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**The Hip Hop Music in the United States of America  
during the 1970's: A Means to Call for Equality**

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## **Dedication**

To my parents

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Abstract**

Africans lived many centuries in pursuit of freedom. In America, they struggled not to be considered inferior and are still segregated. For this reason, the conditions of the African Americans helped them launch political and cultural movements to call for their rights. Music was a means used by them as a protest against inequality and injustice. The present dissertation attempts to show how the Hip Hop music contributed to spreading the voices of the African Americans that call for freedom and condemn the racial discrimination in the USA. The study starts by providing an overview of the slavery conditions in America. It also presents the major social and cultural activities of the African Americans during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Hip Hop, African Americans, racism, segregation.

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## **General Introduction**

Every human organization- whether it is a group, an institution, or a community- develops values, rules and tools that can help share its voices, achieve goals and solve problems. The result of these activities is what is called culture. In fact, during the last two centuries- mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century- culture in the United States of America developed, in the sense that the general features of accepted beliefs underwent a set of changes with apparent features similar to the process of radical cultural and social transformation.

The African Americans had their cultural and social activities in the U.S.A. The fact that they were segregated because of their skin colour did not prevent them from being representatives of the African American culture. Thus, they tended to express their culture even in the creation of movements that call for their freedom and racial equality. In their protests against the white supremacy and injustice, African Americans created some artistic sorts in music; particularly, the Hip Hop music which represented the Afro- American history and defended the Africans in America.

As the study is concerned with the African Americans, the first objective is to give a historical overview of slavery in the U.S and the oppression that the Africans encountered. It is a second objective to investigate the means by which the African Americans expressed their call for freedom, and showed their cultural aspects. Particularly, the light will be shed on the Hip Hop music and its reflections on the African Americans' struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This research is made to answer these two questions: What are the means of resistance used by the African Americans in the U.S.A? And to what extent could the Hip-Hop music represent the African Americans' struggle? In fact, the African Americans used art, music, and other cultural aspects to express their status in White America. There are several songs from the genre of Hip-Hop

music that told stories of segregation and racial inequality. Singing them is a way of revealing facts to the world.

The research paper consists of three chapters. The first chapter provides a historical overview of slavery and the racial segregation the African Americans lived. The second chapter focuses on how the Afro- Americans presented their identity through their political, social and cultural activities. It also presents an overview of the African American music. The last chapter deals with the hip-hop music as a way to reflect the struggles of the Afro- Americans, and its role in resisting racism.

# **Chapter One: A Historical Overview of Slavery in America**

## **Introduction**

From the first moment when a number of Africans were shipped to the New World, they found life very challenging and unpleasing. The situation of being enslaved in a society dominated by white people, created the harshest and hostile environment for the African Americans. This chapter will provide a historical overview of slavery in America, and then it will show how slaves fought their way to freedom and became a part of massive protests and movements. Led by African American activists, the 1920's Harlem Renaissance created a big shift in the American culture.

### **1. Slavery in the New World**

Labelled as people of colour or black people, African Americans are the descendants of African slaves who were transported to America to serve mainly in agriculture. According to the US Census Bureau, today African Americans comprise a 13.4% of a total 332 million inhabitants in the USA.

The African Americans are considered a segregated minority within the larger American society. They have to assimilate according to the norms of the American culture, which is basically constructed from the European one. Throughout the American history, the African Americans are considered outsiders, especially when they attempt to enlarge their self-definition beyond their own communities.

#### **1.1 Reasons for Slavery**

Slavery is usually defined as the antonym of freedom; it refers to a state where a person does not have free will and cannot decide but decided for by his master. Steven Mintz (2), an

American historian at the University of Texas at Austin, stated that slavery existed since antiquity. Ancient civilizations in Greece, Rome and Egypt enslaved people from different races and lower social classes. People were enslaved in order to serve wealthy and noble men who dominated the social hierarchy.

After the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492, the European settlers sailed rushing for gold and fertile land. Soon after this, they began to practise agriculture to realize that they lacked the workforce. This led them to exploit native Red Indians who did not accept slavery and retreated back to live in their tribes. This led the Europeans to search for another workforce. The Africans were the best choice since they lived in harsh conditions and had enough experience in plantation. (Mintz, 2)

In 1619, a Dutch ship brought around twenty imprisoned Africans to a British colony called "Jamestown." Around the 18th century, the demand for labour force increased which meant deporting more than 350.000 slaves to plant tobacco and harvest cotton. All of this was a result of the rise of consumerism in Europe. Moreover, slavery was considered the pillar of economy in America. (Mintz, 3)

## **1.2 The Abolition of Slavery**

In the early days of the revolution against slavery, slaves finally decided to object the dehumanization they were facing in white America. By different means, they rebelled and formed resistance groups against slave masters. Most of these efforts failed in giving an instant result, yet they contributed in the emergence of abolitionist movements across America.

According to Hazen (2015, 15-16) a number of supporters, including William Lloyd Garrison, was a prominent American abolitionist best known for his widely read anti-slavery newspaper. Harriet Beecher Stowe, best known for her famous novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852), was also a leading abolitionist who sought to inform the northerner of the delicate matter

of slavery. These two prominent abolitionists, among many, shared the same goal and interest which was the full and total eradication of slavery and claiming back the stolen civil rights of the African Americans.

Unlike the southern parts of America where landlords depended on slaves to farm their lands instead of machines, the abolition movement ideas grew significantly and were widely accepted in the north. These conflicting ideas about slavery led to the Civil War (1861-1865) that led to the death of approximately 620,000 soldiers. After the tragic end of this war, President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) established the first "Emancipation Proclamation" in 1863, which stated 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>1</sup>

Despite that the contributions of Abraham Lincoln towards slavery abolition, his document of emancipation did not free all slaves immediately but made it a matter of priority. On December 6, 1865, the Congress added the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the American Constitution to eradicate slavery for good.

## **2. Post Reconstruction America**

### **2.1 Education and Slavery**

In his book, *The Strange Career of a Troublesome World*, Randall Kennedy (2013 27) stated that education and slavery were two words that did not meet in the same context. Slave masters, who owned lands and ran textile industry, knew that knowledge was power and educating slaves would eventually make them rebel against their owners; therefore, many anti-education laws were legislated against slaves. In the biography of Frederick Douglass, a former

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<sup>1</sup> "Abolitionist Movement". *Historynet*, 2020, <http://www.historynet.com/abolitionist-movement>. Accessed 5 Jan 2020.

slave who escaped his master and became a national leader of the abolitionist movement in Massachusetts, spoke about his experience when he attempted to learn reading and writing but he was faced with severe objection. He said, retelling his master's words, "...If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A Nigger should know nothing but to obey his master (...) learning would spoil the best Nigger in the world. (Kennedy, 27)

## **2.2 Political Movements**

After the abolition of slavery, African Americans felt the need to go back to their origins and revive their lost identity. Therefore, they organized political and cultural movements to claim what was theirs. For the sake of establishing a society that would overlook colour and treat both the African and American people equally, the African Americans launched two recognizable movements. The first one was called "The Civil Right Movement" which comprised peaceful protesting and shot outs to equality. The second one was called "Black Panther Party" that pursued equality by violent means and hate speech to reach their goal.

### **2.2.1 The Civil Rights Movement**

After the enactment of the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, the African Americans' life changed radically. However, some ideas remained the same and white people still considered African Americans second-class citizens. The latter led a new organization in 1909, "Congress of Racial Equality" CORE. At that time, exactly in 1957, a number of students joined the fight under "Student Christian leadership Conference" SCLC. All these movements were established under one goal and title "the Civil Rights Movement." (Karson, 11-13)

The movement had a great impact on the way white people looked at African Americans, simply because the latter showed their ability to lead a peaceful and organized protest to attain their objectives. The movement later could dismantle many segregation laws such as Jim Crow laws and gained black people suffrage without obstacles.

### **2.2.2 The Black Panther Party**

During the Civil Right Movement that was led mainly By Martin Luther King that used non-violent methods to reach their goals, a number of people criticized the movement as being weak and believed that what was taken with power could only be taken back with force. This led to the rise of the Black Panther Party in 1966.

Adopting Malcolm X philosophy of building an army to maintain self-defence, Newton and Bobby Seal believed that violence was the key to protect their nation from brutality and unfair behaviour. Moreover, this organization was founded on the principle of "the Ten Point Plan" which was a document written to address main issues that threatened the African community, and this helped recruiting more members to the Black Panther Party.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. The Leading Political Activists**

When the fight for civil rights is brought up, two main figures would be mentioned: Malcom X and Martin Luther King. Both of these men led a rebellion against white societies and sought to break free from the remnants of slavery. Martin Luther king believed in peaceful protests and the power of free speech; whereas, Malcolm X philosophy and the ideology of the Muslim Nation advocated peace in the same way yet they gathered an army for they believed that violence was a necessary in certain situations.

Best known for his famous speech "I have a dream", Martin Luther King was an influential civil rights activist and a leading figure in the American history. King grew in a religious family; his father and grandfather were pastors in a Baptist Church while his mother worked as a teacher. Following the footsteps of the Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi, King believed that civil rights and equality can be gained throughout peaceful protests, sensible actions

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<sup>2</sup> Garrett, Duncan. "Black Panther Party". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Black-Panther-Party>. Accessed 5 Jan 2020

and that violence would bring more discrimination and hate speech. The famous Rosa Parks arrestment and the Bus Boycott in Montgomery made King's voice heard, but it caused him to be temporarily jailed. However, it also placed him on top of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference organization (SCLC) that was established in 1957.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, King left a huge impact on the civil rights fight in the USA because he led a peaceful protest and delivered encouraging and humane words. He remained faithful to his cause until he was assassinated in 1968.

The ideology of Malcolm X was not in parallel to King's ideology, for the former believed that brutality and force were necessary to serving the black population in Harlem and in America. In addition, Malcolm had the belief that the black nation was already separate and segregated from the white one. His main contribution to the African community was his ideas of Black Nationalism, based on his philosophy of self-defence; all of these led to the creation of the Black Panther Party.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4. A Cultural Revolution**

The African Americans always struggled to make a balance between their original culture and the new one in which their children are born into. For this, they developed a new culture that would reflect their African background and display a touch of modernity through the invention of new genres of music, dances and colourful clothes. This revolution was the result of the recognizable cultural and political movement: "Harlem Renaissance."

Harlem, located in the northern side of New York, was the destination of many African Americans who escaped the south mainly because of segregation. The new citizens of Harlem

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<sup>3</sup> "Martin Luther King Jr". *Biography.Com*, 2007, <https://www.biography.com/activist/martin-luther-king-jr>. Accessed 6 Jan 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence, A. Mamiya. "Malcolm X." *britannica.com*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Malcolm-X>. Accessed 7 Jan 2020

contributed to shaping a new culture that was projected in the new fashion called dandyism<sup>5</sup>, the new type of music called Jazz and the revolutionized art and literature that portrayed the life and suffering of the African people in America. (Prendergast, 105)

Harlem Renaissance, also called the New Negro Movement, is considered a landmark in the history of the African American culture. The renaissance was a period dominated by literary works in the music industry by prolific singers such as Daniel Louis Armstrong who led to the emergence of "blues" and "jazz age". These musical works were well performed and appealing not only to the black community, but also to the white one as well.

Whether it was a political or a cultural movement, the Harlem Renaissance made a huge impact on the American society, as it helped shaping a new identity for the African Americans within the American culture. It provided opportunity for a new cultural integration and allowed people of different races to express and keep their cultural heritage through literary and artistic works. (Prendergast, 106)

## **5. African American Literature**

African American literature dates to the early 17th century. During the Harlem Renaissance, a new wave of African American authors appeared on stage and covered with their books and articles the life of the African people in the New World. It is also important to note that the protest movements were a mere result of the black writers' literary works. The latter displayed sensitive content such as segregation, racism and the type of inequality black people faced during that period. Furthermore, the African American women also found their way to be a part of the literary movement, and by the end of the 19th century, the contribution of black artists, ranging from paintings and music to prose and poems, were eventually regarded as a genre in the

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<sup>5</sup> The term usually describes a stylish-person who wore colourful clothes and cared about the way they looked.

American literature.<sup>6</sup>

## 6. The African American Music

The African American music saw light around the 1700s when slaves sang and repeated African songs that they inherited from their grandfathers. Those songs were sort of a motivation during the labour of plantation and corn harvest. Also, they were their only bond and heritage reflecting their origin and African identity.

The early phases of the African American music development were in the 1800s to the 1860s when spiritual songs appeared. A type of songs composed of chants, claps, moaning and groaning were played and performed usually with harmonicas, drums, guitars and tambourines. Later on, ragtime and arranged spiritual music followed. Furthermore, in the end of the 17th century, folk gospel music surfaced and had many fans all over the continent. This genre of music was a form of storytelling and traditional tales on the surface. but deep down, they carried out subliminal messages encouraging other African Americans to break free from white dominance (Willett, 159)

The 19th century that was called "the age of saxophone and trumpet", witnessed one of the greatest types of music "blues and jazz". Both were influenced by ragtime and spiritual chants. Musicians used guitars and banjos and most of their songs denoted racial injustice, prison, segregation and love stories. However, Jazz music was notably played with saxophones. Robert Johnson and B.B king were the leading figures of Blues music. (Harold, 127-128)

Later on, other kinds of African American music emerged like the "rhythm and blue" or R&B in 1930s, Rap (1970s); and after in the 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

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<sup>6</sup> "African American Literature". *Cs.Mcgill.Ca*, 2020, [https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/a/African\\_American\\_literature.htm](https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/a/African_American_literature.htm). Accessed 8 Jan 2020.

these problems using just lyrics. With tremendous speed, it became the most receptive and celebrated type in all over the world and became known as the Hip-hop.

### **Conclusion**

The African Americans had to go through brutal and challenging years of slavery and segregation. However, they did not give on fighting for their basic rights of equality and acceptance within the American society. Harlem Renaissance was not only the era in which the Africans restored their dignity, but was also an era of art explosion and cultural development. It was a rebellion of language, literature and music. The next chapter will deal with how the new genre of music, the Hip Hop music, dealt with the theme of racism in the United States of America.

## **Chapter Two: The History and Impact of Hip- Hop Music**

### **Introduction**

After the African slaves had been brought to the New World, they were stripped off everything they had. But one part of their identity remained, which was the African music that included folklores and spiritual songs. This Chapter deals with a brief history and development of hip hop, and with an analysis of rap songs and how their lyrics reflected the Afro- American struggle with racism and co-existence in the American society.

### **1. Hip-Hop and its Characteristics**

Hip-Hop is considered a cultural movement that carried the elements of African origins and their everlasting struggle to exist. The word hip-hop means hip "In the know" and Hop relates to the 1960s hippie movement. The "Cowboy" Keith was the rapper, member of the Grandmaster Flash and Furious five, was the one who coined the term.<sup>7</sup> Different from the other African American music, hip-hop constitutes mainly a unique construction that is made up of the following elements:

**Breaking:** known also as "Breakdancing" is a form of dancing that contains movements that rhyme with the flow of the song. In addition, it involves Freestyle or street dancing that was first invented by street groups such as "Double Dutch", "Electric Boogie" and "The Zulu King"

**Mcing:** this element means when the rappers narrate stories following poetry guidelines and without breaking the rhythm.

**Graffiti:** known as street art or Graff, is a type of calligraphy sprayed on walls or clothes; just like Hip-hop is sang to convey a message, Graffiti is sprayed to do the same and often mark

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<sup>7</sup> GEORGE, A K. A. J. O. E. Y. G. J. O. S. E. P. H. *Rap with a Mission: How Rap & Hip-Hop Can Be Used in Missions and Evangelism*. Place of publication not identified: LULU COM, 2016

groups territories.

**DJ:** invented by Disc Jockey who owned a records company that mixed and cut and re-mixed songs to give them a modern flavour that consisted of beats and melodies often played in Hip-Hop parties.<sup>8</sup>

## **2. The History of Hip-Hop**

Hip-Hop is deeply rooted not only in the American music but also in the Afro-Americans' daily life and culture. It flourished around the 70s and 80s and since then a new artistic movement was forged. As Hip-Hop affected the social side of America, it also stretched to other countries around the world and is still widely practised by the youth in the streets "as freestyle battles" or in parties. Moreover, Kool Herc, a Jamaican American DJ, invented the "break-beat" in 1973. This made him successful to the point where people considered him the father of Hip Hop. Later on, new bands emerged such as The MC (1975) which did not break the norms of traditional rap songs that consisted of one story told in rhythmic words. In addition, Sugar Hill Gang also released a new song in 1979 under the name of "Rapper's Delight" which became the most popular song in the history of Hip-Hop.<sup>9</sup> In the coming years, many Hip-Hop gangs and groups began to compete against each other through publishing of new albums and rapping about social cases such as poverty and hardship.<sup>10</sup>

### **2.1 Hip-Hop Pioneers**

Gaining a massive popularity worldwide, the Hip-Hop music industry, like any other fields, has a list of founders and pioneers who helped sustain the Hip-Hop music. The list comprises names of the prominent figures that made Hip-Hop powerful. The first school of hip-

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<sup>8</sup> KRS-One, . *The Gospel of Hip Hop: The First Instrument.* , 2013

<sup>9</sup> Hess, Mickey. *Icons of Hip Hop: An Encyclopedia of the Movement, Music, and Culture.* Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2007

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

hop is called "The Old School" that took place in the early 80s. It includes: Tupac, B.I.G, Ice Cube, Eazy-E, Snoop Dog, Dr. Dre, D.M.C, 50 Cent, Eminem (Marshal Mathers), Busta Rhymes and others. The second wave of rappers consists of Kendrick Lamar, ASAP, Chance The Rapper, Wiz Khalifa, Lil Wayne Rihanna, The Game, and Lil Pump.<sup>11</sup>

## **2.2 Hip-Hop and Racism**

Controversially, most of rap songs are criticized for having loads of jargons, enticing violence and certainly explicit words. Yet, this does not hide the fact that rappers protested through singing against white brutality, discrimination and inequality. Moreover, employing the lyrics to narrate personal stories reflecting own experience and African American folklore, rappers also lived in critical conditions and most of them had to struggle to make a living or even find a place in the ghettos. For instance, prominent rappers such as Tupac sang about police brutality against the African community.<sup>12</sup>

Not all rappers sang for fame and money, some of them followed the footsteps of famous civil right activists such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King. Tupac Shakur, for instance, in his album "Strictly My N.I.G.G.A.Z" contained sixteen songs all of which were dedicated to urging black people to be proud and adopt "self-defence strategies" as did Malcolm X. Furthermore, the reason why Tupac was related to Black Panther Party is because his father was a member of that party and passed on its ideology to his son.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.3 Hip-Hop and the American Culture**

As Hip-Hop presented an inseparable part of the American culture, it also changed how African Americans dressed, thought, talked, walked and even how they socialized with others as

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<sup>11</sup> Music, Ranker. "The Best Old School Hip Hop Groups/Rappers". *Ranker*, 2020, <https://www.ranker.com/list/old-school-hip-hop-bands-and-artists/ranker-music?ref=search>. Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

<sup>12</sup> "A Dream Deferred: 10 Civil Rights Movement References In Rap". *Hiphopdx*, 2013, <https://hiphopdx.com/editorials/id.2271/title.a-dream-deferred-10-civil-rights-movement-references-in-rap>. Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

they invented new handshakes and fist bumps. Rap music also raised a numerous social phenomenon that triggered many critics to investigate this domain of art and become mindful of how the youth interact and behave when listening to such music. What is agreed upon is that Hip-hop has changed the way young people faced their problems with more consciousness and awareness about the social area of which they were oblivious.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, art helped in reshaping language. Rappers, while writing or performing, used a special language that did not abide by the usual norms of grammar, this language was usually referred to as "slang." Consequently this informal type of language has found its way to literature and to the English dictionary as well. The media also played a massive role in propagating for these intrusive words as it played hip-hop on music channels and used these words in their T.V commercials.<sup>15</sup> Style of the African American outfits also was associated with hip-hop, in a way that countless stars were known as fashion symbols and principally rappers. Young people, in particular, were more likely to be influenced by their clothes; they dressed like hip-hop artists.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Lyrics Analysis

Below is an example of a hip-hop lyric and its analysis to extract the general theme underlying the words of the rapper:

It's like a jungle sometimes

It makes me wonder how I keep from going under<sup>17</sup>

The first two lines of this song refer to the lawless ghettos black people had to live in. The singer

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<sup>14</sup> "Positive Impacts". *Impacts Of Rap Music On Youths*, 2008, <https://impactofrapmusiconyouths.weebly.com/positive-impacts.html>. Accessed 5 Feb 2020.

<sup>15</sup> III, Emmett. "Hip-Hop: An Indelible Influence On The English Language - Afrik-News.Com : Africa News, Maghreb News - The African Daily Newspaper". *Afrik-News.Com*, 2008, <http://www.afrik-news.com/article16254.html>. Accessed 2020.

<sup>16</sup> "Dr. Renford R. Reese's Homepage". *Cpp.Edu*, 2020, <https://www.cpp.edu/~rrreese/nonfla/HIPHOP.HTML>. Accessed 10 Feb 2020.

<sup>17</sup> "Grandmaster Flash And The Furious Five - The Message Lyrics | Azlyrics.Com". *Azlyrics.Com*, 2011, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/grandmasterflashandthefuriousfive/themessage.html>. Accessed 14 Feb 2020.

is also asking himself how he can keep up and survive despite the jungle-like environment he is living in.

Broken glass everywhere

People pissin' on the stairs, you know they just don't care.<sup>18</sup>

The first phrase is a reference to the well-known idiom "walking on broken glass" which means that the speaker is going through an unbearable psychological. The second line, however, means that people (presumably white people) piss on stairs so that it is hard for black people to escalate and reach a higher position in the social hierarchy.

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

Don't push me 'cause I'm close to the edge

I'm trying not to lose my head<sup>19</sup>

The first four lines above reflect on the same theme: a description of the ghetto life. First, the singer describes how awful and unbearable the smell is since people are impoverished and not receiving enough attention from the government "they just don't care." Then, he moves on to saying that despite this situation, he cannot move out since he has no choice but to be where black people are. Also, the rapper mentions "Rats" and "Roaches" in one line: these two words, regardless of the literal meaning, implies that there were people working with the police as an informer (or a snitch) Then he passes on to speak of the hostility of the ghetto area as being full of drug addicts who carries baseball bats.

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<sup>18</sup> ibid

<sup>19</sup> ibid

The fifth line suggests that rapper has reached a phase where he can no longer take any extra burden. The expression “close to the edge” is usually used when someone is about to break badly: become a criminal or put an end to his life. The last line, however, is opposing the previous one as it means that despite of the hardship and discrimination and even that the rapper is close to becoming insane, he is trying to control his actions and remain sane.

Unlike other types of African American genres of music, hip-hop deeply impacted the lives of Americans and people from all around the world. Indeed, it had a negative side that urged for violence and the use of explicit language to describe the police and sometimes white people. Yet, it represented a powerful tool of expression that allowed singers to cover different social areas such as the political life and the social discrimination they faced.

## **Conclusion**

The second chapter has given a brief account of "Hip-Hop" and its impact on the social life in America. Then it ended on an analysis of an example of how rap songs carried deep meanings and treated different social issues.

## **General Conclusion**

There are a number of practices made by the African Americans that reflected their cultural and social activities in the U.S.A. The Afro- Americans kept fighting segregation in order to represent their culture. The latter was expressed through creating movements, protests, and artistic activities. The Hip Hop music is an example that contributed to the representation of the Afro- American culture and defended them in the sort of lyrical melodies. There are Hip Hop songs that were about discrimination and racial inequality. Telling this through songs would be considered a witness to the injustice of White America.

The present dissertation, consisting of two chapters, highlights a historical overview of slavery in the U.S. and how African Americans were oppressed. It also investigates the means by which the African Americans expressed their call for freedom. The focus of the study is on the Hip Hop music and its reflections on the African Americans' struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the African Americans used the Hip Hop as a cultural aspect to express their status in White America. They produced several songs from that genre to tell stories of segregation and racial inequality. Singing them is a way of revealing facts to the world.

The African American music represented an important aspect of the lives of an oppressed community that transformed its stories, trauma, struggles and sufferance into cultural and social activities. The Afro-Americans kept updating their ways of resistance through literary works, paintings, addressing people, producing movies, and writing letters and songs. The remarkable styles in all forms of resistance reflected the African American society differently. As studied in this work, rappers spoke openly in their lyrics about the African community and rejected racism expressed by the Whites.

In contemporary events, racist acts are still happening here and there in the US. However, the African Americans are still updating their forms of resistance like opening radio stations, creating TV channels, and updating online press and journalism. Social media has also helped individuals and institutions express the artistic productions of African Americans that presented their calls for full freedom from racial discrimination. For further research, it is recommended that researchers should highlight the contribution of other artistic activities to expressing the resistance of African Americans. Also, the reactions from the US administration throughout centuries were not steady or firm.

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