense as it was originally called was founded in the late October of 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland, California who adopted Malcolm X philosophy of self-defense. Its main purpose was to protect the black community from police brutality. It starts spreading in the United States after the member of the BPP decided to publish a newspaper called “The Black Panther” that help in adding more members to the organization. To achieve their goals, the group adopted “the Ten Point Plan”, a document that addressed the major issues faced by black community: land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice, and peace.<sup>26</sup>

The Black Panther Party members were involved in many political activities using both violence and nonviolence methods. Party briefly merged with student non-violent coordinating committee (SNCC), also in 1967, they created a protest in front of California state capital against the state’s attempt to outlaw carrying the loaded weapon in public. But the BPP didn’t always use peaceful ways to bring awareness to their cause, the party members were involved informing armed patrols that monitoring the police actions in black neighborhoods that usually end up with deadly shootouts. Furthermore, they stated a number of popular community social programs that included: breakfast programs, clothing distribution, medical care service, Grocery Giveaways and others.<sup>27</sup>

Most of African Americans did not support the BPP violence ways and most of its leaders were arrested and that resulted in it collapsed by the early 1970s but it made it impact in the black history as the government consider as J. Edgar Hoover stated, "the Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to internal security of the country"(1969).

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<sup>26</sup> Duncan, Garrett Albert. “Black Panther Party.”britannica.com<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Panther-Party> (accessed April 19, 2018)

<sup>27</sup> Shirley, Williams. “Black Panther Party.” marxists.org.<https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/> (accessed April 20, 2018)

## **1.4.2 African Americans Political Activists:**

Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X are probably the most powerful African American leaders of 20th century, both men wanted to improve the position of black people in the United States using different philosophies, while Martin Luther King Jr wanted nonviolence ways to achieve equality, Malcolm in the other hand believed that white racism had to be tackled with force.

### **1.4.2.1 Martin Luther King, Jr:**

Martin Luther King, Jr a Baptist minister, the civil rights movement notorious supporter, best known for his inspiring speech “I Have a Dream”, considered as one of most famous leaders of the twentieth century.

Born as Michael King Jr in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929; he grew up in a middle-class family; martin’s father and grandfather were both pastors in Baptist church while his mother was a teacher. When he was twelve years old he committed suicide because of his grandmother’s death after a heart attack. King attended Booker high school and due to his diligence he overstepped two grades, and at the age of fifteen in 1944 he joined the Morehouse College and graduated from it in 1948 with a level in sociology and then he got bachelor of divinity degree in 1951 and after he moved to Boston University to work on his doctorate there he met his future wife Coretta Scott, they held marriage on June 1953 and they gave birth to four children, king became priest of church of Montgomery 1954 and later he received his degree in 1955.<sup>28</sup>

From his childhood King was influenced by the Indian great leader Mohandas Gandhi who believed in facing violence with the peace he took this idea and applied it in America where there were violence and inequality against blacks. And during the period when he was

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<sup>28</sup>“Martin Luther King Jr.” Biography.com.<https://www.biography.com/people/martin-luther-king-jr-9365086> ( accessed April 21, 2018)



a pastor in Montgomery the arrestment of Rosa Parks happened and the Montgomery Bus Boycott started under his rule. King used nonviolent way to respond to this unfair treatment and because of his participation in this event he got arrested and the segregation on buses was made illegal. King was named the leader of the organization the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) that was created in 1957. On April 1963 King ruled Birmingham march to desegregate race in public the period when he wrote the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" on August 28 of the same year he delivered his famous speech "I Have a Dream" the speech that inspired African Americans, American, and people from all over the world and aids African Americans to achieve the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act 1965.<sup>29</sup>

King was the father of nonviolent protest methods due to this clever technique he encouraged people to join the civil rights movement helping the black community to win equality in white society. And he kept on defending people's rights until he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.<sup>30</sup>

#### **1.4.2.2 Malcolm X:**

Malcolm X was an African American Muslim minister, public speaker, and human right activist and one of the most controversial black character in the American history.

Born Malcolm Little, on May 19, 1925, in Omaha, Nebraska in a period ruled by the violence of the KKK, he grew up an orphan child after his dad was killed by a white racist and soon after his father died, his mother was sent to a mental hospital. Although he was a good student, he dropped out of school because his teacher told him; he can't achieve anything in his life because of his color after that Malcolm turned into the life of the street which got him arrested in 1946 for larceny and breaking and sentenced to ten years in prison.

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<sup>29</sup> Martin, Kelly. "Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr." Thoughtco.com.  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/martin-luther-king-jr-p3-104278> ( accessed April 22, 2018)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

While he was in prison he joined the Nation of Islam (NOI) and soon after he got out he became its minister and started his role in the making of African American history.<sup>31</sup>

Malcolm X had a notable impact on the history of the African Americans. He was both the minister of the NOI and an activist in the Civil Rights Movement; his ideas were completely the opposite of that of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s peaceful one. Malcolm X believed in black supremacy, he preached separatism and violence against white oppression.<sup>32</sup> For him, the black needed to build their own nation, and an economy separate from the white, he mainly helped to embrace the ideas of Black Nationalism into the African American community and later on his philosophy of self-defense influenced the Black Panther Party founder. His ideas about the white and race separation were changed and he became a more peaceful activist after he visited Mecca. His beliefs and ideas eventually got him killed, on February 21, 1965, Malcolm was shot 15 times when he was about to deliver a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan. He was only 39 years old.<sup>33</sup>

### **1.5 African American Cultural Rebellion against White America:**

When Africans first arrived in America as slaves, they brought over their own cultures and traditions, followed by the struggle with the attempt of the whites to destroy anything that related them to Africa, African Americans developed and created a brand new culture that gathered both the African as well as the American one, for the Blacks, the African American culture was a way to show their identity, and revolt against the white American.

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<sup>31</sup> Jack Rummel, *Malcolm X: Black American of Achievement* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005) 16-40.

<sup>32</sup> Lawrence, A. Mamiya. "Malcolm X." *britannica.com*.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Malcolm-X> (accessed April 24, 2018).

<sup>33</sup> Rummel, *Malcolm X: Black American of Achievement*, 50, 86, 93-94.

### 1.5.1 Harlem Renaissance Movement:

The life of African Americans had changed radically in the period between 1920 and 1930 where there was a huge cultural explosion that has an impact on American culture and world in general.

Overall Harlem neighborhood has no specific geographical boundaries; it is located in the northern part of New York City. Manhattan precinct, <sup>34</sup>Harlem was the destination of many blacks fleeing the south from Jim Crow laws searching for better opportunities and life in the North. It was the area that has contributed significantly to the blowing of African American history in America particularly in politics, arts, culture, and music.<sup>35</sup> However Harlem Renaissance or “the New Negro Movement” is considered to be a turning point in the life of black community, this era was characterized by the detonation of Negro creativity where many writers and actors appeared and wrote on such themes as absorption, isolation, and unity, a productive poets as Claude McKay, Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes, and authors like Zora Neale Hurston.

besides literary works music was a dominant aspect in Harlem renaissance movements in which this period knew the birth of blues and jazz which were most celebrated kinds of music at that time,<sup>36</sup> and from the prolific trumpeters and jazz singers Daniel Louis Armstrong and other musicians; a type of music that attracted not only the black but the white as well.

<sup>37</sup>The Harlem Renaissance was an important motive for blacks, it helped them to gain a place within American culture and society; it made an occasion for them to express themselves artistically and build an identity for the black community.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, “Harlem.” britannica.com.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Harlem-New-York> (accessed April 21, 2018)

<sup>35</sup> Tom, Sara, St. *James encyclopedia of popular culture* (Detroit, St. James Press, 1999) 105.

<sup>36</sup> The Harlem Renaissance.”ushistory.org. <http://www.ushistory.org/us/46e.asp> (accessed 28, 2018)

<sup>37</sup> Tom, Sara, St. *James encyclopedia of popular culture* (Detroit, St. James Press, 1999) 115.

<sup>38</sup> Cary D, Paul, *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (Rutledge, 1 edition, 2004) 88.

### **1.5.2 African American Vernacular English:**

Many African Americans speak and use a form of English that is to some extent different from Standard English, it called African American Vernacular English (AAVE) also called “Black Vernacular English”, “Negro Dialect”, “Ghetto talk” or “Ebonics”.<sup>39</sup>

There are two dominant assumptions on the origin of African American Vernacular English, the dialect hypothesis which suggested that during slavery, slaves start learning English slowly and mostly incorrect and that resulted in a bad English full of mistakes which have been passed down through generations. The second assumption is the Creole hypothesis that claims that African slaves firstly learned Pidgin English before leaving Africa and after the arrival into the new world, the African slave need a language to communicate with their master and other slaves from other western African parts and that led to the birth of Creole language a combination of Standard English and a mix of African languages.<sup>40</sup>

Ebonics is spoken by millions of Americans throughout the United States; not only black people but also nonblack use it too. Although it not taught at school is still used in general conversation, movies, music and even books .for black American s it, not just a dialect or language it is part of their cultural identity.

### **1.5.3 Literature:**

African American literature existed in the United States long time ago nearly in the 17th century. The first black writers were slaves, as the poet “Phillis Wheatley” a slave girl who wrote Poems on Various Subjects, published it in 1773.<sup>41</sup>And there are other slavery narratives works written by blacks who portrayed their personal life, their suffering, their

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<sup>39</sup> Taylor, Jones. “What is AAVE?” languagejones.com. <http://www.languagejones.com/blog-1/2014/6/8/what-is-aave> (accessed April 30, 2018).

<sup>40</sup> Larry D Purnell, Transcultural health care,(Philadelphia:F.A. Davis,2013),93.

<sup>41</sup> “African-American Literature”.Questia.com. <https://www.questia.com/library/literature/literature-of-specific-groups/african-american-literature/african-american-literature> (accessed March 29, 2018)

struggle for freedom with the white owners, slaves who flee to the northern area however their literature concentrate on the topics of slavery and the fight for independence such as the work of Frederick Douglass a slave who left the south heading to the north searching for liberty which revealed in his autobiography “My Bondage and My Freedom”(1855). African American authors carry on writings after the abolition of slavery by describing the situations of the black community in America and it is dominant as the pre-civil era as an example the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and others.

Later on, The Harlem Renaissance (1920-1940) appeared as “the Negro movement” a period when the African Americans writings began to attract not only the black but all American society. Then the Civil Rights movement rose in the United States and influenced black writers who inserted problems of race and segregation into their literary works such as the two celebrated authors of that era James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison this period was known by the involvement of women into writing literature also. By the late of the 19th-century black works and literature were considered as a genre in American literature.<sup>42</sup>

The African American writers kept on upgrading the level of black literature were many of them became popular in the whole world, and allow them to win many awards like the “Nobel Prize, in addition to the authors mentioned before there are a long unfinished list of celebrated black writers and poets most notably: Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright, Alex Haley, Maya Angelou, and Alice Walker.<sup>43</sup> After taking a place in American literature, their books became internationally known, among these popular novels: “Kindred”

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<sup>42</sup> African American literature. Cs.mcgill.ca. [http://cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/a/African\\_American\\_literature.htm](http://cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/a/African_American_literature.htm) (accessed May 1,2018).

<sup>43</sup> 10 Black Authors Everyone Should Read”. pbs.org. <http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/10-black-authors-to-read/#.WqxLJmrOXIV>(accessed May 2, 2018).

(1979) “Beloved” (1987) “The Color Purple” (1982) “Native Son”(1940) “The Souls of Black Folk”(1903).<sup>44</sup>

#### **1.5.4 African American Cinema:**

From the beginning of film’s industry in the late 1890s, The African Americans from the start were portrayed as Donald Bogle declared “Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks”.<sup>45</sup>

They were firstly excluded from playing any role in movies, instead white actors used to blackface to portray a black character, such as in the controversial movies “the birth of a nation “ (1915)<sup>46</sup>, and years after when the black finally got a chance to act in movies they took the role of characters that give a negative stereotypes of the African American men and women such as the actor Stepin Fetchit who played the roles of lazy, slow-witted, and coon characters also the black female actress Hattie McDaniel , she played the character of Mammy in the famous movie “ Gone with the Wind” (1940) although she won an Oscar for the role she perceived a negative view from the African Americans who saw her role offensive to the black women.<sup>47</sup> Following this racist role, the black formed their own film production companies; the first was created by Emmet J. Scott in 1915 and two brothers, George and Noble Johnson in 1916 and soon after the African American s start gaining more respect in the movies industry.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Best African American Books” goodreads.com.

[https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/193.Best\\_African\\_American\\_Books](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/193.Best_African_American_Books) ( accessed March 14, 2018).

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Cripps, Slow Fade to Black: the Negro in American film,(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993),9.

<sup>46</sup> You young, Lee. “A History of Black face in Movies: From Birth of a Nation to White Chicks”. huffingtonpost.com.[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/01/history-of-blackface\\_n\\_4175051.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/01/history-of-blackface_n_4175051.html) (accessed March 24, 2018).

<sup>47</sup> Padgett, Kenneth. “History of Black Face”. black-face.com. <http://black-face.com/> (accessed March 13, 2018)

<sup>48</sup> Keller, Lenn. “Black American Cinema:1915 – 1982”. lennkeller.com. <http://www.lennkeller.com/blackfilm.html> ( accessed May 5, 2018).

In the 1990s, there was a rise of a type of African movies known as hood films which tackle the aspect of urban African American society from hip-hop music to street gangs, racial discrimination and poverty and the most famous movies in this genre are: “Boyz n the hood” (1991),” Friday” (1995), “Menace II Society”(1993) and “Juice” (1992).<sup>49</sup>

Nowadays, the blacks are producing and acting in roles that show both the good and the bad side of the African American men and women. And getting respect not only from the black people but the white people as well.

### **1.5.5 The Evolution of African American Fashion:**

during the period of slavery, the African Americans were forced to wear a certain form of dress by their owners , the basic clothing for slave was loose fitting clothes made of coarse wool or as was call “ Negro Cloth “ , the men fields hands generally dress up in shirts , breeches or trousers and for the female , shifts , petticoat and jacket.<sup>50</sup> After slavery, the Black starts developing their own clothing style, to identify them as African American people.

Through the Harlem Renaissance, The African Americans start having well-paid jobs for both men and women and that led to a clothing changing, black men start wearing Zoot suit which consists of the long oversize jacket and baggy pant and added hats made off feather, long pocket watches and handkerchief to complete the look. For the women, it was the period where they show their glamour and elegant by dressing in cocktail and flapper dresses with rhinestones with long silk gloves and pearls also they added high heels shoes and fur coat.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Paula J. Massood,Black city cinema: African <sup>2</sup>American Urban Experiences in Film (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> History of American Fashion”. shmoop.com. <https://www.shmoop.com/history-american-fashion/race.html> (accessed March 20, 2018).

<sup>51</sup> Fashion of the Harlem Renaissance”, YouTube video, 1:59, February 29, 2016<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMmjFB6l3MU>.

African Americans continued to wear and dress in classy look until hip-hop was introduced, and effected fashion trends among blacks especially the youths, Between the 1970s to 1980S, African Americans firstly start wearing tracksuits, bomber jackets, sportswear with sneakers of popular brands like Adidas Superstar, Puma and Taylor All-stars, Timberland and they added big flashy chains and gold Grill to symbolize wealth. In the 1990s, black style changes little with the emergence of baggy jeans, construction boots, and baseball hats; also there was the trend of retro jerseys influenced by the TV show “Fresh Prince of Bell-air “starring will smith. In the 2000s, the black begin dressing in graphics and colorful sweatshirts and overly big and baggy clothes and low rise jeans.<sup>52</sup>

Nowadays, each African American has its own style that reflects his status in society or his political statements or just to show the style of music or fashion trends he is into.

### **1.5.6 Music:**

African American music birth was in the 1700s where most of the slaves sang traditional songs during their laborious work this music was brought with them from Africa whereas they used it as a tool to communicate among each other; send messages that were difficult to be understood by the white owners, and helped them overcome hard work.

In the 1800-1860s a kind of music emerged known as spiritual music which was religious songs performed quietly in churches using hand clapping moaning groaning sometimes using musical devices such as tambourines, drums guitars, and harmonicas. Later in the 1870s and 1880s, the arranged spiritual and the ragtime music appears, and then in the 1890s, it was the time birth for the folk gospel music that contains cached messages and hints for slaves who look for freedom and encouraged them to escape from slavery.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Julie A Willett, *The American beauty industry encyclopedia*, (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood,2010),159.

<sup>53</sup> Harold, ”Negro Folk Music U.S.A,” (New York:Columbia University Press, 1963)35-36 Shepack Nick, “History of African American Music in 10 Minutes,” YouTube video, 9:59, May 1, 201,[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mbk8jy\\_bVNo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mbk8jy_bVNo)



In the nineteenth century a famous type of black music “blues and jazz” appeared in the first type musicians used the guitar or banjo during their entertaining it was used to indicate displeasure and regret, musicians spoke about such themes as prison, discrimination, racial injustice, bad treatment that were exposed to however in the second type they used instrument as saxophones and trumpets.<sup>54</sup>

Later on other kinds of African American music emerged like the “rhythm and blue” or R&B in 1930s, Rap (1970s) and after in 1980s due to the issues in urban living, spread of crimes, drugs, poverty and racism in black community a new type of music rose as a reaction to these problems using just lyrics and with tremendous speed, it became the most receptive and celebrated type all over the world it was known as Hip-hop.<sup>55</sup>

### **1.6 Conclusion:**

To conclude, The African American faced hard conditions from the days of slavery, the KKK and the police brutality of the 20th century, it was clear that the white racists wouldn't accept the black as Americans and that gave a strength to the African American to fight and revolt to build their own identity as American citizen. After getting political rights, The African Americans developed their own culture somehow different from that of the white Americans, they use it as rebellion against the white, and that included the Harlem Renaissance movement, language, fashion, literature, cinema, and music in which the African American described racism and violence and how they felt about it especially in the Hip Hop music.

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<sup>54</sup> Harold, *Negro Folk Music U.S.A*, (New York, dover publication, 1992)127-128

<sup>55</sup> Ruehl, Kim. “The History of African-American Folk Music”. thoughtco.com.

<https://www.thoughtco.com/history-of-african-american-folk-music-1322654> (accessed April 13, 2018)

**CHAPTER TWO:**

**AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC HISTORY AND**

**HIP-HOP AS A REFLECTION OF BLACKS**

**STRUGGLES**

## **Chapter 2: African American Music History and Hip Hop as a Reflection of Blacks Struggles**

### **2.1 Introduction:**

When slaves were brought to America in 1600's, they were completely stripped of their possessions and one of the only things that they managed to salvage their culture was music. For blacks, music was not just a form of entertainment but also served as a form of expression hope and protesting against poverty, racism and racial discrimination served by the white supremacy.

This second chapter will be divided into four part ,The first part will provide a brief account of the African American music history that included slave spirituals and work songs, as well as Ragtime, Blues, jazz and rhythm and blue (RNB), The second part will be devoted to hip hop as the main protest genre of black music , thirdly, this chapter will analyse the lyrics of rap songs that reflect the black Americans struggle, and for the final part, it will show the impact of the Hip Hop music on the lives of African Americans .

### **2.2 The Process and the Development of Black Music:**

The music was a huge part of African Americans history; it has been a way of conveying a message of black Americans experience in the United States. From the first days of slavery, the music help to some extent the African Americans to stay related to their motherland Africa. It was music that helps them to tell their stories.

#### **2.2.1 African American Spirituals & Work Songs:**

In the African culture, music was always a huge part of the Africans daily life, so by the time Africans were forcibly transported to the new world, they brought with them their love of music.

Enslaved Africans were not allowed to communicate with each other so they sang to communicate with one another, at the beginning, the slave music was all about “work songs” in which they described their working condition in plantation fields and railroad tracks in a form of “calls and responses», And it soon developed into a new genre of music known as “negro spirituals”, in which the slaves, combined the hardship of work, slavery, and religious elements of Christianity. The spirituals were sung during works, in churches and in secret meeting where they all gathered and start singing.<sup>1</sup>

The slave owners accepted to some extent the negro spirituals because they consider as religious song that makes the Africans slaves accepted the idea of being a slave, also because they saw that it helped them in working harder, but what that didn’t know was the lyrics of the songs, it seemed as song where they are praising God and Jesus but it had secret meaning and messaged that the slave owners didn’t know about because was difficult for them to understand.<sup>2</sup>

The Negro Spirituals was used firstly to killed boredom of long hours in work, beg for God to free them, and to express themselves, however, African American start modifying the words of the song to talk about freedom and the promised land, rejection of the White authority, and most importantly, it was used to instruct the fugitive slaves to avoid capture. Popular examples of these songs are: “Wade in the water”; “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, “Go down Moses” and “Let Us Break Bread Together” and “Roll Jordan roll”.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen Koskoff, Music cultures in the United States,( New York, Routledge,2005),9,192-198.

<sup>2</sup>Pamela Crosby, Part of history: African-American spirituals still heal, The United Methodist Church,<http://www.umc.org/resources/part-of-history-african-american-spirituals-still-heal>, (Accessed April 14, 2018).

<sup>3</sup>Sarah Brankley, Spirituals and their "coded messages", Blogs.longwood.edu,<http://blogs.longwood.edu/sbrankley/2012/03/07/spirituals-and-their-%E2%80%9Ccoded-messages%E2%80%9D/>.(Accessed April 14, 2018).

The African Americans slave songs “the Negro spiritual” influenced later on the birth of many African American genres of music and still consider the most important phase of the history of Black America music.

### **2.2.2 The Emergence of Ragtime:**

The black music saw a different type of music style in history among them, the Ragtime. The Ragtime is a type of African American music that emerged between 1893 and 1917 and was originally born in Saint. Louis, Missouri, The ragtime is a word taken from the term “ragged time” meaning rhythmically broke up melodies, it is known by the use of the piano as the central instrument of the band.<sup>4</sup>

The well-known artists of the ragtime music are Scott Joplin who consider as “king of Ragtime”, and Ernest Hogan, who developed the musical genre and created the name “ragtime”, Joseph LaMothe, Eubie Blake, James P. Johnson, Joseph Lamb, and James Scott.<sup>5</sup>

Although the ragtime was barely heard after 1917, it had influenced in creating important African American music mostly Blues and Jazz.<sup>6</sup>

### **2.2.3 Blues:**

The blues as a music existed almost in the sixteenth century and then in the 1920s the word “blues” officially emerged and used to name this new type of music which differs from the old types of black music.

The blues singer’s songs were composed of grouped verses which prettify the subject mentioned in the first line that details the story using rhyming component, and with the use of instruments such as guitar and banjo, and doing some stops in the center or before the end of the verse allowing the instrument to perform. The blues is a form of music that tells a personal story, it is used as an expression of misery or regret about something, bad luck, representing

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<sup>4</sup>Michael Verity, What is Ragtime, Thoughtco, <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-ragtime-2039546>, (Accessed April 14, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ragtime, Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ragtime>,(Accessed April 14,2018).

and tackling topics such as sufferance in jail, loneliness, segregation, and evil treatment and racial injustice.<sup>7</sup> Bluesmen are people who suffered from segregation and evil treatment where they reflect the bad life they were living it, and narrate their stories using this kind of music as a tool to show the others how they feel about it, such Billie's Holiday song "*Strange Fruit*" and «*On the Sunny Side of the Street*» by Louis Armstrong which tackle racism and oppression. There are other songs that show the rebuke that centered the African American life from the side of people and officers such as «*Alabama Blues*» of J.B Lenoir. The black community found the freedom in expressing their feeling through blues.<sup>8</sup>

The first songs of blues back to 1920s and from the most known blues singer at that time Bessie Smith known by her most audible work "*The Essential Bessie Smith* «and unlike any other songsters Big Bill Broonzy who transported the blues to Chicago notable by his song «*The Young Big Bill Broonzy*». Blind Lemon Jefferson is another prolific artist who could register almost 100 songs such "*Matchbox Blues*," "*Black Snake Moan*" and "*See That My Grave Is Kept Clean*." Moreover to other widely known musicians like Robert Johnson with his notorious music work "*King of the Delta Blues Singers*." And Son House who recorded a set of songs he is noted by "*Heroes of the Blues: The Very Best of Son House*." In addition to Tampa Red who is popular by his "*It's Tight Like That*" song.<sup>9</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Jazz:**

The jazz was a type of African American music style that took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and became well known during the "Roaring 20s"; it was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Jazz was developed from different black music genres as Wynton Marsalis, explained "New Orleans had a great tradition of celebration. Opera, military marching bands, folk

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<sup>7</sup>Harold, *Negro Folk Music U.S.A* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963)126 127 128

<sup>8</sup>Remy, *A Sound For Recognition: Blues Music And The African American Community*(Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2011),54-55.

<sup>9</sup>Reverend Keith A. Gordon, *10 Early Artists Who Defined the Blues*, Thoughtco, <https://www.thoughtco.com/early-blues-artists-4134323>, (Accessed April 15, 2018).

music, the blues, different types of church music, ragtime, echoes of traditional African drumming, and all of the dance styles that went with this music could be heard and seen throughout the city. When all of these kinds of music blended into one, jazz was born.”<sup>10</sup>

The jazz was developed due to the great immigration, and the spread of illicit “speakeasy” where the Jazz musicians usually performed, more and more people start recognizing this new music style and enjoying it, unlike the previous black music styles, the Jazz was successful in breaking the barriers between the black and the white.

White people enjoyed the jazz music where they went speakeasy, clubs, and concerts just to watch a black band performing; they even collaborated with the black in the same band and performed publicly.<sup>11</sup>

The famous jazz artists included: Louis Armstrong “The father of Jazz”, Ray Charles, Nina Simon, Joe "King" Oliver, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Betty Carter and many others.<sup>12</sup>

The Jazz had a huge impact on the black culture and society; it was one of the first steps toward accepting black among white people, and also helped to introduce the black culture to the white people in America as well in Europe.

### **2.2.5 Rhythm and Blues(R&B):**

Rhythm and blues is a genre of widespread urban music that was performed by African American in the late 1930s in America. The name given to this new form of music was created in 1949 by Jerry Wexler a journalist in *Billboard magazine* that replaced the previous term that was used "race music." Then it was abbreviated to become “R&B.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Burton W Peretti, *Lift every voice: The history of African American music*, (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 81.

<sup>11</sup>Piero Scaruffi, *A history of Jazz music*, Scaruffi, <https://www.scaruffi.com/history/jazz2.html>,(Accessed April 15,2018).

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_jazz\\_musicians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_jazz_musicians).

<sup>13</sup>Ed Ward, Rhythm and Blues, Britannica,<https://www.britannica.com/art/rhythm-and-blues>,(Accessed April 18,2018).

Like the blues, most of the R&B singers used the guitar and the piano as well. And tackled the same topics as the previous types of music do, in fact, R&B songs discuss black problems and their fight for equality and discrimination in one hand, in the other hand showing to the world the situation of how African American lived, this music was used as tool to speak about oppression, a voice which helped black to be accepted by the others, and as an anti-racism song “Everyday People” of Sly & The Family Stone which call for peace and spoke on social racism. And the James’s Brown song named “*Say It Loud (I’m Black and I’m Proud)*” where the title explains the meant. <sup>14</sup>

Among the renowned songs of R&B A “*Change is Gonna Come, «You Send Me,*” by Sam Cooke. Etta James is known for her songs “*At Last,*” “*Tell Mama*” and “*I’d Rather Go Blind.*” Tina Turner is another prolific performer of the ‘60s where she scored a wow by her R&B works “*A Fool in Love,*” “*It’s Going to Work out Fine*” and “*Proud Mary*” in 1971.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.3 Hip hop Music:**

After the R&B, a distinctive type of music appeared with a different style, specific words and particular topics in which it gains a huge popularity in a very short period this new kind of African Americans music was called “Hip-hop”.

#### **2.3.1 Definition of Hip Hop:**

Hip-hop is an African American music genre as well as a cultural movement. The term hip Hop is a combination of two slang words, the first hip, meaning “In the know” and second is Hop which portrays the hopping movements of the hip-hop performer. The expression was first coined by Keith “Cowboy” from rap group called Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, when he used to make fun of his friend who was going to the army,

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<sup>14</sup>Mark Edward Nero, Best Social & Political R&B/Soul Songs, Thoughtco, <https://www.thoughtco.com/best-social-and-political-randb-soul-songs-2851689>,(Accessed April 18,2018).

<sup>15</sup>The 35 Greatest R&B Artists of All Time, Billboard, <https://www.billboard.com/photos/6737387/best-r-and-b-singers-of-all-time> , (Accessed April 18,2018).



Keith imitated the rhythmic beat of marching soldiers by singing hip hop/hip/hip/hop .later on this words was used in their stage performance and soon was adopted by others rapper.<sup>16</sup>

The rapper Afrika Bambaataa was the first one who uses the term to describe the youth movements that happened at that when he said: “Well, I chose the name ‘hip-hop’.”<sup>17</sup>

And since then Hip-hop was the name of both, the music style, and the cultural movements that included four major elements: Breakdancing, graffiti art, DGing, and MCing.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.3.1 Hip-Hop Elements:

Hip-hop is different from the rest types of black music where it consists of several elements that make it special and unique music, from these elements there are four basic one:

- **The Breaking** is a form of dancing that has other names as b-boying or breakdancing and involves different kinds of freestyles street dances among them *Up-rocking, popping and locking, Jailhouse, Double Dutch, and Electric Boogie*. Breakdancing emergence started through groups like “*the nigga twins,*” “*the Zulu king,*” “*the Salsoul crew,*” and other groups.

- **Emceeing or Mcing** often means rap or rapping it is a form of poetry and rhythmic words done by the rapper in a spoken way where he tells his story, problems, or express the self, and most famous rapper, Coke la rock, Sha rock and others.

- **Graffiti** also known as writing, piecing, and Graff, a sort of writing on walls, streets, roads, and clothes it is considered as the visual copy of hip-hop a letter in form of an image it is just like MCing in concept, graffiti draw the message while MCing utter it.

- **Deejaying** represents often the work of the Disc Jockey who did the move vinyl records, mix, cut, and scratch the songs; in addition to speaking while performing to make the audience move.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Joseph George A.K.A JOEY.G, Rap with a Mission: How Rap & Hip-Hop can be used in Missions and Evangelism, ([S.l.]: LULU COM, 2016), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.10

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 8

### 2.3.2 Hip-Hop History:

Hip-hop music has its roots in the African music. And it flourished in the period between the 70s and 80s in America. And since then a powerful history of hip-hop music was formed.

The social changes and the different types of music affected on hip hop since it starting in 1970's it was practiced outside by African American youths in streets and parties. It first born with the Jamaican American DJ Kool Herc who invented *break-beat* in 1973 and due to his success, he was considered the Father of Hip Hop. And then accompanied by the emergence of the MC in 1975 or rap as it is known where rappers used rhythmic words to the told story or issue. Busy Bee was the first MCs working with DJs where they recorded several rap songs that time among them the first rap record by Sugar Hill Gang published under the name "*Rapper's delight*" 1979, and became popular in the entire world. Hip-hop was used mainly to escape from poverty which appeared in the first conscious song "*The Message*" that became the symbol of hip-hop musicians 1982.

Years that followed saw the emergence of many hip-hop crews and rappers or as it was called the second wave of hip-hop, where their rapping and songs became popular outside of the African American community since they release MCs and using them to deliver messages and spoke of collective experience. Then in 2000s hip-hop did not stop it continued to grow with a little different than the old wave.<sup>20</sup>

Generally speaking, hip-hop gains a place not just in the black community but also in worldwide, where it became the most famous type of music all over the world.

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<sup>19</sup> KRS-One, *The gospel of hip hop*, (Brooklyn, NY: Am Hip Hop, 2009) 113 – 118.

<sup>20</sup> MickeyHess, *Icons of Hip Hop: An Encyclopedia of the Movement, Music, and Culture, Volumes 1 & 2*(Westport, Connecticut. London, GREENWOOD PRESS, 2007) 22-24.

### **2.3.3 Famous Hip Hop Artists:**

In the history of music, many African Americans had an incredible success in the hip-hop music industry and become well known not only in America but as well as worldwide. Here is a list divided the rappers into two, old-school hip-hop artists and new school artist.

Old school artists and groups included : Tupac , N.W.A, Notorious B.I.G , Ice Cube , Wu-Tang Clan, Eazy-E, Snoop Dogg, Dr.Dre , Outkast , Eric B. & Rakim, Nas, Run–D.M.C., 50 Cent , Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Lauryn Hill, LL Cool J , Common , MC Lyte, Salt-N-Pepa, Afrika Bambaataa & Soulsonic Force, DMX, Busta Rhymes, and many others .<sup>21</sup>

New school artists and groups included: Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole, ASAP Rocky, Joey Bada, Chance The Rapper, Big Sean, Travis Scott, Wiz Khalifa , Young M.A, Lil Wayne , Cardi B, Nicki Minaj , Kodak Black , Rick Ross, The Game, Kevin Gates, 2 Chainz , Rae Sremmurd, 21 Savage, and others.<sup>22</sup>

### **2.3.4 The Role of Hip-Hop Music in Resisting Racism and Brutality of the Whites:**

Typically, the rap songs criticized of being too violent and sexual, while this view does have credibility; however, through the lyrics of hip-hop music, rappers discuss and protest against the racism, inequality, discrimination, and brutality against the black people.

Most of the rappers, use their rap songs to tell the stories about their own experience of racist action or others black folk stories, as well as uncovering and unveiling the struggle they face of living in inner-city ghettos and housing projects, like Tupac, Common, Public Enemy, KRS-One, NAS, N.W.A spoke overly about the police brutality against African American

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<sup>21</sup>The Best Old School Hip Hop Groups/Rappers, Ranker, <https://www.ranker.com/list/old-school-hip-hop-bands-and-artists/reference> , (Accessed May 1, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Top New School Rappers, Ranker, <https://www.ranker.com/list/top-new-school-rappers/ranker-music>, (Accessed May 1, 2018).

also on the racial discrimination they face for being a black man, they even try to encourage African Americans to be self-determination and self-pride.

Some of the hip-hop artists tried to continue with the message of the Civil Right Movements as well as the Black Panther Party by adopting the ideas of both Malcolm X and Martin Luther King in their songs, like the legend Tupac Shakur who was the son of former Black Panther party activists, Tupac dedicated a whole album to the ideas of self-defense named “Strictly 4 My N.I.G.G.A.Z”. Also other had songs where they mentioned both X and MLK such as Public Enemy “By the time I get to Arizona”, Common “A dream”, Lupe Fiasco “All black everything”, J-period and the Roots “Malcolm X/ Roots of a tree”, Game Feat. Nas “Letter to the king”.<sup>23</sup>

The police as well as the American governments weren’t happy about this new genre of music and saw it as a threat to its own safety and damaging the mind of the youth by encouraging violence and rebellion.

#### **2.4 Rap lyrics as Evidence of Black American Struggle:**

There are numerous examples of rap music that identify and discuss African Americans struggle including discrimination, poverty, racism, and police brutality.

One of the first rappers that spoke openly about the tough life of African Americans in the inner city are the famous group Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five , their song called “the message”(1982) was the first hit rap song to describe the social and economic conditions within poor, Black, inner-city communities<sup>24</sup>:

It's like a jungle sometimes

It makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under

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<sup>23</sup> <https://hiphopdx.com/editorials/id.2271/title.a-dream-deferred-10-civil-rights-movement-references-in-rap>.

2450 Greatest Hip-Hop Songs of All Time, Rolling Stone, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-50-greatest-hip-hop-songs-of-all-time-20121205/grandmaster-flash-and-the-furious-five-the-message-1969123>, (Date Accessed May 01, 2018).

Broken glass everywhere  
People pissin' on the stairs, you know they just don't care  
I can't take the smell, can't take the noise  
Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice  
Rats in the front room, roaches in the back  
Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat  
I tried to get away but I couldn't get far  
Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge  
I'm trying not to lose my head<sup>25</sup>

They basically highlight the violence and poverty in the ghetto and how their living conditions affect the emotion and the mental state of the person. Soon after the song was released, many rap artist and group start talking about the political and social issues of the American Blacks.<sup>26</sup>

Next group that rap about blacks are N.W.A (which stands for Niggaz with Attitude), which is a famous group that caused a wave of controversy in the nation after they released the protest song “Fuck the Police “that attacks the police brutal actions against Blacks and encourages violence against the police. Ice Cube Start his Rap with:

Fuck the police coming straight from the underground  
A young nigga got it bad 'cause I'm brown  
And not the other color so police think  
they have the authority to kill a minority<sup>27</sup>

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25 Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five Lyrics, AZLyrics, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/grandmasterflashandthefuriousfive/themessage.html>, (Date Accessed May 01, 2018).

26 50 Greatest Hip-Hop Songs of All Time, Rolling Stone, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-50-greatest-hip-hop-songs-of-all-time-20121205/grandmaster-flash-and-the-furious-five-the-message-19691231>,( Date Accessed May 01, 2018).

<sup>27</sup>SimonaJ.Hill,Dave Ramsaran,*Hip hop and inequality: searching for the "real" Slim Shady*,(Cambria Press,2009),66.

He is stating that police are mostly attacks the blacks more than any other ethnic group, and stereotyped African Americans as drug dealers, “Searching my car, looking for the product/Thinking every nigga is selling narcotics”, Ice Cube went far with his lyrics when he shows how he will kill a cop, rhyming “Beat a police out of shape/and when I'm finished, bring the yellow tape/To tape off the scene of the slaughter”.<sup>28</sup>

N.W.A’s song “fuck the police” was an example of the hatred emotion that the young African blacks felt toward the police and that was not well received by the American security, after the song was firstly released, the American FBI argue that the lyrics of the song misrepresenting the police and encourage violence against them so they end up with sending a warning letter to priority record:

A song recorded by the rap group N.W.A. on their album entitled Straight Outta Compton Encourages violence against and disrespect for the law enforcement officer and has been brought to my attention. I understand your company recorded and distributed this album and I am writing to share my thoughts and concerns with you.

Advocating violence and assault is wrong, and we in the law enforcement community take exception to such action. Violent crime, a major problem in our country, reached an unprecedented high in 1988. Seventy-eight law enforcement officers were feloniously slain in the line of duty during 1988, four more than in 1987. Law enforcement officers dedicate their lives to the protection of our citizens, and recordings such as the one from N.W.A. are both discouraging and degrading to these brave, dedicated officers. Music plays a significant role in society, and I wanted you to be aware of the FBI’s position relative to this song and its message. I believe my views reflect the opinion of the entire law enforcement community.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.67.

<sup>29</sup> Gail H Woldu, *The words and music of Ice Cube*, (Westport, Conn. [u.a.]: Praeger,2008),23.

The group had not only received the letter from by the FBI but they were also banned from performing the song by the police.<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, Public Enemy “Fight the Power” (1989) is a song that was made to guide the black American youths and encourage them to fight for their rights and be proud of being black. The verses “Got to give us what we want/Gotta give us what we need/Our freedom of speech is freedom or death/We got to fight the powers that be” targeting the government that has no right for the blacks to express them self by telling them that the black will fight to get the right to be free in speech and expression.<sup>31</sup>

The song also tried to restore the black pride by saying that “Now that you've realized the pride arrived/we got to pump the stuff to make us tough”, Public Enemy show that things will not be easy for the black so they need to prepare themselves for the road toward freedom “To revolutionize make a change nothin's strange”. Chuck D continues his protest against racism when he attacked America’s icon Elvis Presley rhyming “Elvis was a hero to most But he never meant shit to me you see/Straight up racist that sucker was/Simple and plain” as well as rap about how America doesn’t give too much importance to the African American historical figures “Most of my heroes don't appear on no stamps/Sample a look back you look and find/Nothing but rednecks for 400 years if you check”. Public Enemy ends up their song by calling the black people to protest against the one who try to control their social rights and freedom by rapping “Power to the people no delay/To make everybody see/In order to fight the powers that be”.<sup>32</sup>

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30 Kelley L. Carter, The Painful, Long, And Lasting Legacy Of "Fuck Tha Police", BuzzFeed, [https://www.buzzfeed.com/kelleylcarter/how-fuck-tha-police-started-a-revolution?utm\\_term=.eeB3M38xWw#.fvMyNyXbwE](https://www.buzzfeed.com/kelleylcarter/how-fuck-tha-police-started-a-revolution?utm_term=.eeB3M38xWw#.fvMyNyXbwE),( Date Accessed May 06, 2018).

<sup>31</sup>Fight the Power Lyrics, Shmoop,<https://www.shmoop.com/fight-the-power/lyrics.html>,(Date Accessed May 06, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Public enemy “fight the power” soon after it released became an anthem of blacks during the Reagan and Bush years.<sup>33</sup>

finally, Tupac Shakur is another artist that reflects the African American struggle in his song, using explicit and controversial lyrics that straightly attack cops and American governments, as well as reflect the struggles of black communities he was able to affect many blacks Americans. In one of his song called “Trapped” (1991), Tupac portrayed his life in the ghetto marked by the police harassment and brutality, he rhymes:

They got me trapped, can barely walk the city streets  
Without a cop harrasing me, searching me then asking my identity  
Hands up, throw me up against the wall, didn't do a thing at all  
I'm telling you one day these suckers gotta fall  
Cuffed up throw me on the concrete<sup>34</sup>

Here in this verses he describe how black males are constantly and unfairly harassed and jailed by police for no reason and encourage somehow the black males to self-defense and show how they resisted the cops by rapping “But they didn't know this was the wrong street/Bang bang, down another casualty/But it's a cop who's shot there's brutality/Who do you blame?... He got caught in the chains of his own game /how can I feel guilty after all the things they did to me”, he shows how the police are blamed for the reaction of blacks.<sup>35</sup>

In another song named “Changes” continues his critic's police abusing blacks and how they don't care about black lives, he raps “Cops give a damn about a negro? Pull the trigger, kill a nigga, he's a hero,” and how the government used the War on Drugs as excuse to target blacks “Instead of war on poverty/they got a war on drugs so the police can bother me”, and

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<sup>33</sup>Fight the Power Meaning, Shmoop, <https://www.shmoop.com/fight-the-power/meaning.html>, (Date Accessed May 06, 2018).

<sup>34</sup>2Pac-Trapped, Genius, <https://genius.com/2pac-trapped-lyrics>, (date accessed: May 02, 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Carrie Golus, Tupac Shakur, (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2011), 39.



he goes further with his song with encouraging African Americans to united and work together to solve poverty, racism, and violence, “We gotta make a change/It's time for us as a people to start making some changes/Let's change the way we eat, let's change the way we live/And let's change the way we treat each other/You see the old way was not working/So it's on us to do what we gotta do to survive”.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the white racist saw Tupac as a criminal who encourage violence on the police, after his first album “2Pacalypse” released, Vice President Dan Quayle demanded to withdraw the album from stores after one of the police officers was murdered by a black male who was listening to one of Tupac song while committing crime, Dan Quayle stated that “There's no reason for a record like this to be released. It has no place in our society.”<sup>37</sup>

Rap was and continues to be a great form of expression, which allows the black Americans to speak about their social problems as well as to revolt and response toward the white supremacy.

## **2.5 The Impact of Hip-Hop on African Americans:**

Since its inception, hip-hop music has played an expressive part in the modification of African Americans lives; it influenced the black communities in appearance and thinking.

As hip-hop picked up the standard victory and its songs have known advancement, it uniquely affected on how African Americans think, talk, dress, and socialize. Performers of hip-hop got to be part models for individuals particularly youths, where they raise numerous social problems using music, which in turn stimulate young people to become worried and mindful of these issues while listening to these songs. It helps youths and motivates them to think almost on their problems and try to find solutions. Rap music has stimulated social consciousness in the people and it has worked as a device to speak about negative features

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<sup>36</sup>Silvie Vale, *Changes by Tupac, Words in the Bucket*, <https://www.wordsinthebucket.com/changes-tupac>, (Date Accessed May 02, 2018).

<sup>37</sup>Carrie Golus, *Tupac Shakur*, 43-44.

which most of the blacks face in life such as violence and injustice. In fact, many rappers deliver messages through their music, directed to people to make a change in society.<sup>38</sup>

Rappers while performing they use alternative language and add some specific and exclusive words to their songs which are recognized as “slangs” subsequently this words and phrases became part of everyday English outside. Most of the hip-hop fans and listeners take these lyrics and use them in their ordinary language. Indeed young people worship hip-hop artists and imitate their manners; they copy and use the same words used by performers while speaking with each other in streets, with family members, and use it even in schools, and they even try to be like stars where they act, walk and do the same gestures done by their much-loved artists. Indeed the influence of hip-hop on the English language is seen from the use of such famous words as “hood” which is the shorter version of “neighborhood”, and “whip” that is to say “car” which became familiar in the interior of daily conversations of blacks public. Other well-known terms like "what's up" (hello), "peace out" (good-bye), and "chill out" (relax) were greatly used by external communities and now are used even in media and television.<sup>39</sup>

Style of African Americans outfits has continuously been associated with hip-hop; countless stars were known as fashion symbols principally rappers. Their mold comprises of loose pants worn exceptionally loosely, baggy shirts, caps are worn in reverse and expensive sneakers, moreover to jewelry, heavy gold chains, and rings with distinct haircuts, and large eyeglasses. Actually, young people, in particular, are more likely to be influenced by these kinds of clothes, where they dress like hip-hop artists. The unique look of Tupac Amaru Shakur, the backward bandanas that most of the people wear and which is relevant in today's

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<sup>38</sup> Positive impacts, Impacts of Rap Music on Youth, <https://impactofrapmusiconyouths.weebly.com/positive-impacts.html> ,(accessed May 2, 2018).

<sup>39</sup> Price, Emmett G, Hip-Hop: An indelible influence on the English language ,Afrik-news, <http://www.afrik-news.com/article16254.html> (accessed May 5, 2018).

dressing of young people. The more hip-hop fashion will continue progress; it will impact the urban styles of hip-hop fans all over.<sup>40</sup>

Hip-hop influence is apparent in the social life of African Americans. So that it contributed significantly to proving the existence and identifying the black's community using just lyrics.

## **2.6 Conclusion:**

All in all, African American music had always played an important role in the lives of black Americans, starting in days of slavery and continues to develop throughout the years in which they show their rebellion against social and political problems as well as racism and racial discrimination. The second chapter focused on Hip hop music and rap songs that depict the African American struggles by analyzing some rap songs by famous hip-hop artists, and it ended up with giving some impact that hip-hop as on blacks American.

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<sup>40</sup>Dr. Renford R. Reese's, FROM THE FRINGE: THE HIP HOP CULTURE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS, Cpp.edu, <https://www.cpp.edu/~rrreese/nonfla/HIPHOP.HTML> , (accessed May 8).

# GENERAL CONCLUSION

## General Conclusion

Over the centuries, African American people endured many obstacles, tribulations, and difficulties just because they were blacks .from the day they were forcedly transported to the American land and became slaves for whites owners, black Americans experience a brutal and racist treatments by the whites American, starting with the period of slavery where African slaves were both physically and orally abused by their owners and continually after the Emancipation Proclamation, blacks faced segregation and discrimination where they were prevented from having the same right as the white people, furthermore, the whites not only restricted the blacks right, but they also harass and attack them examples of this are the KKK and the police brutality .

African Americans responded to the oppressive treatments and the racial discrimination in many ways, the most important once are ,the civil rights movement of the 1950s mainly led by the social activist Martin Luther King JR who believed in changes through nonviolence methods, and the Black Panther Party of 1966 that was influenced by Malcolm X philosophy of “self-defense” and the black separatism, although , this two political movements had different believes and methods, both of them wanted blacks to be equal to whites .

African American had also formed and developed a culture that represented their black identity and that is diverse somehow from whites, this cultural variation is shown in the language they used, their fashion, literature, cinema as well as music. With the leading event that led the African American culture to a new level is the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. it became obvious that black Americans are making their position in the American society.

African American music was an important aspect of the lives of African Americans, throughout lyrics and rhythms, blacks were able to express their struggles and sufferance, and

the most remarkable style that truly reflects blacks lives and society is Hip Hop music, in which rappers spoke openly in their lyrics about black community and attacked the racism expressed by the whites.

In short, African Americans today are having more rights and better statue from the one they had in their first arrival to the new world, the hip-hop culture today is making the black Americas both proud and respected by the other ethnic groups particularly the white race.

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