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**Sing for Freedom: The African American Song**  
**as a Weapon in Emancipating Cultural Identity**  
**in the American Civil Rights Movement**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment**  
**of the Requirements for master's degree in Civilization and Literature**

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## **Declaration**

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, “Sing for Freedom: The African American Song As a Weapon in Emancipating Cultural Identity in the American Civil Rights Movement” is our own work and that all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

## **Dedication**

In the Name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate.

To the soul of my **father**,

The one who left my reality but never my thoughts and prayers. This is for you **أبي**.

To my dearest **mother**, who always pushes me forward.

To my dear **family** members, brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces. My heartfelt gratitude for all the encouragement and the Moral support that they gave me when I had no strength to keep going. words fail to express all my gratitude to them.

To my partner and my dear friend Imane (Imy), for her presence in every step of the way. I'd like to extend a special thanks to my best friend Malake and my long-lost twin Amel for truly being there for me and for their unconditional support.

To all my friends who supported me throughout the process with love, kindness, and care.

I sincerely thank **All** of you.

**Chahrazad KHALDAOUI**

## **Dedication**

In the Name of God the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate.

I dedicate this work to my loving mum for being the one who has been with me in every step of the way, for her words of encouragement and pushes for tenacity that ring in my ears.

To my Special sister who has never left my side.

I dedicate this work to the dearest and adorable uncles, aunts, and cousins for their love and support.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my best friends Malake and Khalil for being Friends in need and for their support, I will always appreciate all they have done.

Finally, I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my best friend and partner chahrazad (gigi) for being with me in every step, I could not have done this without you. Thank you for all of your support along the way.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation sheds light upon two of the most influential aspects of the Civil Rights Movement which are music and cultural identity. By analyzing some of the most famous songs of the time period, the purpose behind the present study is to investigate the role of the African American song in not only achieving equality but also emancipating their cultural identity. Music is an artistic form of expression of people's suffering that always seeks to communicate their issues through encrypted messages. From coded work songs during slavery time to the adamant freedom songs in the sixties, black music was able to flourish and evolve into this form of art during the events of the Civil Rights Movement. Freedom Songs had an effecting power over African Americans who suffered for years from suppressing their blackness, singing became an existential experience through which African Americans decolonized their minds and constructed a new identity. By using W.E.B. Du Bois' 'double consciousness theory and Critical discourse Theory, this study reveals the importance of the African American song during that era.

**keywords :** African Americans, music, culture and identity, protest songs, spirituals, American civil rights movement.

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## Chapter two

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## General Introduction

“It’s been a long time coming, but I know a change is gonna come.” —Sam Cooke, R&B, Gospel, and pop singer.

Those are the chorus words to Sam Cooke’s passionate song “A Change is Gonna Come.” The African Americans recognized the power of song and performance during the civil rights movement and used this form of cultural communication in their pursuit for equal justice and freedom under law.

The African American Songs are part of a long heritage of struggle And suffering in the American culture since the seventeenth Century. In the twentieth century, this heritage is well illustrated by the Freedom Songs of the civil Rights movement, This turbulent time period experienced an evolution of black music into more politically and socially aware songs that inspired some of the most passionate and emotional performances and compositions in the history of the music (stefani 55). These songs used the foundations of the black music like soul and gospel but adapted them to their time period in order to make them effective for achieving their goals. The goals included desegregation, fair treatment, equal opportunity and being granted the rights all Americans were guaranteed.

There were two main themes of the civil rights movement, religion and a strong history, it allowed members to create a strong sense of collective identity and cultural expression<sup>1</sup>. These themes, Mixed with organization and activism, led to the success of the movement. These

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<sup>1</sup> Collective identity. [https://owd.tcnj.edu/~borland/2006-civilrights/collective\\_identity.htm](https://owd.tcnj.edu/~borland/2006-civilrights/collective_identity.htm)

emblematic songs would declare social injustices and also become a Roar for action addressed to the general public. The performers would turn into stars and activist leaders in the black community for using their voices to create or support organizations for the emancipation of the African American cultural identity.

The issue in understanding the meaning of cultural identity is one that has confronted generations of African Americans. Many white people argued that all African Americans were savages without culture, In a way to justify slavery and slave trade. This lead Them to use many ways to suppress the African American identity that they strongly denied. As a result many Black people denied their African heritage in shame by trying to supress their blackness. They were in a constant search for means to lessen their true identity by straightening their hair, Bleaching their skin, dressing like the white, Malcom X clearly understood this when he proclaimed in 1965, “ We have been a people who hated our African characteristics. We hated our black heads, we hated the shape of our noses ... , we hated the color of our skin.” (Runice 185).

Musicians like Odetta, Bernice Johnson Reagon, Sam cooks, Nina Simone, John Coltrane, and others responded to the struggle through their music, writing protest songs and inspirational chorales for the period. Whether it was sung at mass meetings, churches, marches, or in some of the Jim Crow South’s most forbidding jails, these songs conveyed the moral urgency of the freedom struggle. The music was undoubtedly beautiful. It was joyful, contemplative, and Touching. Yet it was also A powerful tool in the fight for freedom. It was music whose brightest stars were Black, and in a country filled with oppression of Black people, that was revolutionary. The African American song Was no entertainment, neither was it a marginal byproduct of the

black struggle in the 1950s and 1960s (Stefani 51). For the African Americans music was an existential and healing experience that connected them with their culture.

Expressions of unity and racial solidarity turned into a necessity for the fight in the American civil rights struggle. The youth of black activists Started to see the Political struggle in nationalistic terms. Many Organizations like the black power movement, black nationalism, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Black Panther Party put pressure on various Groups of The African-American community to indicate their contribution to the cause. And African-American Musicians were no exception.

They were called upon to Explain the value of their “art” in these “revolutionary” times. Therefore, This research will addresses the use of African American songs as a mean of liberation during the civil rights movement. It argues that African American music was more than an entertainment used for only motivational purposes but also a vital Weapon used for creating a strong sense of collective identity and cultural expressions. By analyzing some of the most Significant and remembered anthems of that time. We’ll also examine the function of these songs in order to demonstrate what role did they represent, their roles, and effectiveness.

African American music has always been a subject of our interest, what motivated us most was the curiosity to understand what drove black artists to use music as a weapon and whether such a beautiful way of expression was an effective mean to connect African Americans to their true identity. One’s self-consciousness will never be raised without one knowing their history and Culture And community ties cannot be strengthened unless Black people in the world understand what binds them together culturally and the obstacles That might wait them in this modern World. For African Americans, Oral language and mainly music has been an important way for cultural expression.

Another element of this work is Cultural expression, an essential aspect of during the civil rights movement music. As for many years black people were restricted from their freedom of expressing their cultural identity during slavery yet they found a way to make their voices heard through music. Old spirituals, gospel and other songs they sung while working on the fields. These songs resurfaced again and Turned into a way for African Americans to connect to their past. It is important to remember where they came from, in order to see how far they had come and how far they still had to go. This idea of linking past and present is expressed in the black national anthems of the civil rights movement.

This research aims to investigate the Role of music as a weapon for Emancipating cultural identity during the civil rights movement, it seeks to understand how music have helped African Americans decolonize their mind from decades of physical and mental oppression through analyzing some of the movement songs. Since the topic is generally ethnographical and we're not active participants but a passive observers, quantitative data mainly secondary will be used for T research. It will Draw from theories like critical race theory for Analyzing / understanding how freedom-singing was used to emancipate cultural identity, and how it helped convey the message of the movement.

to study how their music reacted to bondage and Later to unfulfilled dreams of freedom and emancipation. It argues that beyond Their most obvious function, which was to mobilize and connect collective Participation in the various demonstrations and actions of nonviolent resistance to Segregation, Freedom Songs had a strong altering effect over both the performers and the audience. It Also aims to prove that singing became a cathartic experience, a new birth through which African Americans grew into a new awareness of their culture and constructed a new Identity. In order to attain the above Mentioned aims, a set of objectives should be achieved,

and the central objective of our study is to Understand the role of songs as a document that kept the past history of African Americans' Culture and experience intact, the conditions under which were They performed, Analyze lyrics of prominent songs of the era and extract meaning and value from them, and Evaluate the effectiveness of music in spreading the message of the civil rights movement.

This dissertation seeks to provide answers to how the African American song was used as a weapon to emancipate cultural identity in the American civil rights movement and how did the African American song reflect the values of the civil Rights movement of the sixties and helped the movements convey its message. In order to answer this question, this study will attempt to answer to understand what role the African American song played in raising the Consciousness and the building of the African-American cultural identity, What songs were Most meaningful and who were the most significant singers, and how were songs adapted sang and taught to the civil Rights activist.

To answer these questions, a combination between an analytical and an ethnographical approach has been adapted. As for the theoretical framework, this study will draw from two main theories. The first theory is "critical race theory", The goal of the intellectual movement known as (CRT) is to comprehend how white supremacy is sustained and reproduced, particularly in the US context. It also seeks to serve as a catalyst for social and political change, it has been embraced interdisciplinary across many areas, most notably education, and in some contexts has evolved into the general term for studies of racial and racist issues. This Theory includes key figures such as, Frantz fanon and W.E.B. du bois (la Garza 01). The second theory is W.E.B Du bois "double consciousness, this theory portrays the feeling that you just have more than one social character, that make it uneasy to improve the sense of self. It is a term introduced by

W.E.B Du Bois in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*, which was written in 1903. Du Bois asserted that African Americans lived in unequal society that was oppressive. At the same time, the African Americans culture promoted equality and nobility. This sort of double consciousness obliged the African Americans to see themselves from the angle of the two cultures, making it uneasy for them to combine their African American subculture with their essentially American identity. Du Bois argues that the problem of black peoples in America utilizing his hard experience as black people, he illustrate the problem of being both a negro and American. Du Bois clarifies that the eras of servitude did not result in absolute freedom (Jamali 27).

African Americans', identity, music, And freedom. All these topics has been a subject of interest for many researchers for the past decades. Generally all those who write on this topic agree that music serves a purpose, some would say it sustained the movement others would consider it as a mean to pass time during the freedom rides. What makes this work different from others is that it looks at music through the lenses of both liberation and cultural emancipation seeking to see what else did the song do for the African Americans.

"Sounds of freedom: songs in the 1960 Southern civil rights movement" by Anne Stefani was the most inspirational article for me to further study this topic. According to Stefani, Freedom Songs were first and foremost part of the myriad local direct actions that occurred in The South between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s, but they soon became a means To sensitize American audiences when Freedom Singers started touring the country to Perform as the voice of the nonviolent movement songs are a distinctive feature of the struggle for black freedom in the South. Her article analyzes the nature and function of Southern songs, demonstrating that they represented much more than protest songs. This shows that beyond their most known Purpose, which was to mobilize and cement collective participation in the multiple

demonstrations and actions of nonviolent resistance to segregation, Freedom Songs had a transforming power. In the context of the southern Freedom Movement, singing became an cathartic Event, a second birth through which African Americans re-appropriated their culture and demonstrated a new identity for themselves and for their people. According to Stefani, Freedom Songs thus can be said to have contributed not only to defeating white supremacy in the South but also to empowering African Americans by reconnecting them to their culture (55, 56).

Another significant work is “Aesthetic Identity, Race, and American ethnic music by William G. Roy’ this text used the concept of aesthetic identity so as to interrogate the connection between musical genres, racial identity, and social movements. In the twentieth century, American traditional music has at times destroyed and sometimes reinforced the boundaries between blacks and whites in the United States. Aesthetic identity is the cultural alignment of artistic genres with social groups and by which groups feel the genres represent ‘our’ or ‘their’ art, music and literature. Then Genre boundaries turned into social boundaries. Traditional music overturns the usual relationship between Genre and social boundaries. Before the age of economic recording, Black and white musicians sang an equivalent music, learned techniques and songs From one another , and shared a social world of performance. The concept of folks Music was Pioneered by academic elites, but unfamiliar to most of the people Until the organized left took it on as a cultural project within the late 1930s and 1940s.Both academic elites and political activists constructed the genre as an alternate to the racialized genres that the commercial recording industry had dubbed “race records” and “hillbilly music.” American communists and their allies were Especially self-conscious about using ethnic music as an instrument of racial solidarity States particularly racially polarized era. Submerged by McCarthyism by The 1960s ( 459).

Bill Lawson's "Jazz and The African-American Experience" is another similar work. This article demonstrates The two Difficulties that Black artists faced first, artistic standards were historically set by the larger white Community which usually had been antithetical to the experiences of black transformation. And Second, the numerous black artists had embraced the view that art and Politics should be separated. In another words, art shouldn't be regarded as an ideological weapon. As the civil rights struggle went forward, the position of "art for art's sake" was changed into the view that black art should and could make a statement about the Black experience and/or raise consciousness through continuous cultural awareness. This obstacle Was picked up by visual artists such as Dana Chandler, Akua McDaniel, Faith Ringgold, and groups like Afro-Cobra. We find this kind of Approach in the works of poets such as Don Lee, Sonja Sanchez, Mari Evans; novelists Like John L. Williams, and Nina Simon (131).

This research contains two chapters, first chapter will examine the events that lead to the beginning of the civil rights movement in America, and birth of black music as a genre, from coded Lyrics inspired by biblical stories to freedom songs. Then the evolution of black protest songs toward a more engaged discourse in Popular songs. We'll Also see how songs have been used as a mode of Decolonization around The world. Then finally discuss the theoretical framework. The second chapter will contain three sections. The first section will shed the light upon the major singers and activists, who inspired the cause, then analyze The most important protest songs of the civil rights movement, will also study specifically the freedom Songs or Civil Right anthems while making a study case of multiple in order to see it's Role in delivering the movement's message. The second part of the chapter will examine cultural Issues during the Movement by leading to the formation of militant groups or artistic movements for black

Empowerment like the black power. The last section will show how the African American song reflected the values, what roles did it serve, and what helped to Make the songs effective in The Civil Rights Movement. In short, This work will demonstrate how music Evolved into a militant Weapon for emancipating the African Americans' cultural identity in in the United States and how the Civil Rights movement was the foundation of this quest by analyzing the most significant songs.

# **Chapter one**

## **Socio-historical framework and the rise of the African American voice**

## **introduction**

For understanding the connection between music, culture, and identity. One must understand the bridge that African Americans had to walk through and the building process of how their identity was and would become. The first chapter of this research is entitled Social Historical Framework and the rise of the African American voice. It will shed the light on the African American culture and identity and its definitions, It is essential to mention the beginning of the African American journey from their roots to their transformed religion as well as the birth of black music as a genre, from coded Lyrics inspired by biblical stories to modern songs. To strengthen our grasp on the topic, The first chapter will also see how songs have been used as a mode of Decolonization by black people from other nations and the main marches of The Civil Rights Movement.

### **1. The African American cultural identity: roots and religion**

Black or African American identity as an entirety is strongly linked to music, even beyond adolescence (Dixon et al 347) Historically, songs have been used as a weapon of coded communication and resistance against slavery and oppression (Pyatak, Muccitelli 57). Bullock reinforced individual identity by calling the verbal protest that developed in the early twentieth century and shaped through the literary efforts as African Americans "were to find a new conception of themselves and a deeper spiritual orientation. The new group aspired to reestablish the Negro's racial heritage, The Negro must reconsider his past in order to make his future. Thus, they wrote about African Kings, black warriors, black leaders of slave rebellions, Negro jockeys, and the problems of being Negro" (Bullock 199). The shift in the definition of identity was visible in literary interpretation based on the historical rejection of a past. The change was based on the worldwide movement among Blacks to connect to their Zion in Africa. The new identity was a

conception of the greatness of the African continent's past by changing blacks' historical places. It was spurred on by the rapid European exploration and exploitation of the African continent that began in the late nineteenth century. In the U.S., Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Dubois pushed blacks to discover their past (Marable 22).

### **1.1 Culture and identity:**

Culture is a number of shared characteristics of a group of individuals, that encompasses place of birth, language, religion, cuisine, literature, social behaviors, art, and music. Some cultures are known to be widespread and have a significant number of people who associate themselves with those certain values, origins, and beliefs. Others can be relatively small, with only a small number of people associating with that culture. Nevertheless, the cultural value cannot be outlined by its size. Regardless of the culture's size, age, or whether it has changed over time or stayed the same, every culture is able to tell us about ourselves, others, and the global community<sup>2</sup>.

Michael L. Hecht, a researcher in the field of human communication Defines identity as a perceived registry in a culture that's legislated in the fitted and effective use of symbols and cultural narratives, similar interpretations and meanings, and common ancestry and traditions. Identity implies a sense of character or personhood, and cultural identity is the private sense of belonging to or class in culture. Identities such as African American, French, and Hindu shift in and through time and space and are composed of diverse elements, like geography, politics, economics, sociology, psychology, and history. At any time, identity is what it was, currently is,

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<sup>2</sup> National geographic society. [https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-culturalidentity/?q=&page=1&per\\_page=25](https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-culturalidentity/?q=&page=1&per_page=25)

and is becoming, and exists on an individual, social, and societal degrees across time and space (Hecht El Al 41).

Identity shapes and is shaped by the people, interactions, as well as the environments in which it has, does, or will exist. It can be defined by the individual and co-created as people interact with one another and the environment. As people align themselves with various groups, this co-creation process is negotiated also, boundaries, symbols, meanings, and norms are modified and developed. Therefore, identity is a characteristic of the individual, the Interaction, the relationship, and the collectivity (Martin et al 201). The main interest in this dissertation is with those who belong to the African American culture. It is clear that for any individual there may be more than one single identity and that each identity is in an unstoppable state moving forward and changing. African Americans in the United States faced and still facing a continuing series of dilemmas, that includes the potential tensions between being African American and American, different ways of being African American, and being an individual and a group member. In addition to this, members of this group are faced with in-group conflicts and out-group assimilationist as well as pressure and discrimination (201).

Edmund D. Pellegrino, a sees "Culture" as perhaps the slipperiest concept in social sciences.' Some years ago, Kluckhohn and Kroeber collected 164 definitions. Of the many definitions available, Pellegrino believes Kuper<sup>3</sup> best captures the connotations of the word in his crisp characterization of culture as a "collective cast of mind.". In his book "African American bioethics" pellegrino takes a "collective cast of mind" to be an outline of all those things that

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<sup>3</sup> Adam cupler is an anthropologist, his definition of culture was within the collected 164 definitions.

give identity to people, nations, organizations, and ethnic group. Under this umbrella, he includes all The things human beings value, which defines them as who they are, what they want to be and perceive themselves to be. “These are the things they value enough to work For, live for, and die for. These are things that define their view of the good Life and shape their morals, that is, their judgments of right and wrong, good And evil”, States Pellegrino. as every human and every group has its own perception of a specific structure of values and beliefs that reflects its history, life experiences, as well as aspirations. In this sense, Humans belong to many "cultures". For instance, to a nation, family, club, or political party (Pellegrino ix).

There are no two persons with specifically the same "cast of mind" as the others who shares their "culture." Nevertheless, it is in those things that are held in common that the form of a culture is established. Therefore, African Americans, like all Americans, have a collective cast of mind on some things and individualized perspectives on many others (200). In “African American bioethics”, Pellegrino indicates that there are two experiences in the lives of black Americans in the United States that seems to be shared in common. The first one is the scars of slavery, the experience of color discrimination, and the minimization of black people as human beings by the dominant culture. The other experience is the collective memory of their African roots, with its various unique cultures and customs transferred from previous generations. Particular features of these two mentioned experiences are shared and produce the "epistemological stance". As individuals, African Americans weigh these experiences sometimes differently in their own lives. So, while there is a collective cast of mind, it must not be analyzed as a stereotype for fear that it becomes a mockery to those who did not share the same experiences (x).

Terry Eagleton shares similar thoughts with pallegirino as he considers culture as one of the most complex words in the English lexicon. It is also notoriously indefinite (Eagleton 7). For instance, it would be possible to talk of a 'civil rights culture' but very difficult to elaborate on exactly what would it contain. He suggests that culture is a phenomenon that aids interest groups to differentiate themselves, despite the fact he accepts that the maintenance of superiority of a certain cultural identity can result in racism or, as he puts it, "spurious attempts to rationalize' this superiority". It has class connotations to be cultured is commonly regarded to be refined and educated. However, this implies that those without refined air and who have received a poor education – for example, the southern black working class – are not cultured. It would be absurd to suggest that such people do not have a culture. As Eagleton further points out, culture could also be defined as 'whatever is superfluous to a society's material (39). One might then even suggest that music is culture, but others such as Guy Carawan of the Highlander Folk School would contend that music is fundamental to human existence. Although Eagleton's formulations so far are vast, they both have one thing in common – which is that identity forms an innate component of culture.

Historically, politically, and socially, African Americans maintain a unique position within U.S. society. religion is a cultural cornerstone of Their history as well as, slavery and segregation, the migration North, civil rights, in addition to the Black feminist and Black Power movements. Their vast political past involves school segregation, voter disenfranchisement, and separation from formal channels of power and their economic life can be described as deprived compared to European Americans. African American culture is also socially distinctive, including their linguistic carry-overs from continental Africa, as well as patterns of interaction and unique nonverbal and verbal styles (Hecht ET Al 07). Distinctions in Structure, culture,

ancestry, and society define the composite African American cultural experience and steer us to assert that African Americans constitute a cultural group. The word composite is used to convey full recognition and understanding that there is not a singular African American experience, but rather a variety of sets of experiences that shape African American cultural identities and communicative behaviors (Hecht ET Al 02).

## **1.2 African American origins and transplantation to the new world:**

African American descendants includes several cultural and regional groups. as it contains, early settlers, immigrants from the Caribbean, immigrants from other parts of the Americas, and recent immigrants from African countries. But mostly, African Americans are descendants of Africans who were forcibly carried to America through the slave trade. Early during the colonial era some were treated as bound servants and freed after a period of time, resulting in a population of free African Americans even in the colonial era.<sup>4</sup> In what is now Louisiana, African Americans were brought as slaves during the French and Spanish colonial periods or brought in by settlers after the Louisiana Purchase. Overtime free Blacks also emigrated from French-speaking areas of the Caribbean. This mix evolved into a group of people who identify today as “Louisiana Creoles.”<sup>5</sup> An estimated 645,000 Africans were imported into the United States between the years 1650 and 1808 as slave labor. They came mainly from sub-Saharan Africa’s northwestern as well as middle-western coastal regions and worked under brutal conditions, especially in the cash crop economy of the rural South ( Bertocchi 14).

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<sup>4</sup> African American Song.” The Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200197451>

The mixed African American experience is an often-used term to characterize the conflict within the African diaspora, out of which was borne African American culture. As they were forced to leave their native land behind, Africans from various groups and clans speaking different languages developed a hybrid culture and a lifestyle in America that incorporated the indigenous cultures of the past with the cruel reality of life in racially segregated America. The Maafa (a great disaster), also known as the “holocaust of enslavement” and the life of African Americans in the United States for the past 300 years is a matter of historical record. Although actual records differ in detail and opinions, the works of WEB DuBois (1903), along with Carter G. Woodson (1969), John Hope Franklin (1988), and Maulana Karenga (1993) are extremely beneficial in understanding African American life and culture. The work of these scholars is valuable due to their contribution toward understanding the African American point of view (Hecht et al 10).

Ron Eyerman's book, “cultural trauma and collective memory” focused on the formation of an African American identity through the theory of cultural trauma as collective memory. More Precisely, "a form of remembrance that grounded the identity" - formation of a people. trauma as a cultural process and the way it effects individuals are not the same. As a cultural process, trauma is reconciled through many forms of representation and tied to the reformation of collective identity and memory (Sherman 1). The idea of a uniquely African American identity emerged in the post-Civil War period after the abolishment of slavery. The trauma of forced servitude and practically complete subordination to the will and whims of another was not precisely something directly experienced by many. However, this came to be central to their attempts to forge a collective identity out of its remembrance. As Slavery established the root of an arising collective identity through an equally arising collective memory, one that signified and

distinguished a race, a people, or a community depending on the level of generalization and point of view being put ahead (10).

This is highly related to Afrocentricity which is an African-centered orientation to the world whereas Africology is the systematic study of Africa for an Africologist to be regarded as Afrocentric, they must be primarily concerned with the placement of African cultural norms, ideas, as well as the liberation of the masses from hegemony and competent explication of Africa's contribution to humanity and the humanity of Africa. The reason this is discussed is that Perhaps one of the most crucial criteria for Afrocentric analysis is the cautious consideration of African natives and descendants as agents in their own experience, rather than puppets acted on by others with little to no distinctive identity of their own (hecht Et Al 11, Kershaw 24 ). Doctor Covin identified five hypotheses that support the Afrocentric perspective:

1. African-American descendants share a common experience, struggle, and origin.
2. Present in Africulture is an immaterial component of resistance to the assault on traditional values affected by the invasion of European legal methods, medicines, political processes, and religions into Africulture.
3. African American culture takes the view that an Afrocentric modernization process would be based on three traditional values: harmony with nature, humaneness, and rhythm.
4. Afrocentricity correlates to the development of a theory of an African means of comprehending and interpreting the world.

These constructs provide the philosophical starting point for an analysis of African American culture. Not All African Americans embrace these assumptions in their everyday life, to suggest

that, would be to suggest that African Americans have a similar cultural consciousness and way of beholding the world (Covin 127).

## **1.2 Religious experience from Africa to America:**

African American religious communities contributed significantly to the American society, not least by providing much of the foundation of ethical, political, and organizational civil rights movement in the twentieth century and through the formation of the idea of its leaders. Such as, Rosa Parks and the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. among them. African Americans and free slaves had their congregations form early in the mid to late eighteenth century after liberation, complete sects have emerged corners. What we today call the "black church" includes seven historic black denominations major, African Methodist Episcopal (AME); African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ); Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME); National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated; National Baptist Convention of America, unincorporated; National Progressive Baptist Convention; And the Church of God in Christ. These denominations emerged after the liberation of American slaves of African descent. They have relied primarily on the Methodist tradition, Baptist and racism, but they often showed links with the American Catholic(Free at last 7).

In "slave religion ", Raboteau clarifies that “similar ways of understanding, shared basic principles, and common habits of ritual were very common among different African religions” (7) Therefore, it is necessary to speak of an African religion. In all African societies, “without a single exception, people have a notion of God... a minimal and fundamental idea about God”(11). Like Jesus Christ, the god of Africans known as a High God, a father, lord, master, judge, or ruler, as it depends on the society that names. Africans are anticipated to be humble before him, to respect and honor him". In African culture's traditions, there was no formal

distinction between the sacred and the profane realms of life, nor between the material and the spiritual; thus there was in traditional Africa no exact word for “religion” because the Africans’ religion permeated and was the basis for all aspects of life, Which include education, politics, harvesting, hunting, homemaking, and community welfare. Since religion permeated the everyday life of African peoples, the great number of religious beliefs that existed were not organized into doctrines, but seemed as ideas and practices that operated everyday life in the various communities (Mbiti 15).

According to Samuel Floyd, Africans depended on spirits for emotional release, confessing their troubles to them as a means of seeking relief. Like the gods, the spirits could interfere in human affairs, aid and meditate with the gods on behalf of their descendants. Unlike Christian religion the Africans believed in life after death differently, because the tone in the later was on the here and now and not on future’s heaven or hell (Floyd 17). As Floyd have explained in his book “power of black music”, “no-line is drawn between the spiritual and the physical”. Besides, salvation and redemption cannot be considered as a part of the African religious concept(18). Singing was a cathartic experience in which they longed to join the ancestors, as revealed in a funeral chant of the Basotho, reported by a European observer:

We stayed outside, /

We stayed for the sorrow, /

We stayed for the tears. /

Oh, if there were a place in heaven for me! /

That I would have wings to fly there! /

If a strong cord came down from the sky, /

I would tie myself to it,/

I would climb up above, /

I would go live there./

(quoted in Zahan 48-49)

The first slave owners agreed on baptizing black slaves. And considering that in Africa, the concept of a supreme god was familiar, they approved this religious conversion. In this striving to protect unity and to affirm identity in a new land. This new God became central to ring ritual, with Christ replacing the previous beliefs. In ring ritual, Christ, not the orisha, drove the participants, and for those slaves introduced to Roman Catholicism (39). As Floyd states:

This African-Catholic syncretism made the transition for Africans to Western culture easier in Latin America and in some parts of the United States, particularly New Orleans, and served as support for the continuation of African traditions in the New World. But it was Protestantism that fueled the religion and religious fervor of enslaved and free blacks in the United States. Protestantism, with its more direct access to the High God through song and praise, made possible the emergence of a new song for Africans, a new song in which they could express themselves as freely as they had in their homeland. This new song was the African-American spiritual (37)

Shortly after, the Church became a source that black people could relate with the tale of the people of Israel living imprisoned in Egypt, as it resembles their own story. Nonetheless, evangelism compelled reading and writing. A knowledge that black people did not have before their conversion; therefore, they began to pertinent themselves with biblical texts particularly

those of the Book of Psalms. The slaves drew African rhythm and harmonies on these texts (Awassi 15). By the end of the 18th century, the first independent churches become the habitat where the slaves, after a long working week, could Freely dance, scream and sing. The following passage from A.M.E. Bishop Daniel Payne’s biography, an exchange between The bishop and the “Band” leader it is Considerable that the latter found the ring shout essential for conversion and for the working of the Spirit. Payne goes on to narrate the “ring” of the “Bands,” also Known as “Fist and Heel Worshippers.” (Raboteau 68):

He who could sing loudest and longest led the ‘Band,’ having His loins girded and a handkerchief in hand with which he Kept time, while his feet resounded on the floor like the drumsticks of a bass drum. In some cases it was the custom to Begin these dances after every night service and keep it up till Midnight, sometimes singing and dancing alternately—a short Prayer and a long dance. Someone has even called it the “Voodoo Dance.” I have remonstrated with a number of pastors for permitting these practices, which vary somewhat in Different localities, but have been invariably met with the response that he could not succeed in restraining them, and an Attempt to compel them to cease would simply drive from our Church . . . And what is more deplorable, Some of our most popular and powerful preachers labor systematically to perpetuate this fanaticism. Such preachers never Rest till they create an excitement that consists in shouting, Jumping and dancing.(69)

his book “subculture”, The theorist and sociologist Hebdige states that The preservation of African traditions (drumming) has been construed in the past by the authorities like the Church, the colonial, and even some post-colonial governments as being naturally provocative, as they posed a symbolic threat to law and order. These outlawed traditions were

considered unchristian antisocial, and positively pagan. They indicated unspeakable alien rituals, made possible prohibited and malicious allegiances, and hinted that darkest of rebellions: a celebration of (Hebdige 31). However, the Bible has been the agent of civilization par excellence – where that alternative values and dreams of a better life were drawn.

The Bible is also central determining force in both music and popular West Indian consciousness in general. In the past, the scriptures had been used by the colonial authorities to implant Western values and to introduce the African to European notions of culture by repressing the soul. It was under their sacred care that civilization itself was to be achieved that Western culture was to fulfill its divinely ordained mission of conquest. Supported by the constant duality of slavery in biblical discourse, it managed to flourish with a relatively relaxed conscience, transforming the "savage" into a diligent servant, the system of interpolation and divine virtues between the disenfranchised African and his rebellious "nature". However, this internal colonization was absolutely biased and flawed (30).

As the years went by, it became clear that there was a distinction between the practice of slavery and the Christian ideology that it had originally “interpreted”. The contradictions became increasingly difficult to contain. Inevitably, the black community began to seek its reflection in the Biblical texts, and the openness of the religious metaphors invited just such a set of identifications. "Africa" that was asleep and forgotten within the language of the white master. Read between the lines, as the script can be written to deliver this Africa, liberate it, and return it to the 'righteous sufferer'. (31)

Many thinkers including E. Franklin Frazier, Calloway-Thomas Lucaites, and John Mbiti

, credited religious life for providing the means for a structured and organized Social life among African Americans. The church affirmed the moral fabric of the community and the organizational network for training for leadership . most African Americans are Christians, with 83% of black Americans identifying as Christian, including 45% who identify as Baptist. While Catholics account for 5% of the population. And only 1% of black Americans identify as Muslims<sup>5</sup>, making church the largest independently funded African American institution in America. Also, The church significantly contributed to African American culture. For instance, Spirituals served as the antecedent of gospel music, which spawned rhythm and blues and rock and roll. As well as varied range of rap and hip-hop music has been inspired by the Black church, with groups like “Kirk Franklin” and “The Family”, as well as “Mary” (Weekes 40).

The African American oral tradition that originated in the African experience and is enacted weekly in pulpits across the country has produced orators to name only a few such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, J. C. Watts, Alan Keyes, and former House Whip Bill Gray. The church, by its surpassed programs, continues to feed the poor, provide youth supporting groups, and advocate for the community. Through organizations such as the National Black Churches Congress, a coalition of seven African-American denominations (the Three Major Baptist Conventions, the Three Major Methodist Churches, and the Church of Christ), has pursued six broad priorities: theological education, employment, economic development, media, Evangelism, and Human Services (Lincoln 121). It is estimated that supporters of the African American Church contribute \$1 billion annually to their parishes, and total assets are believed to exceed \$10 billion. The African American Church remains a funder of the cultural and spiritual

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<sup>5</sup> Religion of black Americas, [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_of\\_black\\_Americans](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_of_black_Americans)

cornerstone of the community. The African American church continues to be a source of the community's cultural and spiritual foundation. It is essential to any study of people's social identities (Hecht et al 21).

## **2 Transformation Of African American Music:**

African-American music or black music is an umbrella term that covers a diverse range of musical genres largely developed by African Americans. Their origins are in musical forms that set of the historical conditions of slavery that characterized the lives of African Americans prior to the American Civil War (Smithsonian). Some of the most popular music types includes, rock and roll, country, rock, funk, jazz, blues, rhythm, specifically, rhythm and blues were created and influenced by African-American artists. On an interviewing nbc new Sydney madden gives a glance of black culture's influenced the music and the entertainment industry "Every genre that is born from America has black roots." Madden said. "The fingerprints of Black creators are all over what makes American music so unique." (Madden).

When African slaves began arriving in colonial America in the seventeenth century they carried multiple cultural traditions that were utterly foreign to European traders, slave captors, and slave holders. This includes, The languages they spoke, the religions and folklore they believed in and practiced, and the music and dances they performed for nearly three centuries in the United States. This implies to modern audiences that the establishment of slavery did not destroy the cultural legacy of slaves nor erase the memories of an African past. In several contexts, slaves proceeded to practice African traditions in both original form and the modified. Captains that lead the slavery ships simplified the transmission of African cultural traditions During the Middle Passage. As They brought African instruments like the drums and the bango aboard the ships to force the slaves to play The instruments, if necessary they'd use the whip

demanding singing and dancing to the music as a mean to reduce the rate of mortality of the slaves. Slaves proceeded to sing songs, perform dances, and play instruments of African origin. They reformulated customs and practices of European origins as well, and that's to conform to African aesthetic ideals In the United States and through the eighteenth century ( Burnim, Maultsby 22)

Transatlantic Slave Trade and the forced transportation of millions of African people across the Atlantic who were then enslaved are a major, undependable part of the building of African American music. the songs of African Americans were created due to the contribution of The cultures from which they were torn and the conditions into which they were forced Into. Great similarities can be seen between the instruments historically used in African American music, like the banjo and the drum, in African musical instruments, as well as multiple features common to African American music similarly have roots in musical traditions in Africa, like the call and response song form and an also the immersive approach to singing (perry 41).

The importance of music in The African American community can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During Their arrival on the new continent, for fear of a revolt, the first slaves were not allowed to Make musical instruments. Despite these challenges of acculturation, the slaves kept a strong connection with Africa by the continuous slave importation until The end of the slave trade<sup>6</sup>. Music aided the enslaved black community to create a cultural identity during the birth of the United States as a nation. As the use of Instruments was not allowed, work time

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<sup>6</sup> Roots of African American Music. <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/african-american-music/roots-ofafrican-american-music>

and tools turned into the first place and the main Way of expression. As Du bois State in his book “the souls of the black Souls:

They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days-Sorrow Songs- for they were weary at heart. And so before each thought that I have written in this book I have set a phrase, a haunting echo of these weird old songs in which the soul of the black slave spoke to men. I was a child these songs have stirred me strangely. They came out of the South unknown to me, one by one, and yet at once I knew them as of me and of mine. (Du bois 178)

The work songs performed in the fields were the only type of songs allowed and preferred because it increased profitability. Then, the spirituals adapted the Holy scriptures, from the story of Hebrews in Egypt, to the story of black people in America, by using coded messages. This allowed them to communicate discreetly without the knowledge of their masters. As a result the black clergymen became the first leaders of the black community. Also, on January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation brought the social Changes to the American Society that also converted the messages conveyed by the religious songs. Furthermore, the Religious songs abandoned coded languages and established a more aggressive style. Out Of the plantation, Black music became the best technique for transmitting messages of revolt. With the historical events of the United States, music will progress and then create Freedom songs. Social movements have transformed the voices and words of the oppressed black community into one that is more proud and ready to fight discrimination, racism, and segregation. Music emerged as a political discourse that relinquished its role in entertainment to become more combative, educational, and inspirational (Awassi 07).

The unification of African American musical traditions like work songs, ring shouts, spirituals, gospel and blues together with features from other places around the world, including, European waltzes, polkas, the polyrhythmic dance music (South America and the Caribbean), led to an outbreak of lyrical styles during the twentieth century (Burnim, Maultsby 202). Some of the most remembered of these genres include jazz, rockabilly, rhythm and blues, rock and roll (which is an outcome of the blues and country music with a powerful beat and leading guitars), soul (a non Church related form of gospel music), funk (a merge of soul, jazz, rhythm and blues), disco (an outcome of funk, Latin, and soul music) and finally hip-hop (a mix of rap, sampling, blues and many other influences).

R&b or Rhythm and blues is a type of African-American dancing music that developed during World War II ( 1939-45 ). Its emergence is linked to demographic, economic, and social changes that happened in American society from the 1940s to the 1960s, as recorded mostly by small, regional independent record labels. many of the rhythm and blues songs recorded in this era, tackled Love and family relationships. and was an antecedent to rock and roll. The term “rhythm and blues” was first coined as a marketing slogan to describe all sorts of secular music made by and for African Americans. Billboard magazine introduced it in 1949 to replace the race music label ( a term in use since 1920 ) (323).

Thanks to the civil rights act of 1964 major forms of discrimination outlawed against African Americans and women. As the political atmosphere began to change during the second half of the twentieth century, a consecutive number of African American artists successfully crossed over into mainstream culture, such as Aretha Franklin, James Brown and Ella Fitzgerald in the pop and jazz worlds, and Leontyne Price and Kathleen Battle in the classical realm (46).

Motown Record Company, is one of the very first Black owned music company in America, was founded in 1959 in Detroit by Berry Gordy, Jr. Who is a successful rhythm-and blues songwriter as well. Motown record helped to establish many great Black singers on the United States cultural level and developed its own style of soul music ( a combination elements of Gospel, rhythm, and blues). Its stars included The Miracles, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations and The Supremes (pelton). President Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 into law, replacing an allowance system of immigration that favored white supremacy with a policy based on immigrant's skills or family relationships with residents in the United States. This new system opened the door for more immigrants to enter the country from African countries, as well as people of African descent from many parts of the world. These immigrants are brought with them thrilling new musical genres to America (Ward 260).

In the 1970s and 1980s, hip-hop emerged in the African American communities in cities like New York, Detroit, Chicago and Los Angeles, and the Bronx. this genre took long established African American musical traditions in new directions. The Bronx hip hop emerged in the mid 70s from block parties thrown In the neighborhood in the Black Spades. Hip-hop groups like, Public Enemy, NWA and Run DMC pulled out on the legacy of old African American musical and cultural forms, such as field hollers and the blues in order to create a unique art form rooted in social protest which used spoken lyrical poetry, sampling, and drumming as the main agents of change (Alridge 190).

Today, the African American song is so deeply connected with United States culture that it turned out to be nearly indistinguishable from it. While the signs of racism continue to build social gaps in certain corners of modern American society, the barriers no longer exist in the musical realm (Henderson 322). From rappers like André 3000, snoop Dogg and pop stars like

Michael Jackson, to gospel artists like Yolanda Adams and Whitney Houston. Even today's performers such as the Weeknd, Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, and many others. African American artists proceed to stir up and shape the musical culture of the United States in utmost profound ways.

### **3. The Birthplace of the Civil Rights Freedom Songs:**

The protest songs sung by civil rights movement activists are known as "freedom songs" or "civil rights movement anthems or hymns are taken from religious music. Activists used the liberation songs to elicit emotions, stimulate feelings, and preserve solidarity during marches, sit-ins, protests, and other events. The music was crucial since it assisted in effectively communicating the movement's message to the participants. In fact, the requirement of music comes from the fact that it was frequently repeated and direct, making it easy to convey the message across the country (King 12). The songs about freedom began as gospel and spiritual tunes. Sam Cooke's "This Little Light of Mine" is one of the most well-known freedom songs. The gospel song "Keep your Eyes on the Prize", Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam, and "We Shall Overcome" by Pete Seeger. B.L. these weren't just songs, they were bullets and shields yielded by African American protesters. Having been at the front line of countless freedom marches and many mass meetings, Martin Luther King, Jr., affirmed the power and the indispensability of music in the freedom struggle:

In a sense the freedom songs are the soul of the movement. They are more than just incantations of clever phrases designed to invigorate a campaign; they are as old as the history of the Negro in America. They are adaptations of the songs the slaves sang — the sorrow songs, the shouts for joy, the battle hymns and the anthems of our movement. I have heard people talk of their beat and rhythm, but we in the movement

are as inspired by their words. ‘Woke Up This Morning with My Mind Stayed on Freedom’ is a sentence that needs no music to make its point. We sing the freedom songs today for the same reason the slaves sang them, because we too are in bondage and the songs add hope to our determination that ‘We shall overcome, Black and white together, We shall overcome someday. (Lincoln ET AL 372)

The Highlander Folk School became a major meeting place for the civil rights movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Many activists, including Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, and Septima Clark, met with Highlander’s staff and volunteers to study protest tactics before implementing them elsewhere. Highlander served to build and mold a new generation of activists who spread the Highlander culture throughout the South through its workshops. Folk singing was essential to the Highlander’s Operation. Visitors were encouraged to sing, dance, and create music. Highlander reasoned that these activities would strengthen communal bonds and develop indigenous leaders (street 23). Their united memory and creativity led to the formation of freedom songs. Almost every one of them was inspired by or adapted from an existing song. In some cases, only a few words were modified to transform the songs into freedom songs, while in others, completely new lyrics were written to accompany the existing music (24). An example of a freedom lyricist is Zilphia Horton, an American musician, community organizer, educator, Civil Rights activist, and folklorist. Zilphia gathered over 1,000 songs from labor unions, communist organizations, and black and white folk cultures. ‘People can be made aware that many of the songs about their everyday lives – songs about their work, hopes, joys, and sorrows – are songs of merit,’ she wrote in 1948. This instills in them a fresh feeling of pride and dignity in their cultural heritage (Horton 17).

The Highlander Center in Tennessee, which had long been involved in labor and civil rights activities, became a key site for the sharing and production of various types of liberation songs from all sources (street 24). According to Bernice Johnson Reagon, Staff and students at Highlander would routinely share tunes then would perform their new songs at subsequent courses to assess how well they were received. If the groups performed well, they would be retained and utilized again. Highlander collected a library of music that visitors identified with using this method. Highlander's repertoire had converged by the early 1960s on an amalgam of African American spirituals, secular union songs from the 1940s, and original works that were an explicit attempt to express the African American freedom cause by music. Guy Carawan also visited the school, bringing his repertoire of freedom songs to Teach the students (45). The so-called "freedom songs" are a vivid memory of the 1960s movement, demonstrating clearly how the movement interacted with a long legacy of cultural and political resistance:

Highlander was one of the gathering places during the early days of the movement. Weekend after weekend in the early 1960s, community leaders and activists from across the South came to share information, to strategize and to plan, to bolster each others' spirits as they returned home to confront segregation. We were based at Highlander for those years and could build on what had been learned there during the Labor Movement — that singing could be a strong unifying force in struggle, and that commonly known songs, particularly southern gospel and religious songs with repetitive stanzas adapted to the situation, were most effective. ( Carawan xviii )

Another major source of freedom songs was Black church music, a musical tradition rooted in African American cultural identity and still vibrating today, as well as the anti-slavery campaigns. As Brian ward explained the important of black church for the movement in his book

just my soul responding, “It is only really possible to Understand it’s significance by placing it within the twin historical Contexts of changes in mass black consciousness generated by an evolving Black freedom struggle, and the steady secularization of black culture which Culminated in the late 1950s and 1960s” (Ward 184).

Another source of inspiration for freedom songs was popular Rhythm & Blues. The Labor Movement also produced some liberation songs, particularly union songs sung by Appalachian miners and southern farmworkers. When they were not .R&B was their lyrical inspiration, young activists occasionally modified existing freedom songs by transferring R&B style formats onto them, rather than using the usual spiritual-gospel-folk musical settings. This happened with Guy Carawan’s “Ballad of the sit-ins”, in which SNCC students did not only hooked to an R&B riff, but from which they later excised a verse about Martin Luther King as if to emphasize the organization’s independence from the older civil rights leadership (203). In “everybody says freedom”, wazir peacock shares a peak of what he experienced during mass meetings:

One night in February, we held a mass meeting. It was the largest one yet — we had to hold it in the First Christian Church. It was powerful. We couldn’t stop singing freedom songs. Those songs had a real message that night: Freedom doesn’t come as a gift. It comes through knowledge and power —political power. It comes from the vote. That night I went to bed at the office. That next morning people started knocking on the door first thing in the morning. They were ready to go down and attempt to register. They kept coming and coming — they knew they probably would not be allowed to register, but it was their right to try. (Seeger, Reiser 166)

The political commitment and social activism of the vocalists distinguishes 1960s protest music from prior protest songs. The 1960s are regarded as the golden age of the protest movement (Silos 39), a time when social action spawned protest songs in favor of the Utopian movement, counterculture movement, anti-Vietnam war campaign, and Civil Rights struggle. social change Required direct, forceful actions, sit-ins, demonstrations, boycotts, Marches, rallies, and prosecutions were essential during the social protest music provided the perfect background for instilling a sense of idealism in the protestors (Massey 49). Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, activists singers and composers such as Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Pete Seeger built on the political and social investment of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Musicians like the Hutchinson singers, paving the way and leaving a great legacy. Even activist groups have adopted Negro spirituals as gathering anthems for their meetings.

#### **4. The black anthems as a mode of Decolonization:**

Decolonizing music pertains to a conscious decision to move from a “colonial” mentality to a “decolonized” mentality. in his magnum opus “A History of Western Music”, The music historian Donald J. Grout, formulated this concept in very striking words. He observed that “reconciliation of the new with the traditional is the task that confronts every artist in his generation, and one that can be avoided only at the price of artistic suicide” (Ingle 16).

Beyond its many joys, music is a method that allows people to do and visualize things that may otherwise be unimaginable or perhaps impossible. It is more than a note; it is a complicated system of meanings that reconcile our relationships with our space, histories, and one another. The anthems of a movement are not simply in response to its actions but it is a means toward collective action and new political approaches. Within the African diaspora, music operates as a method of rebellion, revolution, and future visions that interfere with and question

the artificial differences used to reject, detain, and demolish communities. The anthems developed and set by these communities as it served as expressions of defense and were so powerful that they went viral and were adopted by others ( Redmond 01).

Marginalized groups around the world have benefited from the special formats that musical production needs That include, language, coordinated tunes, and practicing performances that represent, define, and steer the performers and audience of this music as Paul Leroy Robeson, an American artist and activist who became well known both for his cultural accomplishments and for his political stances stated "Get them to sing your songs and they'll want to know who you are."(01) Robinson considered songs or anthems as a meaning-making attempt that is strategically assigned to formulate identification between people who may be culturally, ideologically, or geographically separate or distinct from one another. By "getting them to sing songs" Robeson urged vocal and embodied work, thus building a global audible audience with the power to radically modify their circumstances as his repertoire of world folk songs was sung in more than thirty different languages (17)

Thus Anthems is an interdisciplinary cultural history charting multiple actions in the diaspora music industry that transformed black political cultures. From the Black South's demand to "raise every voice and sing" to black female workers declaring "we will conquer," some songs have helped sustain the collective visions that change the world. Although they are compelling, it is more than the artistry or the charisma of the music or the performer that brings people together.' In the way that they symbolize and call into existence a system of ideas or socio-political positions, the songs are like hymns that are devices that merge the audience and the political public (Redmond 02).

Listening to Black Anthems is a political act of performance as it lines up social related engagements that speak of misperception, pseudo-history, violence, as well as radical exclusion. Songs transmitted alternative theories, practices of cultural blackness, and became a sought out representations, not stumbled upon. Contrasting to standard national anthems, black anthems were not ubiquitous but were performed selectively, and even when their use was not formalized, there was always some clarity in the ends generated by the performance. By collectively singing and listening within their circumstances. Singing was a method of participation within the freedom dreams and liberation projects of an emergent (2).

Through anthems, the illustration between art and politics as well as listener and performer is blurred. Anthems require something from their listeners. During performance, they often prompted their hands placed over hearts or standing at attention. However, more than a physical motion, freedom songs require an affirmation to a network of beliefs that stimulate and organize the receivers of the music. this inspires the audience to believe that the circumstances or world around them can change for the better—that the vision of freedom represented in the song's lyrics and/or history is worth fighting for in the contemporary moment. Black communities boast remarkable histories of struggle for freedom through collective gestures (Redmond 03).

#### **4.1 south Africa:**

The South African apartheid began in 1948 and lasted until 1994. It involved a system of regulated racial segregation, white supremacy, and placed the entirety of political power in the hands of the white minority. Resistance to apartheid embodied in a different ways, including boycotts , nonviolent protests , and armed resistance (vershbow 8). In South Africa, music played a huge role in the movement against apartheid, not only on the national level but also on the

international one. The impacts of songs rejecting apartheid contained raising awareness, building unity within this movement, creating support for the movement against apartheid , and " presenting an alternative vision of culture in a future democratic South Africa through their songs . " (Gilbert, Shirli 33)

The lyrics and rhythm of this music Reflects the environment under which it was composed in. soon after apartheid, The protest music of the 1950s had begun to explicitly address peoples ' grievances regarding overpass laws and forced relocation. Following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the arrest or exile of several leaders, songs became more downbeat, while increasing censorship forced them to use subtle and hidden meanings(Schumann 25) . Songs and performances also allowed people to avoid the severe restrictions on other modes of expression. Nevertheless, songs played a part in the aggressive resistance that began in the 1960s (jolaosho 2). The Soweto revolution in 1976 led to a renaissance, with songs like " Soweto Blues " motivating a further explicit challenge to the apartheid government. This movement enhanced during the 80s, with racially mixed bands questioning the laws of apartheid before these were disassembled with the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the eventual improvement of majority rule in 1994. Over the history, antiapartheid music within South Africa faced crucial censorship from the government, both directly and by the South African Broadcasting Corporation; moreover, musicians opposing the government encountered threats, harassment, as well as arrests ( 27).

Musicians from different countries also participated in the resistance to apartheid. And that's by releasing music that criticize the South African government and by contributing in a cultural boycott of South Africa from 1980 onward. Songs like " Biko " by Peter Gabriel, and " Sun City " by Artists United Against Apartheid. Furthermore, a concert in honor of Nelson

Mandela's 70th birthday (09). Popular South African musicians such as Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela were forced into exile, released music critical of apartheid. This music had a significant impact on Western culture, as it contributed to the "moral outrage" over apartheid.

Thinkers have acknowledged that anti-apartheid music within South Africa, although it attained less recognition worldwide played an equally crucial role in pressuring the South African government. The Music producer Sifiso Ntuli says:

A song is something that we communicate to those people who otherwise would not understand where we are coming from. You could give them a long political speech – they would still not understand. But I tell you: when you finish that song, people will be like 'Damn, I know where you n\*\*s are coming' from. Death unto Apartheid! (Hlongwane, Mtshali 512).

The song "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (God bless Africa) was originally written as a ballad in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a teacher at a Methodist mission school not far from Johannesburg. The song turned out to be the official anthem of the African National Congress (ANC) and a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement. It managed to reach people's hearts and represent the misery of the oppressed. Furthermore, it was reckoned the unofficial national anthem of South Africa (Martin 168). And that's for its connection to the ANC, later, the song was banned by the apartheid government. In 1997, three years after the ending of the apartheid, the anthem 'Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika' was assembled with the past South African anthem, Die Stem van Suid Afrika or (The Voice of South Africa) to shape a new national anthem, which is till today still sung in

South. Also, the song "Ndodemnyama we Verwoerd" which was written in the 50s by Vuyisile Mini, a singer and ANC member who composed some of the vastly significant resistance songs during the early years of apartheid (160). This song carried a ferocious warning to Hendrik Verwoerd, who was the prime minister and the 'architect of the apartheid. translated from isiXhosa to English, the lyrics are:

'Naants' indod' emnyama Vervoerd! Pasopa nantsi' ndodemnyama, Verwoerd!'/  
'Here is the black man, Verwoerd! Watch out, here is the black man, Verwoerd! /' (Collison)

#### **4.1 Zimbabwe:**

The past records colonialism as a lasting infection of violent supremacy. The colonizers arrive with greed and dominant weapons, and sustain order through oppression. Occasionally, says a UC Santa Barbara historian, they also use the music of the conquered as a sharp weapon. Mhoze Chikowero, an associate professor of history at UCSB, reveals In "African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe" how British colonists restrained and co-opted African music and dance, along with the role of music as Africans rose up to reclaim their independence in the Second war of self-liberation (chimurenga) in the 60s and '70s. The First war failed in 96-97, resulting in African subjugation (Matiza, Mutasa 352). In his book "zenzele" nozipo Maraire states:

To outsiders, perhaps, Zimbabwe is just a name signifying some random geographical boundaries... But for me it is different. Rhodesia was a forbidden country for me, a white man's play land...I was always outside looking in...And I did not know until years of bloodshed and turmoil later just how sweet life could be here...I had inhabited Rhodesia, but in Zimbabwe I lived. ( Maraire 52)

in April 1980 , Bob Marley arrived to headline the independence celebrations that would behold Rhodesia turn into Zimbabwe , his. Dedicated song " Zimbabwe , whiwas " the centerpiece of his album " Survival " , was the most famous foreign song in the country back then . Marley , who belong to Rastafariani religion had addressed cultural and political resistance against white oppression in Africa for a long time , he wanted to " build a blood - claat studio in Africa , have hit after blood - claat hit " so much that he spent thousands of dollars flying light and sound devices to Zimbabwe in order to create a concert atmosphere that would suit that of Madison Square Garden .”(dwamena, 2018). As he sang:

We gonna fight (we gon' fight), fight for our rights!/  
/

Natty Dread it in-a (Zimbabwe)/

Set it up in (Zimbabwe)/

Mash it up-a in-a Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)/

Africans a-liberate (Zimbabwe), yeah./

No more internal power struggle/  
/

We come together to overcome the little trouble/  
/

Soon we'll find out who is the real revolutionary/  
/

'Cause I don't want my people to be contrary./

#### **4.2 Angola**

‘Keep moving forward Angolan’ Alberto Teta Lando (1948–2008) sang, “ you have only one road,” on his 1974 album *Independência*, which was released as the country’s struggle of independence from Portugal (1961–75) was coming to and end. He suggested that it didn’t matter if you were white, mulatto, or black. Instead, what mattered was a desire to make Angola better:

This path is difficult/  
But it brings happiness /  
“This is important to no one/  
If you are black/  
But what counts to us is our determination/  
To make Angola betterA truly free Angola/  
An independent Angola/ (Moehn 181)

The Union of Peoples of Angola (UPA) began a sustained armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial forces in 1961. Later that year an album named Angola Freedom Songs—Recorded by the UPA Fighters in Angola, produced by Folkways Records in New York City in 1962. it contained songs from the UPA fighters that declare the need to fight against the Portuguese, and to support and enroll in the UPA troops. According to the lyrics of one of the songs, “When we were born / We found Angola under Portuguese rule / We know now it belongs to us.” (moorman 242).

At that time the war for decolonization in Angola was wrecked by the crises between the MPLA and FNLA liberation factions, they sang the hopes of the people on this album, the messenger for the faceless and anonymous, and transformed their sorrows into a message of hope and struggle (Da Silva). “Angolano Segue Em Frente” is the perfect example of a song that illustrates the need for union and peace despite the difficulties of racism, marginalization, and injustice encountered in order to attain this objective Angola:

Watch out, I’m in mortal danger/  
And I already warned you/  
She’ll stay and I’ll leave/

My child/

Cruel men are after her/

My child/

On a tide of misfortune/

God offered me this offspring/

That I gave birth too/

And she'll remain here/

When I'll be gone/

### **5. The Non Violent Protest During The Civil Right Movement :**

The American civil rights movement was a fight for social justice that was held mostly during the 50s and 60s for African Americans to obtain equal rights under the law in the U.S. after the official abolishment of slavery during The Civil War, the discrimination against Black people still lingered. As they continued to resist the devastating consequences of racism, particularly in the South. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Black Americans had had enough of racism and violence against them. Using many forms of Nonviolent Protests Along with many white Americans they, lined up and started an unprecedented fight for equality that spanned for two decades<sup>7</sup>.

On December 1, 1955, NAACP activist Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a public bus in Alabama to a white person. Spurred by the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, and its various activities in other cities in the mid1950s, led by people like Martin Luther King Jr ,Rosa parks, Malcolm X, the Little Rock

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<sup>7</sup> Civil Rights Movement. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.history.com/.amp/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>

Nine, that fought with Eloquent speeches, protest marches, woeful events, freedom songs and dramatic conflicts between activists and government , all this marked an age where “ freedom” took on a variety of meanings. the founder of the Northern civil rights group and The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) that validated the Importance of music and the Movement, especially during the nonviolent protests ( Hann 01). In May 1961, CORE organized freedom rides to Question the Supreme Court ruling that segregation was illegal on buses, airplanes and Businesses. James Farmer was arrested and wrote, “ As a way of keeping our spirits up, we sang freedom songs. The prison Officials said “If you don’t stop singing, we’ll take away your mattresses.”.... They came in and took the mattresses away and people sang as they had Never sang before.” ( Rappaport 35).

the Civil Rights Movement in the United States restored universal suffrage in the South and made legal segregation illegal. The movement’s overarching approach included lawsuits, mass media use, boycotts, protests, sit-ins, and other acts of civil disobedience to mobilize public opinion against entrenched racism and obtain meaningful legal reform in the United States. As thousands of people were arrested in nonviolent protests, and photographs of the clashes sparked significant public sympathy for the movement’s goals. Hundreds of thousands more took part in marches, boycotts, and voter registration drives across the southern United States. The civil rights movement sparked a national crisis that pushed the federal government to intervene to reverse segregation laws in southern states, restore African-American voting rights, and end legal discrimination in housing, education, and employment.( Zunes, Laird, 02).

During campaigns like Birmingham or Selma, marches laid the framework for nonviolent protest. They were also controversial in nature, challenging segregationists. The marches in Birmingham and Selma were watershed moments, with police beating youngsters in

Birmingham and state troopers attacking protestors in Selma (now known as Bloody Sunday) (Nimtz 18).

The threat of a march in Cicero, for example, pushed the mayor of Chicago to reconsider negotiating with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). It's crucial to remember that the American democratic system allowed African-Americans to organize protests. Even if the right to free assembly was routinely violated by local police forces, the First Amendment guaranteed it. Despite the fact that some demonstrations were restricted owing to court injunctions and demonstrators encountered hostility from segregationists, protesters were allowed to demonstrate (king 60). During several campaigns, American judges, such as in St. Augustine, resisted demands by attorneys to ban rallies Nonviolent African-American protestors conducted marches to bring public attention to political concerns. Protest marches were a crucial dramatic technique. Marches had to: “dramatize an evil, to mobilize the forces of good will, and to generate pressure and power for change,” wrote King.

The March on Washington was the most successful civil rights march in history. The nonviolent march, according to Rustin, was equally as effective as the Birmingham effort. "What Birmingham accomplished in terms of goals, the March accomplished in terms of method."(Rustin 153 ). The march was even sponsored by the President, who described it as "a peaceful assembly appealing for the redress of complaints... in the great tradition". As it extended the movement's support, causing it to shift its focus to political and economic issues. It was particularly successful since it drew crowds ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 people, making it the greatest demonstration in US history at the time. The large turnout of participants, the show of peaceful whites and African-Americans, and the elaborate speeches given,

particularly Martin Luther King's I Have A Dream speech, made the march a major magnet for public opinion (Weisbrot 83).

Protesters conducted marches as part of long-term campaigns to draw media and public attention to their cause. The marches themselves had a little impact on the opposition. Marches, according to King, have to be staged over a long period of time in order to be effective. This time period lasted between thirty and forty-five days. "They must also be large enough to cause some inconvenience to the ruling forces, or they will go ignored." In other words, they must demand the attention of the press, because it is the press that interprets the issue to the general public and thereby sets the machinery for change in action," (King 61). However, there were only a few instances where marches had an instant impact and demonstrators forced their opponents to comply with their demands. When an African-American doctor was wrongfully imprisoned in Monroe, North Carolina, for example, people marched to the police station, crammed into halls and corridors, and refused to leave. The doctor was released since the authorities were unable to apprehend all of the suspects. However, this is an outlier because marches were usually part of a larger campaign (33).

Because one of the main goals of a march is to raise public awareness about a particular topic, protesters frequently used symbolic protests. When Gandhi arranged his "salt satyagraha," a month-long march over a 240-mile route, he mastered this approach. "The march was not exactly part of civil disobedience, but a theatrical prelude," writes Judith M. Brown of the march (Brown 99). The March from Montgomery to Selma was one of the movement's most successful marches, as well as a symbolic one (Nimtz 03). It was a multi-day march with over three thousand participants singing "freedom songs" such as Pete Seeger's "We Shall Overcome" and Nina Simone's "Mississippi Goddam." In Montgomery, they were greeted by about 25,000

sympathizers. The march drew widespread attention due to the high number of demonstrators, the march's length from Montgomery to Selma, and the protesters' upbeat demeanor. Activists not only planned the march, but also put up shows for the participants. The march took place in the aftermath of "Bloody Sunday," when African-American protestors had previously gained global notice owing to state trooper brutality. The spectacle of people heading to St. Augustine's ancient "Old Slave Market" to pray was likewise symbolic, dramatic, and garnered global attention (Abdel Samad 241).

Organizing marches, on the other hand, was not always strategic. Nonviolent leaders called off rallies if segregationists' retaliation was unproductively violent or if the march had little effect on the public. In a letter to the parents of volunteers serving in the South, Bob Moses, for example, stated that protesters were "particularly avoiding any protests for integrated facilities, as we do not believe the state is ready to sanction such activity at the present." (Mills 106). Northern cities, such as Chicago, did not have the same impact as southern cities. Following Chicago, King identified this geopolitical shift when he claimed that "regular instability of city life swallows demonstrations as "simple temporary drama." This is quite typical in everyday mass activity. A march in the South, on the other hand, was a disaster. It is a faint, short shout of protest in the North (king 14). Nonviolent protest was seen as an outlier in the daily lives of southerners, attracting public attention. The South was not used to protests and demonstrations, which aided African-American protestors since state troopers or police forces who were not prepared to respond forcefully to civil rights demonstrations violently reacted to the protest, drawing public attention (Abdel Samad 241).

The Albany Movement began on November 17, 1961, in Albany, Georgia, as a desegregation campaign. It was founded by local activists from the Student Nonviolent

Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Ministerial Alliance, the Federation of Woman's Clubs, and the Negro Voters League. It stood up against the city's racial segregation and prejudice in all forms. It aimed to eliminate all types of racial segregation in the city, but it began by desegregating public transportation. It also established a multiracial committee to debate further desegregation and demanded the release of individuals imprisoned in previous segregation demonstrations.<sup>8</sup> The Albany Movement grew swiftly, gaining backing from the NAACP, the Ministerial Alliance, the Federation of Woman's Clubs, and the Negro Voters League, among others. When 500 protestors were arrested in December, it became a huge movement that drew national attention. The nonviolent movement was founded on the belief that if people witnessed African Americans suffering without retaliating violently, the country would develop sympathy. As a result, the media's role was crucial, and no one understood it better than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Albany Movement urged King to join their demonstration, and he arrived in December 1961, bringing the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) authority and resources with him ( Klein, Muscato).

The Movement used a variety of approaches to achieve ultimate desegregation. Meetings, speeches, marches, sit-ins, and rallies were all held by protesters. But there was one method in particular that proved to be remarkably effective which was singing. Singing proven to be a highly powerful technique to motivate protestors, keep energy and morale high, and

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<sup>8</sup> Momodu, contributed by: Samuel. "The Albany Movement (1961–1962) •." •, 11 Jan. 2020, [www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/albany-movement-1961-1962/](http://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/albany-movement-1961-1962/).

present a relatively non-threatening form of nonviolent protest, partly inspired by the importance of song in African American Baptist churches (Greensboro sit-ins).

The 1960 sit-in protests and the subsequent formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) revealed grassroots militancy's potential power and enabled a new generation of young people to build confidence in their own leadership. The student sit-ins were defined as a "electrifying movement of Negro students that cracked the calm surface of campuses and communities across the South" by Martin Luther King, Jr. Four black students from North Carolina A & T College began the sit-ins on February 1, 1960, at a Woolworth lunch counter in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. Before sitting at the counter allocated for white customers, the students—Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair, Franklin McCain, and David Richmond—purchased many products in the store. They politely refused to leave when a waitress asked them to; to their astonishment, they were not jailed. Until the business closed, the four kids sat for over an hour.<sup>9</sup> No one would take part in a sit-in like this unless they were serious about their cause.

The instructions were straightforward, sit quietly and wait for your meal. Local consumers frequently jeered and threatened the contestants. They were sometimes pelted with food or ketchup. When confronted by furious bystanders, protestors remained silent. The pupil would curl up into a ball on the floor and receive the punishment in the event of a physical attack. Any violent retaliation would be counterproductive to the spirit of the sit in when the

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<sup>9</sup> "Sit-Ins." The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, 27 June 2020, [kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/sit-ins](http://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/sit-ins).

police arrived to arrest the demonstrators, a new queue of students would form to fill the empty seats. Sit-in organizers believed that if the violence was limited to the white community, the world would recognize their cause as just. Over 1500 black demonstrators were arrested before the end of the school year. Their sacrifice, though, yielded results. Slowly but steadily, eateries across the South began to abandon their segregation rules<sup>10</sup>.

The Greensboro sit-ins revitalized the American civil rights movement by reinforcing earlier victories such as Montgomery bus boycott that had demonstrated the power of large groups of people to influence public opinion and alter governmental policy. The sit-in, a kind of "nonviolent direct action," was used, along with the work stoppage and the boycott, to identify and resist pre-existing social conditions as an alternative to legal or legislative channels of political intervention. The sit-in, however, was fundamentally different from previous demonstration tactics. Sit-ins applied pressure by insistently occupying locations from which they were typically barred, as opposed to boycotters or strikers who made their point through coordinated absences. Instead of withdrawing oneself from the spectacle, sit-inners take center stage (Kowal 03).

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<sup>10</sup> Greensboro Sit-In, History.com, FEB 4,2010

### **Conclusion:**

The dilemma of expressing being both an African and an American can be difficult to determine as it depends on the experience each African American went through. The African American identity has been affected by multiple factors throughout the years. Nevertheless, they held their grasp on their heritage since the moment they stepped into slavery trading ships till nowadays. Shared history, religion, and especially music. These were the main components that Africans kept in the new land and even though the majority converted to Christianity, Musical rituals were still an important element of their beliefs even in Church. As years went African American music evolved turning into a strong foundation for multiple musical genres. The African song was not only used by African Americans as a weapon of resistance but by many black nations fighting white colonization away from their land and consciousness.

# **Chapter Two**

## **The African American Song as a Weapon of Resistance: Assertion of Black Identity**

## **Introduction:**

From the 1950s to the 1960s, the civil rights movement in America had both highs and lows. On the one hand, significant progress was accomplished in the treatment of blacks and other minorities in America, but the shift was clouded by violence and racial conflict. Although the procedure was long and tough, music was present every step of the way. Music served as a means of cultural expression that was oriented on religion and shared history, connecting them to their cultural identity. This aided black activists in organizing and mobilizing for social change. The importance of music in the movement cannot be ignored, and it is difficult to conceive the movement's success without it. Singers and their songs were crucial in the civil rights movement because they were used as a weapon in the nonviolent movement not only to express years of racism in the African American Diaspora. More importantly, songs helped to liberate their culture and identity with the help of associations such as black power and black nationalism, as they rewrote slavery songs for marches, embraced their true accents, hairstyles, and true black pride singing their way to freedom and equality.

### **1. The African American Song as a Weapon in the Freedom Battle:**

As the American Civil Rights Movement successfully challenged legal segregation, it also hauled in a cultural transformation that altered music, fashion, and culture in the United States. Singers of folk, blues, and gospel blended harmonies and beats to propel the march for racial equality ahead. Activists dressed in formal church clothes marched to demand racial equality in the 1950s and 1960s (Hsiung 23). As the civil rights movement gathered popularity in the mid-1960s, white and black activists' attire changed to reflect the political and social tide of

change. Dashikis, afros, black leather jackets, berets, blue jeans, loose flowing blouses, long hair, and flowers became symbols of the 1950s and 1960s, one of the most revolutionary periods in American and world history for human and racial equality.

The Movement provides an exceptionally rich example of the significance and application of music, as well as the complicated interplay between culture and politics. This movement has been labeled a singing movement and can be traced back to the ending and failure of Reconstruction in the late 1870s. Music as a cultural artifact – particularly as a communal performance – but also as received text and recording was significant in a number of ways (Frith 143).

Music re-united a community by connecting them to the past, present, and future. Even the comparatively distant spectator shares in the collective memory articulated by music, as Du Bois makes evident in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. In his writings as a Northerner and college-educated intellectual, Du Bois confessed that when he first heard the “sorrow songs” that came from slavery, he felt a strong sense of emphatic belonging. What’s important here is Du Bois’ sense of camaraderie, of identification with a people that he would never meet face to face, an imagined community. This association was sparked, at least in part, by music rooted in the collective singing of an oral culture, which, in Du Bois’ instance, was experienced in a highly stylized concert format far from its origins (Eyerman 446).

Understanding freedom songs within the context of double consciousness also lends credibility to the idea that the unity promotes a culturally enriched education while playing significant social roles. In *The Souls of Black Folks*, DuBois described the experience of being an African American as “ hindered in their natural movement, expression, and development” (Du

Bois 131 ). The following paragraph makes it clear that, for Du Bois, this is not only a “sensation” but forms a crucial object of “striving” and political struggle for African American people in the United States:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife. This longing to attain selfconscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. ( Du Bois 9 )

His book has been described as an "orchestrated text", clearly implying the role of music itself in his book and theory (Stepito 308). Moreover, The task that faced black Americans in the mid-twentieth century was then, in large part, to repudiate the white definition of blacks and replace it with a definition of their own making. Civil rights activists' testimony suggests that they shared at least a subconscious sense of the need to replace the common definition with a self-definition as they recalled the inclination to devote their energies to the Civil Rights Movement. They needed a new definition to help them move forward (Stokes 12). Here, double consciousness presents the need for consistent cultural code shifting that is transitioning between the double mindedness's two modes of thinking and interaction. Thus, music as a Form overcame the identity turmoil of Reconstruction and apartheid in the 1950s and 1960s. Several activists talked, in retrospect. Of the self-doubts, they experienced before their movement involvement. For instance, before her famous refusal to vacate a bus seat in Montgomery,

Alabama, Rosa Parks visited Highlander Folk School. She was surprised, she recalled when she saw there other African Americans able to interact comfortably with whites and plan for change. Parks' reaction was one of dismay: "I felt that I had been destroyed long ago." (Sanger 4)

In selecting songs to sing, civil rights activists created an unusual mix of old and modern. They could have written totally new songs to meet the movement's specific requirements, and in some cases they did. They mostly avoided this option, opting instead to sing songs that had been part of the black singing heritage or other protest traditions for many years. Though activists were drawn to traditional songs, they frequently made their own, sometimes significant, adaptations to them (Sanger 5). By noting these shifts and paying close attention to what activists choose to save from the old songs, we can gain a better understanding of how a set of people used language to achieve their goals. Music has had an impact on cultures and communities all across the world, and it has been passed down for the centuries. It also has the power to affect people's attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. While everybody has an emotional bond to music, its impact on society may not be immediately apparent.

### **1.1 Pete Seeger's We Shall Overcome:**

"We shall overcome" is a gospel song that was adapted from the song "I'll Overcome Some Day", a hymn by Charles Albert Tindley that was first published in 1900. The song's roots is in the Highlander Folk School during the labor fight of the 1940s (Redmond 18). It's melody is even older as it dates back to Slavery dates, confirming the song's origins to black culture (Turck 54). In 1960, Guy Carawan taught "We Shall Overcome" to young members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during meetings. The civil rights movement protestors claimed the song as their anthem. They sang it as they sat in at segregated lunch

counters, at rallies and at marches, as they were beaten and detained and prisoned. They sang it at funerals for those who were killed because of their work for civil rights and justice (55). The executive director of King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference Wyatt Tee Walker, said:

One cannot describe the vitality and emotion this one song evokes across the Southland. I have heard it sung in great mass meetings with a thousand voices singing as one; I've heard a half-dozen sing it softly behind the bars of the Hinds County prison in Mississippi; I've heard old women singing it on the way to work in Albany, Georgia; I've heard the students singing it as they were being dragged away to jail. It generates power that is indescribable (Carawan, 11).

The Song "We Shall Overcome" was originally used for openly political purposes in 1945, when members of the Food and Tobacco Workers Union (FTWU) went on strike. The lyrics changed by One of the workers Lucille Simmons, an African American woman with a background in gospel singing, who performed the song at the end of each day of picketing. Significantly, the text of the song was changed from "I will overcome" to "We shall overcome". Because the pronoun 'I' has long been equivalent with 'We' in African American culture, Redmond theorizes that the change was made to reach out to non-Black cultures participated in the labor movement. for whom ideas of the individual did not automatically evoke the collective (Barker 53). In March 31, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Spoke at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. His expressive speech "Remaining Awake through a Great Revolution" included the message and words from "We Shall Overcome.":

We're going to Win our freedom because both the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of the almighty God are embodied in our echoing demands. And so, however dark it is, however deep the angry feelings are, and however violent explosions are, I can

still sing “We Shall Overcome. We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it Bends toward justice. We shall overcome because Carlyle is right—No lie can live forever. We shall overcome because William Cullen Bryant is right—Truth, Crushed to earth, will rise again. We shall overcome because James Russell Lowell is right—as we were Singing earlier today.(Mieder 213)

The Song talks about overcoming racial injustice. It says, “We’ll walk hand in hand”, implying that white people and black people will walk together and be united as one society. “We shall live in peace” people from different colors can live together in peace. “As the song continues Black and white together someday. One society. “We are not afraid” meaning we are not frightened to protest for justice. According to knight’s book “anthem”, We Shall Overcome has been sung by several activists, but one of its most famous applications was by the 250,000 attendees at the Washington for Jobs and Freedom march (knight 295).

### **1.2 Odetta’s Oh Freedom:**

Since the very beginning of her appearance, Odetta was a symbol of black pride and a decolonized mind. As Seeger recalled the first time he saw Odetta in her biography:

Seeger couldn’t help but notice the young black woman, tall and heavy set, with short, kinky hair—not straightened, as was the accepted style then for African American women—sitting alone, observing the others with a warm smile but keeping her distance. With encouragement, she finally agreed to sing, and the room stilled as she rose with her guitar, gathering herself.

Head back, eyes closed, she belted out “Take This Hammer, (Odetta 09).

Her rise coincided with the flowering of the Civil Rights Era, and her songs about freedom and the plight of prisoners and the downtrodden helped inspire activists and the general public alike (Evans). She was a bullet breaking through racist black stereotypes and raising

young Africans' conscious, providing lessons in black history that weren't being taught in schools. As she recalled in an interview she did with new York Times, "As I did those songs, I could work on my hate and fury without being antisocial—Through those songs, I learned things about the history of black people in this country that the historians in school had not been willing to tell us about or had lied about" (Weiner)

Odette's song "Oh Freedom" is one of her many recordings. The captivating rhythm and lyrics quickly made this song a hit across the country. She sang "Oh, Freedom" at the 1963 March on Washington, a song written by newly liberated slaves after the Civil War. Oh, Freedom was a song of strength and determination that dates back to the days of slavery. It was also a tune that allowed for spontaneous verse creation and adaptation:

No more weeping/

No more shooting/

No more tear gas/

No more jail house/

No Bull Connor/

Traditionally, each verse ended with "Before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave" And "home to my Lord and be free", but by the mid-sixties some activists changed the last phrase and were singing to "As I fight for my right to be free". The most famously sang version was by the civil rights activists.

Following these statements, we can easily understand that "Oh Freedom" is a lyrical depiction of the vocalists' deepest wish. In her book "Words: Slave Life and the Power of the

Spirituals” Dr. Ellen Gunther, Professor of Church Music at Wesley Theological Seminary notes that “A song of resistance, defiance, and escape, it captures the determination of the slave’s heart. Although clearly in physical bondage, slaves did not naturally consider themselves enslaved, as the line, ‘Before I’d be a slave, I’d be buried in my grave’ attests” (117). The song’s most obvious interpretation is that it celebrates the end of slavery and the liberation of its subjects. “Before I’ll be a slave, I’ll be buried in my grave,” a phrase from the song, was unmistakably a statement of conscious resistance. Declaring that there is no going back to the previous condition. The intensity of such imagery (they will die before they can ever be slaves again) provides optimism, but also a sense of struggle, a far more aggressive kind of resistance than African Americans normally demonstrated during slavery (Matthews).

The song also expresses a collective grief (as attested by the alternative verses in the Carawan edition, such as “No More Burning Churches” and “No More Jim Crow.”) Perhaps because slavery was so universally awful, the message of “Oh Freedom” as spiritual has been widely interpreted as primarily a ceremonial exclamation. Nevertheless, the nuances of the version More recently express some complexity in the song, It can celebrate the freedom that exists and claim the freedom that has been withheld. The Negro Spiritual Scholarship Foundation asserts, “What is clear that what gives Negro spiritual songs their power is the way in which they invite the human voice to add contour, rhythm, texture, and melody. Rhythm, variety, and emotional depth to the words. The African-American experience resonates within and through it all” (NSSF). The delivery of this song was the deciding factor in its intentions and reception, whether happy or sad (Matthews 42).

According to the university of Virginia department of American studies, “Oh Freedom” calls for freedom operates on two levels; freedom from slavery and freedom in heaven. The

refrain changes during the song, from “Oh Freedom” to “No More Moaning” and “No More Weeping.” The emphasis here is on the narrator’s emancipation from his or her previous racial oppression. The refrain eventually changes to “There’ll be singing,” indicating that the song’s development is from agony to joy . In the 1960s, racial prejudice was still a major issue, and the song pushed African-Americans to unite together and break their chains (Habib). The emotions reflected in the lyrics echoed across the United States. The hymn is quite powerful, and it served as a powerful message to the oppressed African-American community.

As mentioned before, Odetta was a symbol of decolonization, this can be connected Frantz Fanon’s famous work “Black Skin White Masks “in which they have similar effects and motives. In recent years, Frantz Fanon has increasingly become recognized as one of the most important and formative philosophers or theorists of the mid-twentieth century. His best-known piece, “Black skin white masks” (1952), is regarded as an illustration of changes in decolonization ideologies. Similarly to the civil rights movement, Négritude was French anticolonial literary movement that criticized white dominance and the rationalization of black emotions, cultural identity, language, and mentality that was a subject of dialogue with Fanon’s work in the 1930s and 1940s (Farban 95) .

In “Black Skin, White Masks “ , Fanon clearly seeks equality and civil rights in which he states, “I, the man of color, want only this: That the tool never possess the man. That the enslavement of man by man cease forever. That is, of one by another. That it be possible for me to discover and to love man, wherever he may be.”

### **1.3 Nina Simone's Mississippi goddam:**

Nina Simone was the most constantly engaged star from anywhere near the musical universe during the civil rights movement. No song would manifest the far-reaching dimensions of Nina Simone's political aesthetic in concert more masterfully than her own original protest composition "Mississippi Goddam" (Brooks 182). On a cultural terrain, "Mississippi Goddam" represented pain and wrath. It also offered one of the various political positions that people in and out of movements (black power and black nationalism) were forming in the early 1960s, much beyond the liberal activists of civil rights' emphasis on interracial activism. It suggests that the song's political power and the many ways in which cultural influence mattered to black activism far more than just as a soundtrack to the movement, and not just as a reflection of the movement's pre-existing political objectives (Feldstein 1350).

Nina Simone's involvement in the civil rights struggle grew steadily, but it did not manifest itself in either personal participation or song lyrics until the summer and autumn of 1963 when she wrote "Mississippi Goddam," a famous protest song. As a white supremacist terror act known as the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church bombing claimed the lives of four young Black girls on that day. The incongruously joyful show music, though, was not simply pleading for attention on this one event. Simone was also terribly upset over the recent shooting death in Mississippi of civil rights activist Medgar Evers (Ward 300). She was expressing her dissatisfaction with all of the acts of violence and injustice perpetrated against Black people in the segregated South by weaponizing music itself, politicizing her anger through songs so intelligently, Simone marked a turning point in her career and the Civil Rights Movement (Loudermilk 123).

In her 1968 interview with Michael Smith, Simone explained that after the two events occurred, she asked Stroud to teach her How to use a gun. She told Smith, “I’m not beyond killing—nobody is.” She further explained, “At first I tried to make myself a gun.” She gathered some materials that her husband, an ex-police Officer, had around the house ( Feldstein 1368). She continued “I was going to take one of them out, and I didn’t care who it was”. Then Andy, her husband at the time Said, ‘Nina, you can’t kill anyone. You are a musician. Do what you do”. At that time Nina decided to wield her song as a weapon, “When I sat down the whole song happened. I never stopped writing until the thing was finished.” (Acker 77) The final song, composed in under an hour, would become her first battle cry and political song for the civil rights movement. “It was my first civil rights song,” she later recalled, Simone turned her anguish, bitterness, anger, and passion into a powerful piece of music. In such little time, she wrote what was to become an anthem for the civil rights movement. She recalled, “It erupted out of me quicker than I could write it down,” (Simon, Cleary 90).

“Alabama’s gotten me so upset /

Tennessee made me lose my rest /

And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam/

Simone sings the first line of the song. She described writing and singing it as “firing ten bullets back” at the four members of the Ku Klux Klan who set the bomb.

The general slowness of change and justice in America is also addressed in Simone’s protest anthem. (Fields). As “Mississippi Goddam” was the closest Rhythm and Blues got in the early 1960s to Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” the famous 1963 letter in which the imprisoned civil rights leader responded to criticisms from some white clergymen that

he was seeking too much racial change too quickly. “Wait’ has nearly always meant ‘Never,’” wrote King. Claiming that blacks were fed up with waiting for whites to grant them their rights. With its powerful gospel-jazz chording and stentorian voices, (Ward 301). Simone’s song brilliantly portrayed the same atmosphere of growing anger with white deception and empty promises:

I don’t trust you anymore /

You keep on saying ‘Go slow!’ /

Go slow! // But that’s just the trouble/

She also highlights the concerns about a skewed criminal justice system, which could easily be applied to racial injustices that are still being challenged today:

Hound dogs on my trail /

School children sitting in jail /

Black cat cross my path /

I think every day’s gonna be my last/

The lyrics were full of rage and sorrow, which contrasted sharply with the fast-paced and lively melody. Simone passionately rejected the notions that race relations might change over time that the South was unique in terms of prejudice and that African Americans could or would patiently seek political rights throughout several verses. “My people and I are almost due,” she stated. Simone also questioned the sustainability of a beloved community of Whites and Blacks, which was still heavily associated with liberal civil rights action at the time (Feldstein 1349). The (mostly white) crowd at Carnegie Hall who heard the show song being recorded live did not

appear to catch the meaning at first. “The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam, and I mean every word of it,” Simone says at the outset of the performance, as the audience titters and laughs. “Bet you thought I was kidding didn’t you?” she says to the crowd again during the recording. Only a few whispers are heard in response to her question (Street 133).

#### **1.4 Sam Cooke’s A change is Gonna Come:**

Sam Cooke is without a doubt one of the most influential voices in American popular music history. He helped to establish the foundation for modern soul music while also overcoming over a music industry that was known for undervaluing Black talent at the time. (Neal 25). Cooke founded his own record labels, SAR and Derby Records, in 1961, with the help of his friend and colleague J.W. Alexander. SAR Records helped to develop new musical talent. Cooke Also attempted to acquire access to the revenues he deserved because of his popularity in American popular music, which represented clear display of Black pride and self-determination (Burford 122). As black novelist Julian Mayfield phrased it, Cooke never passed into the mainstream and oblivion.” His commitment to black culture and black people culminated in his work with the SAR record label. “According to Bobby Womack, Cooke was also determined to bring the political meanings and raise race consciousness, masked by his pop lyrics closer to the surface: “He said “Bobby let me tell you something. People will buy the news if it’s sung with a melody” He said, "News is cold. Only bad news makes the press. But if you have sung it with a melody, it would lighten the burden a little bit, and people would understand (Warner 32).

“A Change is Gonna Come” was a daring shift from Sam Cooke’s impressive run of more than 30 crossover pop songs. It was not only about Cooke’s gospel background; it was also a political song. The song risked the white fan base and his place on white radio playlists in

America (Norris 1). Cook admired Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," a civil rights ballad. That he immediately included it into his live repertoire, yet something disturbed him, according to historian Daniel Wolff: "Geez, a white boy creating a song like that?". Peter Guralnick writes in 2005's "Dream Boogie that Cooke was "so carried away with the message, and the fact that a white boy had written it, that, he told Alex, he was almost ashamed not to have written something like that himself"(Guralnick 667). When "A Change Is Gonna Come" was released, it was directly adopted as an anthem by the Civil Rights Movement. Mark Naison, a Fordham University professor who's teaching a course called "From Rock n' Roll to Hip Hop, spoke with NPR about Cooke's legacy in an interview:

"A Change is gonna come" bridged the multiple and diverse feelings about America in the Black community—the portion that wants to forget about all the pain and suffering, the portion which honors the pain and suffering, and the portion which is determined to stick together to overcome this in the face of obstacles. There's something for everybody in this song who is working to overcome a tragic history. (Naison)

The song was socially conscious given it's testimony of racial prejudice and desire for change. According to Christopher Trigg, In Sam Cooke's song, there are two types of movement. The title alludes to a faceless sort of development. Whereas other anthems relate to a destination where their performers are going, this one does not (Trigg 993). It's 'change' that's on the move here. He waits for the 'coming change,' which he believes will happen. His personal journeys are not straight, but rather circular. He was born 'in a small tent' by a river, and 'exactly like the river,' he says, 'I've been running ever since.' There's a significant possibility that this opening refers to a revival camp (994). Despite this, he is perplexed by religious doubt in the second stanza:

It's been too hard living, /

But I'm afraid to die, /

Cause I don't know what's up the e, beyond the sky/

The third verse moves his story into an explicitly urban setting – ‘I go to the movie and I go downtown’ – implying towards the recent civil unrest in America’s cities, and, perhaps, even the protest sit-ins: ‘Somebody keep telling me / “don’t hang around.”’ This movement from the riverbed to the South Side is temporal, as well as spatial (993). As Daniel Wolff observes, the first two verses are ‘general enough to be from some old spiritual,’ but the third has to take place in the present (Wolf 291). Wherever, or whenever, the protagonist is, he is met by trouble and disappointment. As the inspiration behind the verse where Cooke proclaims that he asked for help from his brother, but instead, his brother ended up “Kick in “Cooke down to his knees (Neal 24). This interpretation seems valid as a representation of that event, as protesters struggled for racial equality and justice but instead, they found themselves as in the “ Bloody Sunday “ tragedy, assaulted by state troopers, “ knocking many to the ground and beating them with nightsticks “ (Cantwell ).

By the last verse we seem to have come up with a resolution, as the singer tells us, “There’ve been times that I thought I couldn’t last for long, / But now I think I’m able to carry on.” This temporary expression of faith is a far cry from the overly optimistic “I’m on my way” or the confident, righteousness of “we shall overcome.” Moreover, the significance of this withhold is far from certain (Trigg 992). Sam cook knew that the African American community could not bring the political, social, and economic changes they desired if they were too disappointed. The last stanza exemplifies this optimistic attitude.

“It’s been a long time, a long time, but I know change is coming.” It reminds us, instead, of the difference between his wandering circular motion and the decisive arrival—change—that he expects. He questions the idea that the singer has advanced, and gained some knowledge about himself. At the end of the song, he’s exactly in the same position he was in the beginning. The song was released two weeks after his death in 1964... in a stark reminder that the singer’s life was marked not only by resounding success as a musician but also by incredible personal tragedy (Cantwell).

### **1.5 James Brown’s Say it loud I’m black and proud:**

“Say it loud I’m black and proud.” Is the title of James Brown’s song, as well as the title of his 1969 album. Which publicly expressed African Americans’ desire to reclaim, restore, and express so-called black identity and expression. Not surprisingly, during the late civil rights movement, the song became an anthem in black America (Fouché 639). Brown’s close friend, entertainer Little Richard, said to MSNBC about his Friend: “He was an innovator, an emancipator, and an originator...All that rap music comes from James Brown,” (smith). Few years ago from the release of this album, Stokely Carmichael clearly articulated the meaning of Black power that James Brown referred to in his song. In the book of the same title, Black Power, Carmichael defined black power as “inviting black people in this country to unite, recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community.” It’s a call for black people to start creating their own goals, leading their organizations, and supporting them. A call to reject the American’s society’s discriminatory structures and values.

The song begins Stating the stereotypical opinions white supremacists had over African

Americans “there are those who find us malicious / There are those who say that we do not lack confidence” brown sings, yet he finishes it with a reply singing, “Me, I say that we will not stop until we get what we deserve”. Then the song takes another turn stating the racism and oppression African Americans went through, “We’ve been rolled in flour and despised /We’ve been treated badly” “I’ve worked on jobs with my feet and my hands But all the work I did was for the other man And now we demand a chance To do things for ourselves” yet These treatments won’t be allowed no more as he sings with pride:

Say it loud and clear/

I’m black and I’m proud/

Say it loud and clear/

I’m black and I’m proud/

Say It Loud, I’m Black and I’m Proud became a song of black pride for black people in the fall of 1968. In the middle of the “black is beautiful” movement that was sweeping from urban to rural America, the lyrics pushed black people to speak up for themselves. James Brown, the Godfather of Soul, wrote in his 1986 book that the song cost him white listeners because it was misinterpreted:

The song is obsolete now. Really, it was obsolete when I cut it, but it was needed. You shouldn’t have to tell people what race they are, and you shouldn’t have to teach people they should be proud. . . . But it was necessary to teach pride then, and I think the song did a lot of good for a lot of people. That song scared people, too. Many white people did not understand it. . . . People called Black and Proud militant and angry – maybe because of the line about dying on your feet instead of living on your knees. But really, if you listen to it, it sounds like

a children's song. That's why I had children in it, so children who heard it could grow up feeling pride. (Brown 311)

Brown's song mixed "we shall overcome" and point-blank Protest shouts with ancestral soul strength, Youth movement energy, and Brown's own awakening to Black consciousness (Sullivan 94). With The inclusion of trombonist Fred Wesley and a children's chorus to his revue The James Brown sound was as fresh and musically revelatory as ever on the refrain. The album was transcendent in every way. It was musical confirmation that the journey toward self-worth and the required psychological transformation to reach power had begun, and that everyone with a radio could obtain it. The song, however, was negatively received, with many claiming it cost him his mainstream career; he lost the pop audience, as well as the white listeners, when his message "became militant." According to Brown, SNCC and the Black Panthers' use of the song helped to "obliterate its peaceful and positive message." And yet, brown says, "It helped Afro-Americans in general and the dark-skinned man in Particular and I'm proud of that." (Brown 332)

"That song came out at the height of the black power movement," said Christopher Strain, a history professor at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. "It was the quintessential black power song. It stood for black empowerment and self-reliance (Lewis). The political climate in which he wrote the song could not have been more timely. In an interview by Barney Hoskins in 2003, James Brown spoke about his song, "I clearly remember that we called ourselves 'colored', and after the song came out, we talked about ourselves as 'blacks'. My song shows even today to people that words, music, a song can therefore have an impact on society. "

## **2. Defendants of Black Culture: Black Nationalism and Black Power Singing Tunes of Freedom:**

The 1960s and 1970s were an important period in American history that continues to have a significant impact on current American politics, economics, and arts. Midway through the 1960s, it became clear that the Civil Rights movement's primary goal of equality did not provide many practical solutions to identity crises. As a result, more and more conscious Afro-Americans turned to the more extreme options of Black Power and nationalism (Morrison 52). Various social groups such as the black power movement and Black Nationalism, challenged the dominant philosophy and structure of American society at this time. The Black Power Movement was a set of organized operations carried out by African Americans in the United States from 1967 to 1974 with the goal of political and economic independence. While Black Nationalism is an ongoing movement, which has existed long before the late 1960's and early 1970's. Early sentiments of Black Nationalism echoed throughout society as early as the days of slavery in the US (Blake 17). In the less extreme case, Black Nationalism is an ideology and a mindset and black power is the practice. These two social movements were important forces in the African Americans Freedom Movement and the intergenerational struggle for the liberation of people of African descent<sup>11</sup>.

Organizations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the United States Organization (US), and the Black Panther Party (BPP) gave the Black Power Movement a political push (Tyehimba 24). Malcolm X was a black power leader who thought that history and culture had a vital role to play in the

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<sup>11</sup> Black nationalism. <https://digilab.libs.uga.edu/exhibits/exhibits/show/civil-rights-digital-history-p/black-brown-power/black-nationalism>.

struggle for African liberation. He stated: “ But by keeping us completely cut off from our past, it is easy for the man who has power over us to make us willing to stay at this level because we will feel that we were always at this level, a low level. That’s why I say it is so important for you and me to spend time today learning something about the past so that we can better understand the present, analyze it, and then do something about it” (Malcolm X 04).

The ideas of the Black Power and Black nationalism Movements affected all areas of life of African Americans. There was a strong cultural revitalization effort in the African community. The advocates of Black Power concluded that the problem for Africans in America was the lack of power (Carmichael Et al). Therefore, the goal of Africans in America must be empowerment, Black Power was a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, and to build a sense of community .It was a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations, and to support those organizations. The BPM advocated for a more active political challenge as well as a culturally informed activities to support the fight for rights. They called on black people to unite and organize around a strong sense of self and community. And also, exemplifies factors that inspire and drive social movements such as strong cultural identity and political solidarity (Freeland 261).

Because the BPM was an all-encompassing movement that demanded political, economic, and cultural changes. Popular music and lyrics played an important role in not just supporting the Black power but also defining it. Popular music was seen as an instrument for mobilization and Decolonization that could fight American capitalism’s injustices and racism in order to develop an affirmative ideology as African Americans decolonized their minds while also responding to or creating openings in the political system. Curtis Mayfield, who produced many of the songs that helped develop and define the BPM with his bend “the Impressions”,

exemplifies the working of music in the movement . Also their 1967 song “We’re a Winner” can be considered the spirit of the movement (262).

The Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong’O defines decolonizing the mind as deconstructing the thoughts, attitudes, and values that arise from the colonial way of thinking. For numerous musicians within the past colonial period, singing in one’s native language is more than innovative expression. In decolonizing the mind Ngugi contends that musicians have stood up to mental colonization by holding native musical practices whereas advancing innovation as he stated, “They sang the old songs or composed new ones incorporating the new experiences in industries and urban life and in working-class struggle and organizations. These singers pushed the languages to new limits, renewing and reinvigorating them by coining new words and new expressions” (Enyi 58).

People of Africans origin and the wealthy African musical heritage that they carried with them was part of the establishment of modern Americans is one of significance of the African Americans experience to the social legacy and the cultural legacies of all Americans regardless of race and origin (Lewis). Thus, despite the fact that the African American song wasn’t in native language like ngugi urged the song to be in order to decolonize the mind, the impact of it still remained powerful in the act of Decolonization as the songs are strongly connect to their ancestors and homeland Africa.

Black nationalists, on the other hand, claimed that black people should band together to express pride in their history and culture while also gaining major economic and political power. Due to the dark masses’ approval. His idea of the artist’s role was at the centre of the debate. Initially, Amiri Baraka who is an activist, artist, and an African American leader, believed that by rejecting Western form and structures, jazz musicians were transmitting some sort of basic

truth about the black experience. However, as his ideas became more rigorous, he began to see soul music as more directly speaking to black people. By insisting that their audiences follow their experience, the jazzmen alienated themselves from the masses. As a result, Baraka believed that Curtis Mayfield's music addressed to the masses (Jones 180). As he indicated in 1969, Soul music was popular among black people because "it explains us to ourselves, it is about us... it is an extension of us" (124). The music needed to reflect the collective spirit of the public rather than the preferences of a select few. Instead of meaningless abstractions' to idle away the hours in social indulgence, it had to be functional – James Brown's straightforward 'Say It Loud, I'm Black And I'm Proud' was a perfect example of that.

Baraka's work became an effective tool of projecting ideology after he adopted Black Nationalism. Michele Wallace is inaccurate in this regard when she claims that Baraka was "first and last a writer... most concerned with captivating pictures"(Wallace 63). Baraka maintained that only agit-prop art remained valid, just as the Black Panther Party and US claimed that art without even a message was pointless. It might seem that instrumental music, lacking words, would not be the most effective medium for expressing outrage. Yet John Coltrane's message is loud and clear. As his music reached places where lyrics could not. Coltrane introduced a new depth to his emotional arsenal in his later years. Some recall him as one of the angry jazzmen, whether it was owing to his own motives or the views of others (Davis 152). Miles Davis addressed him in his biography:

Trane's music and what he was playing during the last two or three years of his life represented, for many blacks, the fire and passion and rage and anger and rebellion and love that they felt, especially among the young black intellectuals and revolutionaries of that time. He was expressing through music what H. Rap Brown and Stokely Carmichael and the Black

Panthers and Huey Newton were saying with their words, what the Last Poets and Amiri Baraka were saying in poetry. He was their torchbearer in jazz, now ahead of me. He played what they felt inside and were expressing through riots- “burn, baby, burn “– that were taking place everywhere in this country during the 1960s. It was all about revolution for a lot of young black people – Afro hairdos, dashikis, black power, fists raised in the air. Coltrane was their symbol, their pride their beautiful, black revolutionary prides. I had been it a few years back, now he was it, and that was cool with me (152).

The civil rights movement was looking for a new path. The rallying cry of “black power” was used by radicals to resist integrationists and their white liberal allies. Peller who is professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center and prominent member of the critical race theory states: “Black nationalists asserted a positive and liberating role for race consciousness, as sources of community, culture, and solidarity to build upon rather than transcend,”. And, at a time while unity appeared to bring only false benefits to the community as a whole, Black Nationalism appeared to be the solution (Peller 760).

Advocates of Black Nationalism have persistently challenged an integrationist concept of racial development among at least one part of the African American community. Rather than transcending race consciousness, black nationalists asserted a positive and liberating function for it as a source of community, culture, and solidarity to build upon. They established a sustained critique of integrationism as closely related to assimilation, or at the very least historically so. The problem of race consciousness symbolically split whites committed to racial justice and whites committed to racial dominance within the white community. However, within the black community, race consciousness has historically separated individuals who hold to racial solidarity principles into two groups: first, from assimilationists who found white culture more

attractive ; and second from those who concluded that if “the price of black racial identity was the continuation of white racial identity in its traditional, repressive form, then integration was preferable” (761).

## **2.1 Black Art Movement**

the Black Art Movement aimed to use “culture as a weapon” against white cultural superiority. The four elements of the Black Art Movement were “art for the people’s sake,” a discourse on the Black Aesthetic, historical memory restoration, and Black Pride and Consciousness. The phrase “art for the sake of the people” comes from Haki Madhubuti’s poem Wall of Respect. The poem was written as a tribute to the Chicago Southside Wall of Respect, which was built in 1967 (Prigoff, Dunitz 24).

In African American communities in America, artists and activists founded institutions and organizations that launched community projects such as the Wall of Respect. In African communities, they developed community theatre, poetry houses, and murals. These groups allowed poor and working-class Africans to participate in activities connected with so-called high culture, such as poetry and theatre. In contrast to the lifestyles of Euro-Americans, the art made by these groups mirrored the lives and history of ordinary people. These artists, groups, and organizations also created art that aided in the liberation of Africa. The Black Arts Movement preaches that emancipation is deeply connected to politics and culture, according to cultural scholar Larry Neal. The culture provides us with a radical moral vision, a value system, and a methodology for shaping the political movement. Here, it is no solely meant as an artistic forms when someone says ‘culture.’ Instead, it’s people’s values, lifestyles, and feelings as they’re manifested in everyday life (Woods 09).

The movement's next component was a discourse among creative intellectuals concerning the Black Aesthetic. The writer and activist Hoyt Fuller state that "Young writers of the black ghetto have started out in pursuit of a black aesthetic, a system of separating and evaluating the artistic works of black people that reflect the specific nature and imperatives of black experience," wrote Hoyt Fuller, a writer and activist ( Gayle 09). According to Locke, the "New Negro's" artistic output aimed to establish a positive sense of racial identity and to assert black artists' role in American culture. Great art is a sign of racial maturity, according to African American writers like Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois. The leaders of this so-called Negro or Harlem Renaissance, which researcher David Levering Lewis has since termed to as "civil rights by copyright," once believed that artistic expression could change deeply rooted perceptions of black inferiority and eradicate discrimination (Calo 581).

The growth of Black Pride/Consciousness was the movement's final component. The African mentality has been harmed by centuries of white domination and social degradation. "W. E. B. Du Bois, a prominent African scholar, talk about the idea of double consciousness of Africans in the United State of America. He stated: "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness- an American, a Negro- two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder"(Du Bois 05).

## **2.2 black is Beautiful**

Some of the music created by popular African American musicians heavily emphasizes black pride. Songs from the Civil Rights Movement era, such James Brown's "Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud" and "I don't want nobody to give me nothing (open the door, I'll get it

myself)” and “Keep on Pushing,” emphasized black cultural pride (koskoff 237). There has been a drive for individuals of color to be heard going back to 1960s. Through their works of art and music, musicians and artists like James Brown gained the respect of the American people. Establishing movements such as “Black is Beautiful.”

“Black is beautiful” was a catchphrase that referred to a broad acceptance of black culture and identity. It urged people to value the African-American history as a valuable legacy, as well as to take pride in current black achievements. “Black is beautiful” promoted emotional and psychological well-being as part of its philosophy. The movement acknowledged natural hairstyles such as the “Afro,” as well as the African American community’s diverse skin colors, hair textures, and physical traits. As the African Author idowu koyenikan in his book Wealth for all Africans: How every African can Live the Life of Their Dreams clearly states the change of the African mindset:

Most people write me off when they see me.

They do not know my story.

They say I am just an African.

They judge me before they get to know me.

What they do not know is

The pride I have in the blood that runs through my veins;

The pride I have in my rich culture and the history of my people;

The pride I have in my strong family ties and the deep connection to my community;

The pride I have in the African music, African art, and African dance;

The pride I have in my name and the meaning behind it.

Just as my name has meaning, I too will live my life with meaning.

So you think I am nothing?  
Don't worry about what I am now,  
For what I will be, I am gradually becoming.  
I will raise my head high wherever I go  
Because of my African pride,  
And nobody will take that away from me. (kyenikan)

The American historian Robin Kelley clarifies that the idea of black self-determination was vital to what he calls the black fight for freedom as abolitionism, Garvey's Back to Africa Movement, the Pan African Congress, the Harlem Renaissance, the Negritude, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power movement, and the black feminist struggle. The purpose of these freedom movements was to generate awareness through African slaves to become conscious of themselves as people, to shape a collective identity centered on their common experiences (Jha 35, 36).

### **3. Serving the Movement: The Roles of Freedom Songs:**

As mentioned in the first chapter, Africans who were forcibly kidnapped from their houses and sent to America began singing as a means of expressing their feelings as early as 1619. Work songs were used by Africans in the 1700s to depict the living and working conditions that slaves were forced to endure. While they were permitted to assemble outside of work at church, they sang songs. During church services, a soloist would often shout a phrase, which the crowd would then repeat whilst joining hands. In terms of music, this marked the start of call and response. Soloists would occasionally yell encouragements for the rest of the group to sing and praise (Winter 01).

Music raised people's spirits and kept the Civil Rights Movement going. Singing aided in the development of a spirit that conveyed the emotions of demonstrators and all those who listened to songs. These Spirituals were sung in many situations, including meetings, prayer vigils, protests, freedom rides, sit-ins, jails, and gatherings. They were sung to enhance spirits, instill courage, and foster a sense of community. Police and onlookers were confused and irritated as a result of singing. Songs provide a unique perspective on many significant developments and events in the Civil Rights Movement. Segregated lunch counters, restaurants, churches, transportation, schools, swimming pools, employment, and voter registration were all the objectives of their protests. The lyrics of the songs were altered by students and demonstrators to fit their individual protests or gatherings (Carawan 12).

During early American history, songs have been a part of a wide legacy of dissent and conflict in American history. Singing has always been a good way to endure, resist, and protest oppressive situations and policies in many times of American history, from slave songs through rock music, folk music, and Freedom Songs. Freedom Songs became a characteristic aspect of the battle for black freedom in the South in the 1950s and 1960s, beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott and continuing through sit-ins, Freedom Rides, the Albany Movement, and all subsequent nonviolent activities. They were utilized both inside and outside the civil rights movement to keep the struggle going as well as to promote it. Singing was an existential experience for the nonviolent activists and volunteers of the southern civil rights movement, who used it to play the American story of racial oppression, resistance, and liberation. Freedom songs were above all part of the numerous local immediate actions that took place in the South between the mid-1950s and the late 1960s, but they quickly became a way of sensitizing American audiences once the Freedom Singers began moving around the country as the nonviolent

movement's voice (Stefani 01,02). In the course of the civil rights movement, songs played a crucial role in conveying the message of the movement and reflecting its values.

As Charles Payne states:

The changing fortunes of the movement and the morale of its participants could have been gauged by the intensity of the singing at the meetings. Music had always been a major part of the black religious experience. Ministers knew that a good choir was a good recruiting device. In the same fashion, many who came to meetings came just to hear the singing (Reed 28)

Singing in the black tradition is a tremendously communal experience. As a result, simply attending a meeting to listen can swiftly escalate to deeper levels of commitment. One may even argue that if they can have their voices heard, their politics will follow. Music is more deeply embedded in memory than mere speech, and this property has made it a useful organizational tool. It's one thing to listen to a political speech and pick up a few ideas. It's another thing to sing a song and have the politically charged words become etched in your mind. When you sing, you commit to a concept on a deeper level than if you merely hear it spoken about. The movement was focused about "commitment," and singing was frequently used as a improvisation measures. (Payne 261).

Music can also be utilized to enhance certain types of engagement. For example, Mississippi organizer Sam Block recalls utilizing songs to ease people into higher levels of leadership. He recalls how essential liberation songs were to him "an organizing tool to bring people together—not only together bring them together but also the organizational glue to hold them together. He states, "I started to give people the responsibility of thinking about a song they would want to sing that night and of changing that song, you know, from a gospel song to a

freedom one”(146). The body played an important role in this deepening of devotion through the black song. Civil rights activists frequently spoke of “putting your body on the line” for the cause. Bodies were literally the movement's weapon, and being "on the line" implied being in the line of fire, which included fists, spit, and occasionally bullets (Reed 28).

Singing is a deeply bodily act, as Bernice Reagon so eloquently illustrates. In meetings, letting your voice go, putting it “out there,” was also a kind of rehearsal for, and an act of, putting your body on the line. The impression of personal strength derived from singing in unison with a large group of people was transferred into front-line movement power. “The Negroes began to sing,” Reagon recounts from a voter registration meeting in 1962. With the old familiar lines ‘We are climbing Jacob’s ladder,’ the voices that were initially weak grew stronger as they progressed up the scale.” When the sheriff arrived to disturb the meeting, the singing became louder, ending in a rousing chorus of “We Shall Overcome” as the sheriff walked away (29).

Music used to convey the movement’s essential values and strategies, in addition to assisting recruiting and developing devotion. According to Kerran Sanger, the sequencing of lyrics in a song often worked as a transition from abstract concepts such as freedom and equality to real activities to secure that value, for example sitting in, going to jail, breaking an injunction (Sanger 106). The movement was centered on numerous types of mass demonstrations, ranging from marches to civil disobedience actions. Most protests were initially silent, as any evidence of “rowdiness” would be exploited as an excuse for violence. Initially, songs were primarily used in nonviolence rallies and workshops (Tilly 79). However, it became evident that they do play an important role in protests and civil disobedience actions. When large groups of black people gathered in the South, they were seen as a danger, a possible mob. Singing (along with prayer)

became a great technique to keep a mass from turning into a mob (Payne 3), as well as to show opponents that they were watching an orchestrated event rather than a mob activity. Songs provided messages of quiet defiance rather than fury, and they emphasized the action's goals, stakes, and issues. Singing can serve as a rehearsal for collective activity as well as a direct element of the action. Singers are not typically thought of as dangerous figures. The singing activists' nonviolent intentions were communicated by their posture and behavior (Reed 29).

Songs were frequently used to express the challenging concept of nonviolent struggle. Nonviolence was a basic value of the movement, although it was understood by various civil rights workers, as well as many other participants. Freedom songs were a firmly held, often religious principle for some, and largely tactical for others. Activists were occasionally forced to carry guns in self-defense in some situations, particularly in rural areas, despite their commitment to nonviolence in their movement actions. Nonviolence is a formidable weapon, especially in situations where the opponent has a near monopoly on the means of violence and where the use of that violence is frequently justified by public opinion. Several songs juxtaposed segregationists' deeds of violence with demonstrators' nonviolence: "We've met jail and violence, too," or "We're gonna to board that big Greyhound / Carrying love from town to town." Both of these verses from "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" relate to the movement's adoption of Christian love for one's adversaries through the lengthy heritage of pacifism. In the movement, love would be almost as important as freedom, and it was successfully used to contradict the hate released by white supremacy in the form of police dog attacks, beatings, and a variety of other types of brutality (30).

While circumstances threatened to spiral out of control, music may be used more proactively to alter the mood and, as a result, the behavior of the participants. Music also helped

to de-stress a tense situation. Likewise, music could energize a tired mass. Based on the tempo and spirit with which it was performed, the same song may do either. Because they were constantly altered to the needs of specific situations, conditions, and localities, there is no such thing as a full version of a freedom song (Seeger Et al 85).

### **3.1 the effectiveness of freedom Singing:**

No cultural force had a more significant role at all levels of resistance than “freedom songs,” since the three primary networks of radio, television, and churches assisted in spreading its impacts (Reed 13). As the three key networks of media (radio and television, protests, and churches helped spreading it’s effects. Singing proved to have wide appeal across class, regional, generational, gender, and other lines of difference. Through the sharing of recordings and concerts, television and radio served to extend that sense of pride, empowerment, and cultural unity far beyond the ranks of frontline activists who were transformed by their personal experience of protest and battle (Ward 449).

When speaking about the Civil Rights Movement and music, Bernice Johnson Reagon said, “I began to sing songs and the course of singing changed the song so that it made sense for that particular moment. Although I was not consciously aware of it, this was one of my earliest experiences with how my music was supposed to function” (Reagon 1). Reagon spent time in jail during the Civil Rights Movement, just like many other activists. While there, she gained still another level of musical comprehension because she was surrounded by many different women from various backgrounds, yet their differences melted away when she sang (1). As She stated, “Somehow, making a song required an expression of that which was Common to us all. This music was like an instrument, like holding a tool in your hand”

It was crucial for African American activists to be able to use songs that had deep cultural roots because it represented a good shift in how African Americans saw themselves and their pasts. The only way the movement would be successful, according to Reagon, is if people made this connection between identity and song. “such musical identification enabled singing activists to remake themselves into people who were living refutations of the white myths regarding blacks” (Sanger 9). We Shall Overcome and “keep your eyes on the prize” are two examples of songs with strong roots in African American culture and history that were popular as protest and freedom songs (Sanger 26). The sheer fact that these songs were derived from their culture, particularly from black enslavement, was embraced by many protestors (27).

According to Ann Stefani, The veterans also consider the collective meaning of those songs and the sacrifices they made in the emancipation of black people as a whole, such liberation passing through the assertion of a specific culture rooted in their history of oppression and resistance. Reagon and others describe their experiences in very personal terms and emphasize the significance of Freedom Songs in their transformation as individuals. The numerous testimonies all revolve around the idea of empowerment (Stefani 62), as for instance, Andrew Young’s says in his memoir :

Somehow through the music a great secret was discovered, that black people, otherwise cowed, discouraged, and faced with innumerable and insuperable obstacles , could transcend all those difficulties and forge a new determination, a new faith and strength , when fortified with song . The music was not a political or economic gift to the people from the authorities, nor could it be taken away by them-music was the gift of the people to themselves, a bottomless reservoir of spiritual power ( Harvey 172 ).

According to Young, singing was a forceful act of self-assertion that allowed African Americans to reclaim their history and identity (Stefani 63). People who had never been in positions of leadership were able to become civil rights leaders by singing or leading Freedom Songs. Odetta is one of the best examples of this; her iconic singing made her a symbol of the Freedom Movement.

The presence of television in American homes in the 1960s contributed to music's effectiveness. The new invention showed footage of social and political conflict. Also, the music videos were an effective way to express opposition to the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, which was primarily shown on television, as well as to report on violence and racial injustice. In another words, the 1960s were the Golden Age of Protest Music. Since the time of slavery, protest songs have urged for change, but they reached new levels as many young Americans were forced to participate in the Vietnam War. This increased young activism and student activism became more assertive. The horrors of the war were shown on television, heightening racial tensions over the battle because many young Americans especially African Americans found it inexcusable that they would not be able to vote until they were 21 years old yet would be called upon to fight in the war. The lyrics of "Eve of Destruction" solidified this claim (Denisof, Levine 119).

The Eastern world, it is exploding'/

Violence flaring', bullets loading'/

You're old enough to kill but not for voting'/

You don't believe in war, but what's that gun you're toting'? / (119).

African Americans got more involved in the radio community, they interacted largely with DJs and the records they played, rather than with the entire mechanism of the deeply exploitative and generally racist industries that lurked behind them (ward 36). Simply by broadcasting black music, speaking in their own dialect of the black streets and fields, promoting black concerts and dances, and, to the extent that it was permitted, reporting on the accomplishments of black leaders, athletes, and celebrities, as well as announcing the latest black community and national news, black radio helped to define and legitimize black American culture as something unique and valuable. Black-oriented radio helped to codify and encourage new patterns of increasingly urbane black conduct and consciousness across the country. As a result, it helped to revive and reshape the feeling of shared identity that had been severely damaged by numerous black migrations in the first half of the century. This emerging black consciousness was, of course, closely related to the common experience of the long struggle against racism's various manifestations (37).

The black church has long been a source of support for downtrodden black Americans, and the church's involvement in the struggle sanctified it. Many black religious meetings were successful because of the participation passion instilled in their listeners by the songs, artists and preachers. It was the emotionally charged, participatory dimension of black worship, perhaps more than any specific numinous component, that allowed individuals, saved and Faithless alike, to express themselves freely and engage in a shared, essentially democratic experience with other blacks (198). Black church made the freedom songs effective because it provided a sense of a shared understanding. In his study of Black church music, Minister Wyatt Tee Walker emphasized this aspect: "It was the music of the slaves more than anything else that gave them a sense of community. Everyone could participate, and the Spiritual form and performance were

no exclusionary.” Through the intimacy of performance, this method induced collectivity and tapped into a cooperative heritage (Redmond 151).

Almost all social movements that make use of music are aware of its ability to build solidarity as well as convey the message (Roy 94). However, the social relations in which music is performed have an impact on how individuals are connected and, as a result, when cultural activities raised people’s consciousness, they were thought to be effective. Tuning in was based on a shared experience of making music. They were able to accomplish what the Old Left had hoped for:

they were able to start a singing movement. People had learned to sing “We Shall Overcome «from hearing it on television when SNCC organizer Charles Sherrod first arrived in Albany, Georgia, so he taught them how to connect arms, sway, and harmonize, uniting the participants into a collectivity Furthermore, music had a significant role in imprinting political parties’ aspirations to change people’s consciousness ( Reagon 84).

As the music was embedded in the collective action of the civil rights movement itself, in meetings, picketing, riding on busses, sitting in, and passing the time in jail.

## **General conclusion**

This study, “sing for freedom: the African American song as weapon for emancipating cultural identity in the American civil rights movement “ has explored the musical journey that African Americans went through starting from their transplantation in the American soil until their emancipation in the civil rights movement. This study showed that singing during the civil rights struggle was unquestionably a weapon for African Americans to free themselves, both through proclaiming their civil rights and a cultural identity that had been suppressed by white culture for decades. They accomplished this by reinterpreting classic African American tunes and giving them new context, Also buy having a strong bond with their history and religion. Through this process, the songs they had grown up hearing and singing at church that were both familiar and totally separated from the reality of discrimination they faced on a daily basis—also became potent nonviolent tools they could use to resist their racist oppressors. In another words, singing gave the protesters a new sense of collective identity and a helped them decolonize their minds.

Since their Transplantation in America, music has been the most vital weapon of cultural expression for African Americans. Black music swiftly established itself as the first social haven because it served as the primary medium for expressing the melancholy and longing of Home Africa. Black music was created as a result of the Great Awakening’s religious influence and the people’s desire for rebellion. Music is without doubt, a powerful weapon for social changes. From post-civil war to post-black-power movement black music has served as a document of the history of the struggle for freedom and equal rights, raise cultural awareness, and build black consciousness for African Americans. This was a turning point as music changed from being an African-inspired form of amusement and remembrance, through genres like the rhythm and

Blues and Jazz, to being a protest music that reflects the radicalization of racial violence and social injustices by white supremacists like the Klux Klan.

This conclusion follows from the fact that two of the key foundations of ethnicity are identity and culture. Many have attempted and continue to attempt to address the issues with ethnicity and meaning by the formation of cultural identity. Cultural identity is the result of ethnic groups' actions as they define and redefine their culture and self-definition. However, ethnicity is also created by external social, economic, and political processes and factors as they define and redefine ethnic categories throughout time. Our research reveals that black music is that link that unites Black people to their cultural identity.

At the height of the Civil Rights Movement's struggle, musicians gave voice to the cause by providing the music for marches, sit-ins, and demonstrations. And that's by teaching activists freedom songs both in high school and in church. Their own cultural history served as inspiration for the music, the CRM was the starting point which sparked the beginning of many other movements that mainly focused on protecting cultural heritage and the ascent of black leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Amiri Baraka, and Malcolm X. Who despite their differences all supported and acknowledged the power of music for African Americans and defended black cultural identity. Additionally, artists achieved local and national recognition as social activists around the nation. Musicians emerged as prominent Civil Rights movement players and famous spokespersons, equal in importance to politicians, religious leaders, and entertainment icons.

In other words, without Freedom Songs, a large number of the nonviolent resistance that took place in the time period of the civil rights movement would not have been successful nor would have had the same influence on the African American community. Freedom Songs' power

to transform the audience and the performers was what made them so powerful. We argue that the African American Song played vital role in the emergence of many black organizations that fought to contain and restore the African American cultural identity such as “black is beautiful” and “black arts movement” their effects reached even beyond America such as South Africa. Additionally, while such power was evident for African Americans, it also had an impact on many white people, bringing to the frontline decades of oppression and struggle that were expressed by the singers’ voices.

## Glossary

**Afrocentric/ity:** emphasizing or promoting emphasis on African culture and the contributions of Africans to the development of Western civilization

**AME:** The African Methodist Episcopal Church, usually called the AME Church is a predominantly African-American Methodist denomination.

**AMEZ:** The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, or the Zion Church is a historically African American Christian denomination based in the United States.

**CME:** The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church is a historically black denomination within the broader context of Wesleyan Methodism founded and organized by John Wesley in England in 1744 and established in America as the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1784. It is considered to be a mainline denomination

**Orisha** (also given as Orisa and Orishas) are supernatural entities usually referred to as deities in the Yoruba religion of West Africa.

**Evangelism:** (or witnessing) is the act of preaching the gospel with the intention of sharing the message and teachings of Jesus Christ.

**-Ring shouts:** A shout or ring shout is an ecstatic, transcendent religious ritual, first practiced by African slaves in the West Indies and the United States, in which worshipers move in a circle while shuffling and stomping their feet and clapping their hands.

**-ANC:** The African National Congress is a social-democratic political party in South Africa

**UPA:** The Union of Peoples of Angola began a sustained armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial forces in 1961.

**-MPLA:** the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola – Labor Party, is a left-wing, social democratic political party from Angola.

**-FNLA:** The National Front for the Liberation of Angola is a political party and former militant organization that fought for Angolan independence from Portugal in the war of independence, under the leadership of Holden Roberto.

**-NAACP:** interracial American organization created to work for the abolition of segregation and discrimination in housing, education, employment, voting, and transportation; to oppose racism; and to ensure African Americans their constitutional rights.

**-CORE:** The Congress of Racial Equality is an African-American civil rights organization in the United States that played a pivotal role for African Americans in the civil rights movement.

**Highlander folk school:** was first established in 1932 in Monteagle, Grundy County, Tennessee by Myles Horton and Don West, it was one of the few places in the South where integrated meetings could take place, and served as a site of leadership training for southern civil rights activists.

**Anti slavery Campaign(Abolitionism):** was the social and political effort to end the practice of slavery in the united state from 1830 to 1870.

**Ku Klux Klan:** A violent secret fraternal society founded in 1915 in Georgia to maintain white Protestant cultural and political power

**The Old Left:** the pre-1960s left-wing in the Western world, the earlier leftist or Marxist movements that had often taken a more vanguardist approach to social justice and focused mostly on labor unionization and questions of social class in the West.

**Sit Ins Movement:** nonviolent movement of the U.S. civil rights era that began in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 and produced a new sense of pride and power for African Americans.

**Sorrow songs:** were songs that expressed the suffering and unjust treatment of enslaved African Americans during the period of slavery in the United States (1619–1865).

**Double consciousness:** this concept introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois in his book “The Souls of Black Folk” in 1903 which describes the feeling that you have more than one social identity, which makes it difficult to develop a sense of self.

**Black pride:** is a movement which encourages black people to celebrate black culture and embrace their African heritage.

**Decolonize the mind:** is a theory used by Ngugi means deconstructing the thoughts, preferences and values that derive from a colonial way of thinking.

**(NSSF):** Negro spiritual scholarship foundation is a Central Florida nonprofit established in 1996. The network of programs and services through which we impact the public is known as Project GRADY-RAYAM.

**Dream Boogie:** was a poem written by Langston Hughes in 1951 that dramatizes the double consciousness of an African-American.

**Bloody Sunday:** On March 7, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, a 600-person civil rights demonstration ends in violence when marchers are attacked and beaten by white state troopers and sheriff’s deputies. The day’s events became known as “Bloody Sunday.”

**SNCC :** American political organization that played a central role in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, it begun as an interracial group advocating nonviolence and adopted greater militancy late in the decade, reflecting nationwide trends in Black activism.

**BPP** : the black panther party was founded in October 1966 in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, It was a revolutionary organization with an ideology of Black nationalism, socialism, and armed self-defense, particularly against police brutality.

**Wall of respect:** was an outdoor mural first painted in 1967 by the Visual Arts Workshop of the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC). It is considered the first large-scale, outdoor community mural, which spawned a movement across the U.S. and internationally.

**Pan Africanism:** the idea that peoples of African descent have common interests and should be unified.

**Harlem renaissance:** The Harlem Renaissance was a period in American history from the 1920s and 1930s. During this time, many African-Americans migrated from the South to Northern cities, seeking economic and creative opportunities.

**Negritude movement:** The literary movement, Negritude, was born out of the Paris intellectual environment of 1930s and 1940s. It is a product of black writers joining together through the French language to assert their cultural identity.

**Black feminist struggle:** is a philosophy that centers on the idea that Black women are inherently valuable, and Black women's liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else's but because our need as human persons for autonomy.

**Dishikis:** a colorful garment that covers the top half of the body, worn mostly in Africa.

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## المخلص

تسلط هذه الرسالة الضوء على جانبين من أكثر الجوانب تأثيراً في حركة الحقوق المدنية وهما الموسيقى والهوية الثقافية. من خلال تحليل بعض أشهر الأغاني في تلك الفترة الزمنية ، فإن الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التحقيق في دور الأغنية الأفريقية الأمريكية ليس فقط في تحقيق المساواة ولكن أيضاً في تحرير هويتهم الثقافية. و باعتبار أن الموسيقى هي شكل فني للتعبير عن معاناة الشعوب تسعى دائماً إلى توصيل ذلك عبر رسائل خفية . من أغاني العمل المشفرة خلال فترة العبودية إلى أغاني الحرية القوية في الستينيات ، تمكنت الموسيقى السوداء من الازدهار والتطور إلى هذا النوع من الفن خلال أحداث حركة الحقوق المدنية. كان لأغاني الحرية قوة مؤثرة على الأفارقة الأمريكيين الذين عانوا لسنوات من قمع عرقهم ، وأصبح الغناء تجربة و جودية قام من خلالها الأفارقة الأمريكيون بإنهاء استعمار عقولهم وبناء هوية جديدة. باستخدام نظرية الوعي المزدوج لويب دو بوا ونظرية الخطاب النقدي ، تكشف هذه الدراسة عن أهمية الأغنية الأفريقية الأمريكية خلال تلك الحقبة .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الأفارقة الأمريكيون ، الموسيقى ، الهوية الثقافية ، الأغاني الاحتجاجية ، الروحانيات ، حركة الحقوق

المدنية .