Name

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 **Essay exploring influential art emanating from marginalized groups**

Arguably the planet’s most popular music over the last two decades has been rap/hip-hop, which began as a largely urban African- American form of music. Likewise, the blues, the bedrock of other popular forms of American music, such as rock, was also primarily an African-American form of music, though a rural one. Rap music has accumulated global recognition for its creative beats and lyrical ingenuity. Looking at its historical significance in the African-American culture, rap is seen as a form of communication by economically exploited and poor black American societies. Seen in its lyrical content, harshness, repetition as well as energy one exudes when rapping, it mirrors a form of brutality and racial exploitation. Equally, the blues music display a form of a cultural message. This essay looks at rap/hip-hop and blues as a form of cultural appropriation, and exploitation among African- Americans, who used lyrics, content and energetic dancing forms to vent out socio-economic frustrations.

Hip hop culture is a vigorous and intense form of culture, it delights in aggressive gestures and dances. Its violent dances and movement gave rise to break dancing, a distinctive form of rap dancing. Rap uses sound and voice as well as rapid body movement to enact special body rhythms and moves. Its form and action encompass “style, fashion, and attitude, hip hop culture thus become a way of living, a genuine subculture and way of life, appropriate for the postmodern adventure” (Best & Kellner, 2). Using its style, hip hop has ghettos, and produce new cultural matrices in everyday life from Los Angeles to London, and from populous Sao Paulo to San Francisco. Rap is “the flagship of the globally popular, bringing style, attitude, and voice to marginalized groups” (Best & Kellner, 2). Rap articulates lyrical content to provide ethos and voice to marginalized cultures, and opening doors for exploited to raise their voices and fight marginalization.

In its infancy, hip hop was seen as voice and outlet of youth in low-income areas, deprived and disenfranchised communities. Hip hop culture showed socio-economic and political problems facing African- Americans ghettos in New York and other cities (Crossley, 5). Hip hop has over time “became the distinctive sound of African- American anger, rebellion, cultural style, and contemporary experience” (Best & Kellner, 3). Given its popularity, it must be looked at in perspective of a cultural movement that reflects attitudes, realities, conditions, and aspirations of the composers. Hip hop portrays a lot of information in its content, choice of words, repetition of phrases, beats, and dances. Their performances mirror concepts, lives, and status of disenfranchised and discriminated communities.

Like hip hop, blues music has African- American roots, it was “born out of an oral tradition, building on African spiritual and musical traditions and European folk music, emphasizing improvisation and spontaneous expression, and artist-audience interaction” (Steinfield, 4). Blues outlines cultural and socio-economic consequences as “inspiration for political movements and emancipation of minorities and underprivileged groups worldwide” (Steinfield, 4). Through expressions and content, blues “express basic human feelings within a context of suffering and injustice. Blues helped to form a cultural identity, suddenly possible through the end of slavery”(Steinfield, 5). It helped to highlight racial exploitations and economic deprivations among black Americans.

In conclusion, hip hop and blues function as a form of a channel to voice out cultural appropriation and exploitation among African- Americans. Using its form and content the music flourished as the music that highlights voices of exploited not only in African- American cities but also in modern urban centers.

**Works cited**

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