The Evolution of African American Discourse of Emancipation from Blues to Hip Hop

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IZJAVA O AUTORSTVU RADA I POŠTIVANJU ETIČKIH PRAVILA U AKADEMSKOM RADU

Izjavljujem da sam diplomski rad *The Evolution of African American Discourse of Emancipation from Blues to Hip Hop,* koji sam predao na ocjenu mentoru izv. prof. dr. sc. Krešimiru Petkoviću, napisao samostalno i da je u potpunosti riječ o mojem autorskom radu.

Također, izjavljujem da dotični rad nije objavljen ni korišten u svrhe ispunjenja nastavnih obaveza na ovom ili nekom drugom učilištu, te da na temelju njega nisam stekao ECTS-bodove. Nadalje, izjavljujem da sam u radu poštivao etička pravila znanstvenog i akademskog rada, a posebno članke 16-19. Etičkoga kodeksa Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

Vilim Mance

Content:

1 Introduction

Although slavery in the United States was abolished in the 19th century, the racist sentiment that accompanied it endured well into the following century and it still lingers on today, although in a much lesser degree. African Americans were bound by and held back by segregation. They were barred from many activities and deprived of many human freedoms. But one of them remained. For "behind the strict, segregating curtain hung between 'Black' and 'White,' African-Americans created a distinctive music that sank its roots deeply into their American experience and drew from it an amazing evolution of sound that has penetrated that racist fabric and pervaded the entirety of American culture"[1]. From slaves to freemen, black music was one of the essential vehicles for promotion of black striving for equality in often hostile political environment. In the poetry of the two pillars of African American music, blues and hip hop, lies a hidden message of emancipation, embedded in metaphors, secluded in symbols and expressions that were foreign to whites.

This idea that blues and hip hop songs hold some kind of socio-political message is not new. It is expressed in a variety of works, for instance in Stewart B. James' *Political Commentary in Black Popular Music from Rhythm and Blues to Early Hip Hop* (2005), Adam Gussow's *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* (2002), Henry Douglas' *The Significance of Blues for American History* (1985), Daniel Alridge's *From Civil Rights to Hip Hop: Toward a Nexus of Ideas* (2005), Houston Baker's *Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature: A vernacular theory* (1987), Imani Perry's *Prophets of the hood: politics and poetics in hip hop* (2004) and other such studies. However, a comparison between socio-political discourses and messages of the two genres is seldom found and it is not explored so systematically and in such depth as this work attempts to do.

Furthermore, since "political science has, until recently, taken a relatively little interest in popular culture generally and popular music in particular. . . [unless if it was to] . . . emphasise its deleterious effects[2]", this work serves as a one more example that a connection between the two exists. Indeed, one can go in any direction and view music as something that shapes politics but also see politics as something that influences music. Examples of the former are many, with protest singers such as Woodie Guthrie[3] ("This Land is Your Land"), Bob

[1] Sullivan, 2001: 21.
[2] Street, 2003: 121.
[3] And his guitar, famously labeled with the slogan: „This machine kills fascists".

Dylan ("The Times They Are A-Changing"), Phil Ochs ("Love Me, I'm A Liberal") and also hip hoppers, such as 2pac, Public Enemy KRS One and others, whose politically charged songs attempted to shape political outcomes. Nothing unusual since it is valid to believe "that music's power can be harnessed to evoke and articulate officially endorsed sentiments and identities[4]" thus being able to stimulate people and their decisions.

However, the focus here is on the latter type of relationship as, rather than exploring possible political results caused by music, I uncover musical changes brought on by alterations in politics. This is also not a new concept, with examples of prohibition of Jazz music in USSR and Nazi Germany, scratching of records to ensure them not to be played on the air in apartheid South Africa or barring any kind of music in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime. Censorship of music is rare in Western liberal democracies and in the USA as well[5]. Politics in the USA never banned African American music, but rather unintentionally shaped the music's discourse of emancipation, while attempting to endorse policies in other areas.

[4] Street, 2003: 117.
[5] Street, 2003: 117-118.

1.1 Methodology, structure and blueprint for the analysis

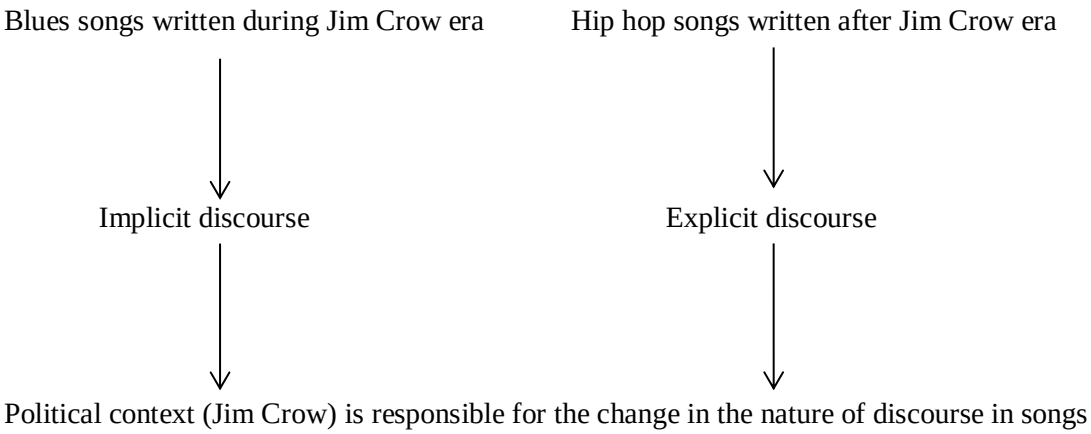
In order to decipher and present these messages or discourses of emancipation to the reader, I will conduct a discourse analysis of blues and hip hop lyrics. That is going to be my main analytical tool and goal in this paper. Terms, *discourse* and *discourse analysis*, have different meaning to scholars in different fields. For many "discourse has generally been defined as anything beyond the sentence"[6]. More suitable for my research is the envisioning of discourse as a "broad conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together construct or reinforce certain terms such as power or racism"[7]. In my case the term is *emancipation*. Since linguistic practice means the use of language, or in other words, communication, then discourse analysis, amongst ample amount of definitions, could be most conveniently defined as "the systematic study of naturally occurring (not hypothetical) communication in the broadest sense, at the level of meaning"[8]. It is no secret that music and songs are means of communication between the singer who transmits his/her message contained in a song to the listener via singing. As Woodie Guthrie once said: "A song ain't nothing but a conversation fixed up to where you can talk it over and over and over again without getting tired of it".

Because I am going to study song lyrics, that is to say, text, it is also important to explain what the term *text* exactly refers to. Although in everyday usage "text conjures up the image of a book or written document… it can be more broadly defined as any coherent complex of signs so that the concept can be extended into the domains of film, visual art and music"[9]. Echoing Guthrie's words in academic vocabulary, Nunan views text as „written or tapped record of communication event" (which is what songs are both at the same time) and the discourse as „interpretation of that event in the context in which it occurs"[10]. His contribution is most useful here because he stresses an important sphere for my analysis not yet touched upon, *the context*, which serves as a framework in which the songs of blues and hip hop era were performed. It "determines the way in which social agents (in this case, the singer and the listener), who are in certain social relations, communicate with each other and what language (semiosis) they use"[11]. In other words, it dictates the nature of discourse of emancipation. I will focus on political context, which refers to racist segregation laws created, approved and

[6] Schiffrin et al, 2015: 1.
[7] Schiffrin et al 2015: 1.
[8] Bavellas et al, 2007: 102.
[9] Hodges, 2015: 42-43.
[10] Nunan, 1993, cit. according to Bavelas et al, 2007: 104-105.
[11] Aleshinskaya, 2013: 428.

endorsed by formal institutions and politicians, the so-called *Jim Crow laws* that were constructed from ideology of racism built upon the false idea of black inferiority. These laws of strict white and black separation, active from 1881-1965, were employed with most zeal (but not exclusively) in the south and were used to keep African Americans in inferior position, ridding them of their constitutional rights.

The research design of this diachronic comparison of emancipation discourse is based in an *inductive logic*. Its concrete foundations were laid out by John Stuart Mill, most notably in his book *The System of Logic* (1843). In it, he devised 5 methods of discovery of causality between phenomena, called *Mill's methods of induction*. The common denominator of these methods is the idea that generalized conclusions can be reached from particular instances or observation[12]. Thinking along the lines of Mill's joint method of agreement and difference, I speculate that the aforementioned political context is the pivotal variable responsible for differences in discourses of emancipation in the two music genres. The process of inductive reasoning on which I have based my ideas went like this:



Implicit discourse purports that messages of emancipation are hidden, or to put it differently, it means that problems and perpetrators of oppression are not named openly but rather secluded in metaphors, euphemisms, symbols, contrasts or ambiguous expressions. Also, this means that not every kind of injustice will be named and rebelled against but rather that the scope will be much narrower as it is going to be shown throughout the paper. Although it serves as aesthetic embellishment, the most important purpose of employment of such artistic techniques is to hide the real meaning of the song, thus often imbuing the songs with two layers of meaning, the outer layer intended for white ears and the inner, esoteric layer, planned for Af-

[12] Grimm, 1940: 493.

rican American audiences. *Explicit discourse* alludes to the exact opposite as everything is blatantly stated, one can clearly see who has been wronged and who is to be held responsible and why. Poetic figures have more *larpourlartistic* purpose, to present a direct message in a more interesting way or to amplify certain emotions or statements, but not to hide it, as songs now possess mainly only one coating, since the singers do want their voices and messages to be heard and understood by everyone. Also, language that is used becomes much more aggressive, with the use of curse words, threatening to foes, etc. [13].

Since Jim Crow laws are viewed as the variable responsible for the change in the nature of discourse, the frame of this analysis therefore belongs to the *most similar system design*, based upon Mill's method of difference, which is used for comparing political phenomena that possess a large amount of mutual characteristics with the goal of establishing the crucial difference between them that is deemed as responsible for a certain political outcome[14].

I chose the songs based on whether they fit my time and space criteria or what I call "the blues and hip hop era in the USA". Blues era stretches from 1910 when the blues first started to emerge with a song called Dallas Blues[15] to 1950, when "the blues have been almost lost in the teen age craze rock and roll"[16]. Since this period coincides with the existence of Jim Crow laws, the discourse of emancipation will be of implicit nature. In that timespan blues became the most popular music genre among black audiences, most notably through the establishment of "race records" by all the major record companies of the time, such as OKeh, Paramount, Victor, Columbia, etc. Although jazz was also a musical genre that was being played by and that was popular among African American musicians and listeners at the time (with the most flourishing period being called the "Jazz Age", spanning from 1920's to 1930's) I did not include it in my analysis, except for one song, "Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday, because of the physical limitation of my work and the fact that the genre is generally more focused on music itself then the lyrics[17]. Blues, on the other hand, was a major outlet for the African-American desire for emancipation. As Baker wrote, the blues are "a multiplex, enabling script

[13] The only author who comes unusually close towards an expression style present in hip hop is a rather remote northern bluesman Josh White, active in the 40s. However, although his songs, as can be observed in this paper, are written in a manner more direct than majority of blues, he still does lack the aggressiveness of hip hop, such as naming the perpetrators of injustices loud and clear as it was done in the 80s and 90s.
[14] Landman, 2008: 46-47.
[15] Charters, 1975: 34.
[16] Charters, 1975: 236.
[17] However, there are examples of protest jazz songs, such as „Mississippi Goddam" (1964) by Nina Simone, „Alabama" (1964) by John Coltrane, „Fables of Faubus" (1959) by Charles Mingus, etc.

in which Afro-American cultural discourse is inscribed"[18]. A script with a tale of years of oppression, hardship, violence and triumph.

The readers might notice I do not mention the blues revival period of the 1960's, where many old blues artists were resurrected and brought back from obscurity to sing their songs in front of white as well as black audiences. I shall not analyse this musical event for three reasons. First reason is the already mentioned physical limitation of the work itself. Secondly, it is an era in which many of the featuring artists sang the same songs they recorded 30 years ago or more before the revival (although there are a few examples of newly written, politically engaged blues songs, such as "Alabama Blues" by J.B. Lenoir). Lastly, I set my analysis in the "blues era" for the following reason: because I specifically wanted to see if discourse of emancipation existed when African Americans were at their worst (not counting the period of slavery, of course). In 1960s their political struggle began with Civil Rights Movement during which (and after which) they could and would express themselves much more freely and without the need for any aesthetic mystery or shrouding found in the early blues. Thus this kind of explicit discourse of emancipation will be accordingly explored in the hip hop era which comes after the destruction of Jim Crow system and Civil Rights Movement.

Hip Hop Era begins in 1979, a little more than a decade after death of M. Luther King that symbolized the start of substantial dissolvement of Civil Rights movement. That year the first hip hop record, "Rapper's Delight", was recorded and "by the 1990's, Hip Hop was the dominant force in popular culture"[19] and soon it "grew into a monumental, globally relevant culture"[20] with fan-base made from all over the world. If, as Muddy Waters has said: "the blues had a baby and named it rock and roll", one can say that hip hop is the blues' grandson. The blues passed the torch of African American struggles on to hip hop and "hip hop political commentators have been forced to address worsening social problems, including high unemployment, police brutality, incarceration, inadequate public schools, political apathy"[21] and other issues.

The golden age of hip hop is considered to have lasted from 1986 to 1996, (although there are slight variations of the timespan from various sources), so I have opted to end my hip hop era in that same year. Duinker and Martin state that *golden age* represents a period of "creativity,

[18] Baker, 1987: 4.
[19] Price, 2006: 16.
[20] Price, 2006: 82.
[21] Stewart, 2005: 218.

diversity and maturation in hip hop history, contributing to its emergence as a commercially profitable and artistically autonomous realm of popular music"[22]. Although hip hop renaissance could also refer to contemporary hip hop, with artists such as Kanye West or Kendrick Lamar, who flood the charts with popular songs and albums that also deal with topic of emancipation[23], I am going to only study the aforementioned 20th century golden age because of limitations of my paper and thus leave the emancipation discourse of post-millennial hip hop for future exploration.

After I have reduced the seemingly infinite number of blues and hip hop songs by using time and space filter I have filtered them out further by whether their lyrical theme does fit into one of my five categories of emancipation presented below. I have made them up by using definitions of human rights from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by members of the UN in 1948 (USA was one of the countries who voted in favour of it!) because it offers the most clear and straightforward definitions of it. However, the most important fact about the content of these categories is the fact that their essence was included in the U.S. Constitution (apart from category no. 3) and should be legally valid for every citizen of the USA, African Americans as well after the abolition of slavery. However, in reality, states and local authorities often worked around the Constitution's provisions or blatantly and openly ignored them when dealing with African Americans, which is clearly observed in Jim Crow laws.

Categories of Emancipation:

1. Emancipation from unequal treatment under the law. It means that "everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law[24]" and that "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law[25]". Also "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile[26]" and finally "everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him[27]". Guaranteed by **14th**, **5th** and the **6th** amendment of the U.S. constitution. In practice, it will encompass such unfair acts as trial by an all-white jury, police brutality, unequal punishment for crimes of whites and black, arbitrary arrest and other similar acts.

[22] Duinker and Martin, 2016: 71.
[23] For instance, Lamar raps about racism in his debut album *Section.80*, from 2011.
[24] Article 6 of the UDHR.
[25] Article 7 of the UDHR.
[26] Article 9 of the UDHR.
[27] Article 10 of the UDHR.

2. Emancipation from violence explicitly motivated by racism. Emancipation from it means that "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"[28] and "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment[29]". It is guaranteed by the **14th** amendment of the U.S. constitution. In practice, this category will encompass acts of violence such as lynching and murder in general, beatings and other similar kinds of physical violence fueled by racial ideology based upon white superiority and black inferiority.

3. Emancipation from unjust working conditions. It means that "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours[30]". Not found explicitly in the U.S. constitution but it is still one of the basic human rights often neglected toward African Americans in the 20th century.

4. Political emancipation. It means that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures"[31]. Apart from these fundamental rights, this will entail giving an opinion on political matter, for example, criticizing actions of political representatives or political institutions such as the state, government, etc. Guaranteed by the **15th** amendment of the U.S. constitution.

5. Emancipation from segregated and biased education. It entails that "everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote under-

[28] Article 3 of the UDHR
[29] Article 5 of the UDHR.
[30] Article 23 and Article 24. of the UDHR.
[31] Article 21 of the UDHR.

standing, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups[32]". Guaranteed by the **14th** amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

I tried, at the same time, to pick out songs that were relevant or were written/recorded by relevant performers based on the criterion of popularity by the Recording Industry Association of America. That is why I included performers like Leadbelly, Bessie Smith, Lightnin' Hopkins, Blind Willie McTell, 2pac, Public Enemy, N.W.A, Ghetto Boys, Goodie Mob, etc. However, sometimes that rule is difficult to apply and other times it has to be completely discarded. Firstly, in the blues era, music industry and music consumerism was not as developed as it was in hip hop era. That is why much less records were being bought, with popular ones selling in tens of thousands rather than millions at best and some performers becoming recognized only in their later years, during blues revival[33], or even after their death[34]. Being famous encompassed much lesser degree of acclaim during those times and also, the RIAA certification system used in hip hop has been established only in 1952, making it again difficult to value popularity of blues records based on contemporary gold, platinum and diamond measures. However, names of blues artists posted above (and many others used, like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Mississippi John Hurt, Billie Holliday, etc.) can be considered in the blues circles as names of *legends*, not only for their musical ability and talent but also because of the influence they had on many generations of upcoming musicians of every skin colour.

Secondly, since blues is not inherently political music, songs with such themes were scarce to begin with so sometimes any blues political song was good enough. With hip hop I had broader manoeuvring area, because there was a political branch of that genre (political hip hop) and artists existed whose records were made diamond, gold or platinum due to development of music market, thus making a much larger impact on their listeners. Still, sometimes lesser known songs had to be included because no other where available. Lastly, I am aware that there is a possibility that some songs that do express my desired discourse may go unnoticed because of my cognitive limitations but nonetheless I believe that my analysis is broad and thorough enough to reach firm conclusions.

[32] Article 26 of the UDHR.
[33] Like Mississippi John Hurt, Son House, Skip James, etc.
[34] Like Blind Willie McTell or Blind Willie Johnson.

2 Many thousands gone. The enduring legacy of slavery through Jim Crow

"Ain't It Hard To Be A Nigger, Nigger – do you know that one?" Blind Willie McTell, a blues legend from Georgia was asked by Alan Lomax, an American ethnomusicologist. "Yes, Sir, of course I know it. All we niggers got is hard times!". But that is not the answer McTell gave him, although it would adequately sum up the African American experience in the United States from the time when they were first abducted from Africa and brought to Jamestown, North Carolina in 1619 up to that cold November morning of 1940 in Atlanta, Georgia, when the aforementioned question was asked. Lomax was searching the United States far and wide, looking for folk music and folk musicians who played Cajun music, old-time country ballads, spiritual music, work songs or blues. Willie was his latest find, and as Michael Gray, author of perhaps the most detailed and complete account of McTell's life put it: "a songster of a wide repertoire and as fine a 12-string guitarist that ever lived[35]". Well versed in blues, he came to Lomax's hotel room so he could be recorded singing some of his songs. A conversation between the two was also captured on tape.

"Er---That's not in our time" was McTell original answer, and if you listen to the tape you can hear the discomfort in his voice, which is understandable if one remembers that he was a blind, black man in a presence of a perhaps crude sounding white man of a big stature and his wife, Ruby Lomax, in American Jim Crow south. It can be concluded, with absolute certainty, that Lomax was not a racist who was out to harm disobedient black folks who revealed their revolutionary flame by knowing protest songs. In fact, he wanted to record their cultural heritage and in this case, he just wanted to get some spicy material. But McTell couldn't have known that. "Any complaining songs? Complainin' about the hard times and sometimes mistreatment by the whites? Have you got any songs that talk about that?". McTell answered with a big lie that is going to be uncloaked in detail in the following paragraphs: "No sir, we haven't. Not at the present time, because the white peoples is mighty good to the Southern [black] people---as far as I know."[36]

"No more auction block for me

No more, no more

[35] Gray, 2009: 11).
[36] A whole conversation can be heard on recording called „Monologue On Accidents".

No more auction block for me

Many thousands gone"[37]

Indeed, many thousands, hundreds of thousands of black men, women and children were taken from Africa, brought to America and sold to work for white men, slaveholders who owned tobacco and cotton plantations. Originally used euphemism "black servant" was soon replaced with more correct term "slave" by 1670's, as from that year "all negroes. . . who now are, or shall hereafter be, in this Province, and. . . [their] offspring, born or to be born, shall be . . . declared . . . and remain forever hereafter, absolute slaves"[38]. They were slaves in every sense of the word: without any rights, subjugated, humiliated, tortured, unable to move on their own, trade or buy almost anything and resist or refuse their punishment. They were treated like animals and they were viewed as such by plantation owners. However, there was resistance. Some slaves did try to escape (although most of them were captured and severely punished, sometimes by death)[39]. Some even killed themselves. But some mended their wounds by singing. They "frequently used music to counter this dehumanization—to boost morale and toughen themselves psychologically[40]" African American music in its entirety was an important factor in African American survival. Firstly, drums were used to "spread messages in a rhythmic language undeciphered by Whites"[41]. The oldest sung songs originated from simple slave songs and field hollers that were used to implicitly express their resentment towards inequality, unintentionally echoing the essence of future Marxist ideology:

The big bee flies high

The little bee makes the honey[42].

Also, apart from these songs, spiritual tunes also had hidden messages such as directions to the Underground Railroad. At last came the blues, a mixture of all these musical styles, which served as a therapeutic remedy "designed to raise the awareness of sympathetic external audi-

[37] Trad. Song.
[38] South Carolina statute of 1740 (Halpern and Dal Lago, 2002: 16).
[39] Interesting occurrence was that some plantation owners and slaveholders could not understand why their slaves ran away, if they started to treat them more kindly and the slaves appeared more happy. There were some 'scientific' theories that justified the frequent slave flights, most notable being that slaves, like cats, often suffered from „Drapetomania, which. . . manifest[s] itself by an unrestrainable propensity to run away." (Halpern and Dal Lago, 2002: 273).
[40] Sullivan, 2001: 22.
[41] Sullivan, 2001: 21
[42] Trad. Song.

ences and promote solidarity among African Americans by documenting common experiences"[43]. It was used as a means to fight oppression as well.

In the North abolishment of slavery came a bit earlier then in the South, as "by 1810 three-quarters of Northern black were free, and by 1840 virtually all were [free]", although they were still "objects of both legal discrimination and vicious hostility[44]". After the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, following the bloody Civil War, slavery was formally abolished in the south as well. However, loss in the *war for Southern Independence* and subsequent adding of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution meant nothing for the Southerners in reality as these events "had little impact on the attitudes and ideas used to defend and support the idea that holding other people as property and denying them freedom and any thoughts of equality was justified"[45]. It was gullible to think that one document and an amendment would be enough to erase centuries of racist thought and upbringing passed on from one generation of white people to another, persuading them that black people are less worthy than them. That sentiment was much more entrenched in the South than it was in the North, for South had slavery longer and its planting economy depended almost entirely on the work of the slaves. The need for wealth was certainly a reason to have racist ideology. For it was the growth of the plantation that created "a new class of men whose appetite for labor was nearly insatiable" and whose ethos resided around "a peculiar social order which conceded everything to the slave owner and nothing to the slave"[46], as the slave was their working mule whose purpose was to create profit, and was to be whipped if he disobeyed or failed to complete an order, at any moment easily replaced by another healthy head from the master's heard. It was the southern way of life.

It was thus shameful for southern sons of the soil to let their way of life be ruined by former slaves, to let themselves be equal to a *negro*, who would now go to school and educate himself alongside them because "reading ain't no good, for an ignorant nigger[47]", who would also seek and get paid on jobs just like them and would now go on to vote just like them and thus have a say in the American government. That is why the white men designed Jim Crow laws that separated Americans by race in 26 states, from 1881 to 1965 in almost every area of interracial human contact with the purpose of renewal of the aforementioned Southern way of

[43] Stewart, 2005: 205.
[44] Halpern and Dal Lago, 2002: 112.
[45] Tischauser, 2012: 1.
[46] Halpern and Dal Lago, 2002: 44-45.
[47] As Bob Dylan sang it in his rendition of a traditional song, "Black Cross" (1961), based on the story of Hezekiah Jones, hung for thinking with his own head.

life "with whites having the status of a master race and people of color having nothing but low wages, hard work and very few chances for improvement[48]". African Americans had to go to segregated schools, pass impossible obstacles to vote, had unequal protection and treatment of the law, had to work in unjust working conditions and most important of all, they were often targets of racist violence that went unpunished. Dixieland was the place from which Jim Crow laws emanated, although there still was racism in the North as well. However, there a black man could vote (from 1919 black women as well), lynch mobs were rarer sight and they could move freely in their own neighborhoods. Also, employers rarely refused to hire someone based on their skin color[49]. Still, a far cry from the slogan *land of the free*.

The laws effectively made void the *Civil Rights Act of 1875* which granted all Americans equal rights regardless of race, as well as 14th and 15th Amendments. One could say that even the 13th Amendment was nullified, as "many former Confederate states had laws of their own, creating a system of labor and race relations as close to slavery as constitutionally possible[50]. Based primarily on a *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 which declared the "Separate but equal doctrine[51]" constitutional, these laws had full backing of the U.S. Supreme Court until their nullification in 1964, when Congress outlawed all discriminatory laws passed by any legislative body, council or county board. Jim Crow laws gave black man the blues, and when he was at his lowest, he cried with his guitar and while clenching his fist in secret.

[48] Tischauser, 2012: 1-2.
[49] Tischauser, 2012: 51.
[50] Tischauser, 2012: 14.
[51] This doctrine was a legal doctrine in the U.S. constitutional law by which racial segregation did not violate the 14th Amendment, as long as Black and White segregated public facilities were of the same quality.

2.1 What's this noise about? Blues and emancipation from unequal treatment under the law

They got me 'cused for murder and I haven't even harmed a man (x2)

They got me charged with burglin' and I haven't even raised my hand

I'll have to give you my number, 5994 (x2)

Because I'll be there forever, I've have no other place to go

They got me 'cused for forging and I can't even write my name (x2)

And my eyes still don't miss, my baby left my poor heart in pain[52].

As mentioned before, in the blues era in the south a black man did not have any real protection under the law. White man's word was always stronger than that of a black man. Since black men and women could almost never vote in practice (as it is going to be explained later) they could not choose their main representative of the law, the sheriff. So the man with the tin star was always white. And the judges were always white. And the jury was always white. And they all honored and believed the white man's word. If he said he did not do it, he didn't. If he said a black man had done it, he did it. McTell, albeit in a rather quiet tone, ironizes that situation in this song. He is wrongfully accused of murder but he did not harm the victim. He is also accused of forgery but he is illiterate and thus unable to forge anything (irony becomes even greater if we know that he has a prefix *blind* before his name for a reason – he lost vision in his early childhood). In the end, after almost apathetically accepting his destiny, for his crimes he is stripped down of all dignity, reduced to number and a life sentence in jail.

McTell could have just as well been wrongfully accused of rape, like the (in)famous Scottsboro boys, immortalized in the movie of a same name. It tells the true story of nine boys (ages 13-20) falsely charged with raping two white women in a boxcar of a moving train in Alabama, 1931. Before the alleged incident, some white man also boarded the train and demanded that the boys get off. The white men were wrestled off instead, after a brawl and in order to get revenge, they falsified the rape story with the help of two white women that were also present on the train. After decades of repeals and violations of their rights, such as having all-white jury, not acknowledging the later testimony of one of the victims who said that the ac-

[52] Blind Willie McTell, "Death Cell Blues" (1933).

cusations were made-up[53], not taking into account that a doctor's examinations of the victims that found no indications of rape, the Scottsboro boys were pardoned by Alabama Governor George Wallace in 1976. Only one of them was still alive at the time.

Likewise, punishments were unequal for a white versus black person. One example is the riots of 1917 in East St. Louis, Illinois in which people of both skin color participated in property destruction and violence. In the end, "state's attorney charged seven white police officers and ten black civilians with murder. Convicted by an all-white jury for the killings, each of the policemen were ordered by the white presiding judge to pay a fine of $150—the only punishment handed out to any whites involved in the riot. However the ten African Americans were each sentenced to 14 years in prison".

Another, more fresher account is the lynching and murder of a 14-old boy Emmett Till, who died for whistling to a white girl in 1954. Some say that is the event that started Civil Rights movement, after his killers were freed by an all-white jury, although they mutilated and savagely murdered the boy and there were ample amount of black witnesses. Nobody did care, not the white public, jury or the judge. Judges were evil and scary figures in the eyes of the black people. To most southern white judges black dealings were unimportant. When black boy Curtis "Cooney" Huston killed his black girlfriend, Delia, on Christmas Eve of 1900, out of jealousy,

Judge said to Curtis,

What's this noise about?[54]

It was not about who is right or wrong. Judicial process involving black men was not a quest for justice just as justification and testifying of a black person was not something worth considering. Rather, it was an annoying noise for the Judge, as black man was a nuisance, buzzing mosquito with his dirty schemes who must get squashed and who was already a guilty man before the trial even begun. If the judge got the chance to destroy and rid the world of one more black savage, he took it. Similarly, policemen were also disliked for they represent-

[53] "The prosecutor told the jury that she had become a communist during the trial and therefore could never be trusted to tell the truth" (Tischauser, 2012: 64).
[54] Bob Dylan rendition of an old traditional song, "Delia" (1993).

ed figures of violence as black people "always lived in mortal fear of the police, for they were arch-terminators and prosecutors of Negroes"[55].

"No more good times, woman, like we used to do,

Police knockin', woman, at my back do'"[56]

The *cops* were seen as someone who always interfered with the black man's peaceful life, who always restricted his freedom and ended his good times, beat him up, harassed him and never offered him protection. Policeman was an embodiment of brute force of the state, and indeed there was ample amount of police brutality. Truly, "in the states of the Old Confederacy, the sheriff and his deputies in rural areas and small towns, as well as the police chief and his patrol officers in cities, enforced two kinds of law, "negro law" and laws for everybody else". Police often beat up confessions out of their prisoners, as was the case with Gerrard White, or Oscar Perkins, who both confessed to murdering a white person after being savagely beaten[57]. A part of a song from before the 1930s called "Look down de road" depicts that anxiety of possibly undergoing a jailhouse confession process:

"I ask jailer: Captain, how can I sleep,

All around my bedside polices creep?[58]"

Josh White describes the inmate's powerless position when found in jail, giving a very explicit description of police brutality, using paradoxical example to show sadistic practice in which prisoners were given tasks that were deliberately impossible or very hard to perform (how can you jump when you are tied in chains?), and thus certain failure ensured regular beatings:

Chains 'round my shoulder, my feet is bracelet bound

Jump when cap'n calls you, or else he'll knock you down

…

Jail guard beat me so much, right down to my shoes[59].

…

[55] Gussow, 2002: 167.
[56] No more good times, trad.
[57] Tischauser, 2012: 80-81.
[58] Lookin down de Road, trad.
[59] Josh White, „Crying Who? Crying You" (1940).

Policemen creeped around looking to strike when the prisoner was sleeping, sometimes not to get confession at all, but just for fun of seeing his shocked face as he was suddenly awoken by sharp pain. Nights can get boring and hands get eager to punch. Black people knew they are not going to have an easy time if they go to jail, regardless if they are innocent or not. That is why many blues songs of that era, such as Bukkha White's "Parchman Farm Blues (1940)" or Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Penitentiary blues" (1929) serve as a warning to avoid getting involved in such situation:

I want you to stop and study, and don't take nobody's life (x2)

They've got walls at the state penitentiary you can't jump

Man they high as the sky.

Lastly, there is resistance found in the so-called "badman tradition". Sadistic enjoyment can be seen in songs about bad black criminals or outlaws, such as "Stackolee" sung by, among others, Mississippi John Hurt (1927), in which, from a standpoint off a song as a whole it seems that the singer is scared and judgmental of Stackolee's misdoings. However, in the first verse he subtly mocks the police officers inability to bring killer Stagger Lee[60] to justice and enjoys his powerlessness against the black desperado:

Policeing officer, how can it be

You arrest everybody but cruel Stagolee

That bad man

Cruel Stagolee.

Another example is "Railroad Bill", in which his action of murdering a police officer is seen, through black eyes, as heroism and "willingness to confront and vanquish white law with a virtuosic display of prowess[61]" as an act worth admiring:

Railroad Bill was mighty sport

Shot all the buttons off high Sheriff coat

Den holler: Right on desperado Bill[62].

[60] He killed his friend Billy Lyons for taking his hat, in 1895.
[61] Gussow, 2002: 173.
[62] trad.song.

In the last line people cheer and approve of Railroad Bill's deed, and that excitement was subsequently toned down in other later versions, thus evolving into "ride old railroad Bill". Black people lived through the actions of these outlaws, for it was through their guns that they murdered symbols of oppression themselves. With the bullets of these crazy fools who were on a path to oblivion, the African American got his revenge and satisfaction. As Fanon put it: "the gangster who holds up the police . . . or dies in a single combat after having killed four or five policeman . . . these types light the way for the people, form the blueprints for action and become heroes"[63].

Gussow informs us that there was also a ditty about an outlaw Two-Gun in which there is a rather boldly expressed admiration for killings of policemen. Although not recorded, a recollection of it being sung by a drunken black man (because few dared to sing it sober or worse, try to record it) exists:

Two-Gun Charlie is a mighty man
Mows down 'dem cops wherever he can
Got two pistols that sho' em fine
Gives them bastards a hot old time.[64]

[63] Fanon, 1968: 69, cit. via Gussow, 2002: 173.
[64] Gussow, 2002: 174-175.

2.2 The white peoples is mighty good to the Southern people. Blues and emancipation from racial violence

Well, I've always been in trouble

'Cause I'm a black-skin man[65].

Since the law did not give them any real protection, black people were easy targets for racial violence, exerted by, apart from representatives of the law as shown in the previous chapter, the *common folk* or members of the radical white supremacist groups, most notable being the Ku Klux Klan. Gussow pointed out an interesting paradox in which black people, after they have gained their freedom from slavery, lost their actual protection because "cruel as slavery was, the status of the slave as the slave-owner's capital placed real limits on the vengefulness that poor whites . . . could exercise toward the slave without fear of retribution from [that slave's owner]. Emancipation obliterated those limits . . ." [66] One of the biggest fears of the black people was lynching. Indeed, it was". . .particularly in its 'spectacle' form, with hanging supplemented by torture, burning, and mutilation— arguably the most brutal southern discipline: by destroying an exemplary black male body, and by publicizing this destruction, the white South hoped to produce sufficient terror in black male subjects to guarantee the continued functioning of an oppressive social and economic system"[67]. From 1882 to 1927, 3,513 black people were lynched in the States, with 1952 being the first year in which not a single lynching incident was reported (although the following year again 3 acts of lynching took place)[68]. Lynch mobs formed at the slightest of offenses with the intention to carry out a death sentence, after the formal white-jury trial took place or even without any trial at all. There are many examples of such atrocities, such as "Red summer of 1919" in which white racists committed 83 acts of lynching, the lynching of Laura and her son L. D. Nelson, lynching of 3 African American circus workers, Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie, etc,

Another account from Memphis Press newspaper is incredibly gruesome but will serve perfectly to further help paint the picture of the degree of exerted violence: "[a black man named] Lowry roasted by inches before wife and children… Inch by inch the negro was fairly cooked to death. . . As the flesh began to drop away from his legs and they were reduced to bones,

[65] Josh White, „Trouble" (1940).
[66] Gussow, 2002: 6.
[67] Gussow, 2002: 18.
[68] Gussow, 2002: 18; Tischauser, 2012: 100

once or twice he attempted to pick up hot coals and swallow them in order to hasten death"[69]. One more example is the burning of a mentally impaired back teen, Jesse Washington, whose execution was captured by professional photographer and the photos he took were put on postcards[70]. Needless to say that many times the victims were accused falsely, although even their actual guilt could not serve as justification for such acts.

Accounts of such murders were seldom expressed in song. The most notable example is Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" (1939):

Southern trees bear strange fruit
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees
Pastoral scene of the gallant south
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh
Here is fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the trees to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

Although it's a jazz song written by white man Abel Meerpol, it gives two important insights: first is that a black person did have the courage to speak, at least metaphorically, about atrocities and murders happening in the south. Indeed, the song is an ironic allegory depicting the image of idyllic, pastoral southern way of life during Jim Crow times. A contrasting olfactory image of sweet smell of magnolias, the symbol of Mississippi, is juxtaposed to the smell of burning flesh and has the purpose of shocking the reader into realizing that the strange fruit, which crows pluck and rain sucks, sun rots and the trees drop are actually dead black bodies left hanging after acts of lynching. That is what pastoral scene meant for, as the singer teases them, "gallant" southerners, who courageously attacked, while in large crowds, helpless black

[69] Gussow, 2002: 120.
[70] Gussow, 2002: 63.

men who were on their own. Holliday reportedly sang this song while completely in the dark and as a closing number, so she could escape easily if she had to.

Second, as Albert Murray says: ". . . Blues functioned purely as party and dance music. Strange Fruit . . . held little attraction for black folks in need of release. Who the hell wants to go hear something that reminds him of a lynching?[71]". Although I disagree with the idea that blues was and is a purely party music it is true that, apart from being dangerous to sing such murder songs for the singer, it was uninteresting to listen them for the listener, as it reminded him of his bleak state of a guillotine hanging above his head, ready to come down at any time. Record companies as well did not want to publish such fiery material as it would not sell. Nobody profited from that.

However, one blues song does exist, "Blue Spirit Blues" (1930), and it comes from another female singer, Bessie Smith:

Had a dream last night

That I was dead (x2)

Evil spirits

All around my bed

The devil came

And grabbed my hand (x2)

Took me way down

To that red hot land.

Interpreting this song via Gussow's thoughts, it is possible to paint a very vivid and traumatic scene: a woman is sleeping and dreaming about her biggest fears. In her dream she feels anxious as already at the beginning of the first verse she anticipates the probable ending of her nightmare. Evil spirits, along with the devil, "who often looked suspiciously like a surrogate for the white man[72]", came and took her from the peace of her home to a red hot land. The devil also took Jesse Washington to the burning land.

[71] Murray, 2001: 96, cit. via Gussow, 2002: 20.
[72] Gussow, 2002: 31.

Mean blues spirits

Stuck their forks in me (x2)

Made me moan

And groan in misery

Fairies and dragons

Spitting out blue flames (x2)

Showing their teeth

For they was glad I came.

Those evil spirits now assume a more concrete form, depicted as dragons and fairies, which signify Klan members since a grand dragon was title for a high ranking person of the KKK, and fairy could be a pejorative name for female counterparts of the organization[73]. They were spitting flames, by waving their torches, knives and pitchforks, yelling and screaming insults as they prepared their banquet of violence, getting ready to tie up, torture and kill the singer.

"This is hell", I cried

Cried with all my might (x2)

Oh, my soul

I can't bear the sight

Started running

'Cause it is my cup (x2)

Run so fast

Till someone woke me up lames.

Certainly being one of few that did so, somehow the singer managed to get free from this hell and ran until someone pulled her out of there by waking her up. Like many blues songs, this one has two layers. On the surface, it does seem to portray an image of a possible religious song, depicting actual hell that is hot, full of fire and terror, with mythological monsters and finally, is ruled by the devil. However, underneath this, there is an esoteric image of a trau-

[73] Gussow, 2002: 31-32.

matic encounter with a lynch mob. For black people, hell was located in Mississippi, USA's poorest and most racist state with the exceedingly frequent acts of violence. "Just the mention of the word 'Mississippi' amongst a group of New Orleans people would cause complete silence and attention. It was the earnest and general feeling that any Negro that. . . entered the hell-hole called the state of Mississippi for any other reason other than to attend the funeral of a very close relative. . .was well on the way to losing his mentality, or had already lost it[74]"

In a song called "The first time that I met the blues" (1936) by Little Brother Montgomery one can view the blues itself not just as a *feeling*, but as a personification of a white man, a real trouble, capturing the singer all of a sudden while he was out on a summer stroll. Yet again the song has two layers, the outer one in which a man feels bad (*has the blues*) because of misfortune, and the esoteric one in which he is being hunted by a white mob:

The first time I met the blues

People, you know I was walkin', I was walkin' down through the woods (x2)

Yes, I've watched my house burnin' blues

Blues, you know you done me, you done me all the harm that you could.

The blues got after me

People, you know they ran me from tree to tree (x2)

Yes, you should-a heard me beg ya, blues

Ah, blues, don't murder me.

The act of resistance to such harassment can be seen hidden in a form of violent, manic retaliation provided by Bessie Smith:

Now I've got the wicked blues

'Cause my baby went away

If I thought he loved me true

I would have asked him to please stay

I will buy a gun as long as my right arm

Shoot at everybody done me any wrong[75].

[74] Gussow, 2002: 32.
[75] Bessie Smith, "Wicked Blues" (1922).

Once more, this song could be read via two-layer optic. Indeed, it is a song about unfaithful love, but esoterically, the singer takes a chance to spit out anger against everybody, every black man who was unfaithful to her but also every white man that has discriminated every black woman and all of it is perfectly masked in manic, heartbroken fury of a cheated woman. Every *Tom, Dick and Harry* has to pay: the sadistic cops, the lynch-mobs, crooked judges, all-white jury, KKK and all the southern racists, as the singer plans to vent out her anger, piled up from years of oppression.

An old song called "Looking for That Bully of This Town", written around 1895 by a white man Charles E. Trevathan but later sung by more contemporary black acts such as the Memphis Jug Band in 1927, depicts just what its name suggests, a search for a bully and his eventual defeat by the singer. Indeed, in its original version the bully is black but that ambiguous term, along with not specifying skin color anywhere in a song left room for artistic manipulation, depending on who sang it. In other words, it is certainly a valid speculation that black people could get away with singing it in front of white people while working in the fields, secretly thinking of the bully as white:

I pull out my gun an' begin to fire
I shot that bully right in the eye
An' I kill that bully of this town.[76]

It would not be the first time African Americans used such tricks: "similarly, under the guise of innocent dancing, African-Americans were able to parody White dance styles even in the presence of those they were mocking, using Whites' blinding racism to play them for the fool" because white people thought African Americans were unable to dance any better[77].

[76] Sullivan, 2001: 23.

2.3 Pay Day. Blues and emancipation from unjust working conditions

In 1930s Franklin Roosevelt and his economic advisors thought that restoring the U.S. economy damaged by the Great Depression would start by saving the U.S. agriculture. For that purpose they designed the Agricultural Adjustment Act that was supposed to help those who needed help the most: sharecroppers and landless farmers of which at least 80% were black and made their living farming on someone else's farm. However, saving agriculture meant saving family farms and big producers, not the really needy groups. The reason for not giving away funds to those who wanted to buy their own land and farm their own craps laid in the core idea of the AAA: reduction of food supplies so that in the future their price could rise. African Americans were thus still condemned to working on a white man's farm in conditions similar to slavery[78].

In the system of sharecropping, the landowner or plantation "boss" would provide his sharecroppers with housing, tools and seeds they needed to survive, while the cropper would supply the labor. After harvest, the boss payed the worker with 30 to 50 percent of the crop the cropper produced minus the cost of his furnishes. The croppers would rarely have any money when they signed the contract so they would have to get their housing, tools and seed on credit from the farm owner, who, of course, charged outrageous prices. In that way, the worker would be in debt to his boss *a priori*, and as his pay was almost always much lower than the debt itself, he could never repay his owner, much more because the owner added interest to the debt. Unless they wanted to face criminal prosecution, the sharecroppers could not leave their farm without repaying what they owed. Thus they would have to work for a long time while the owner, on the other hand, could evict them from the plantation.

A variation of this system was called tenant farming. It allowed a farm worker to rent land from a landowner. But because the farmers again rarely had any money to start off with, they would pay off their rent with a percentage of what they harvested, which usually meant that the owner received one-fourth, or more often, one-third of the income produced by the farmer. Either one of these systems did not bring any wealth to African Americans as they were the systems of modern slavery, based on working for a low wage without any working rights[79].

[78] Tischauser, 2012: 67.
[79] Tischauser, 2012: 68.

Lightnin' Hopkins described such experiences in a satirical, unusually direct and somewhat autobiographical piece called "Tim Moore's Farm" (1948), in which he documented mercilessness of farm's owner he and his family worked for, Tim Moore:

Yeah, you know it ain't but the one thing, you know
This black man done was wrong
Yes, you know I moved my wife and family down
On Mr. Tim Moore's farm.

Yo know, Mr. Tim Moore's a man,
Don't never stand and grin
He sees you back in the graveyard
Says I'll save you time getting in.

Hopkins recorded this song to show that his boss was someone completely emotionless and unresponsive to the needs of his workers. Last two lines of the second verse serve as a metonymy for the whole system of black worker exploitation: they could die anywhere and anytime on the farm and the boss just wouldn't care, because it is very easy to get another worker. S. Charters wrote that "some of Tom's brothers heard about the record and came after Sam [Hopkins] but they couldn't find him in the Houston colored district. Sam won't sing much of it now. . .[80]". But there are more verses:

Yes, you know I got a telegram this morning, boy
It read, it say, "Your wife is dead"
I show it to Mr. Moore, he said, "Go ahead, nigga
You know you got to plow old Red".

That white man says, "It's been raining,
yes, sir, I'm way behind
I may let you bury that woman,
one of these old dinner times".

I told him, "No, Mr. Moore,

[80] Charters, 1975: 257.

somebody's got to go"

He says, "If you ain't going to plow, Sam

Get up there and grab your hoe".

Although his wife dies and he even presents the evidence for it so that he could prove he has a valid reason to miss work, his owner dismisses his plea because the singer *just* has to work. It is hinted that even Mr. Moore knows that Hopkins realizes the foolishness of his request as he just has to plow the old Red and there is no way around it. In the next verse, rain has caused Hopkins to be unable to work the fields and thus to fall behind with his work, which now he has to make up so he can bury his dead old lady. Of course, the burial can only take place during his leisure time, but even then it is not certain if the boss will allow it. In the end, when the singer says that he must be granted an opportunity to leave as someone must go and put his wife in the ground, Tom Moore jokingly pretends that he understands the problem in a wrong way, thinking that it's either the mule or the singer that must go. He therefore responds that Hopkins doesn't have to plow if he doesn't want to, because there is another tool available for usage-the hoe. Another conclusion could be reached, if hoe is read and understood as a *cheap hoe* (whore). Then it can be observed that the boss does let him burry his wife at long last, but he considers her as worthless, nothing more than a filthy whore, a possible synecdoche for all black women.

In "Grade song", sung way before the 1930's, it is possible to notice how the workers were being denied their working rights such as the right to reasonable working hours:

Well captain, captain, you mus' be blind

Look at yo' watch! See, ain't it quttin' time?

Well, captain, captain, how can it be?

Whistles keep a-blowin', you keep a-working me.

It can also be observed how the boss made the black man work without any adequate working equipment, in inhumane working conditions and how he did not care for the worker's injuries or discomfort. It was only important that the job gets done:

Well, I tole my captain my feet wus cold,

[the captain replied] "Po' water on fire, let the wheelers roll!"

Told my captain my han's wus cold,

[the captain replied] “God damn yo’ hands, let the wheelers roll”.

If McTell answered affirmatively to the question Alan Lonax had asked earlier in this paper, he would have sung something like this, a protest song Lomax did in fact heard being sung by a prisoner James “Iron Head” Baker, in 1921:

Ain’t it hard, ain’t it hard,

Ain’t it hard, to be a nigger, nigger, nigger?

Ain’t it hard, ain’t it hard?

For you can’t git yo’ money when it’s due.

Nigger got out o’ his shirt

An’ went to work

When pay-day come,

White man say he ain’t work ‘nuf.

Along with ironizing their position in a kind of playful dialogue whose purpose is to make one laugh to keep him/her from crying, some songs indeed did offer a more concrete discourse of emancipation from unjust working relations, such as Leadbelly’s “Take his Hammer (1940)[81]”:

Take this hammer; carry it to the captain (x3)

Tell him I'm gone

Tell him I'm gone.

If he asks you was I runnin' (x3)

Tell him I was flyin'

Tell him I was flyin'.

If he asks you was I laughin' (x3)

Tell him I was cryin'

Tell him I was cryin'.

[81] A similar, but less direct is Mississippi John Hurt's rendition of this song, called Spike driver's blues (1929). A more direct version is Josh White’s Southern Exposure (1941), where he sings: “I'm leavin' here 'cause I just can't stay (x3), I'm goin' where I can get more decent pay”.

They wanna feed me cornbread and molasses (x3)

But I got my pride

Well, I got my pride.

It seems that the song expresses sadness over leaving a job, as the singer was crying as he was leaving, until a twist in the last verse informs the listener of the songs intended message. Leadbelly could not take this inhumane treatment by his captain anymore, who gave him inadequate pay (if any) for his hard work, exploited him just like the mule used for plowing the fields, kept him in the cold and rain and fed him skimpy food (cornbread and molasses) so he escaped. Before he ran away he asked that his final words be repeated to the captain as they contained a rather bold, bitterly honest and mocking statement. Hyperbole and contrast are used throughout the song to amplify the effect of the message as the captain was to be informed that the singer did not run away, he flew away; such was the speed and his eagerness to leave this hell of a job behind. He did not laugh as he ran, but he cried from a manic happiness that overtook him as he sobbed uncontrollably, happy that he was finally free from harsh labor. He had his pride and he gave his boss the finger, which is a courageous move at the time, especially if one remembers to take into the account the fact that it was against the law to quit without paying off the debt to the Master.

2.4 Not a single one. Blues and emancipation from segregated and biased education system

With the "separate but equal" doctrine Jim Crow laws successfully segregated public schools for black and whites. White people thought that "segregation laws actually reduced racial violence by keeping the races away from each other"[82], and a few so-called experts on racial thinking, such as Thomas Pearce Bailey (1867-1949) designed the rules that expressed the racist attitudes of whites in Jim Crow era. One of the rules proscribed that "in educational policy let the Negro have the crumbs that fall from the white man's table"[83]. And so the Negro had his crumbs.

In order to keep the southern way of life going, white people did not mind paying for "two separate systems of education, one for whites and another-unfunded, vastly inferior and incessantly vocational-for African Americans. [Adding to that], in public elementary schools from Virginia and North Carolina to Texas, the curriculum for black students emphasized subjects that would teach them how to remain in their place[84]". In charge of black school there was always a white person to take care of the school. One description of a "colored school" in North Carolina will be enough for the reader to gain an insight into the quality of black education facilities: "the school house is a shabbily built board structure, one story high… there are no blinds and no curtains on the windows. The desk are homemade . . . and there is no teacher's desk or table . . . The children's . . . books are soiled and look much like their surroundings"[85]. Black teachers were poorly trained as well for they were seldom allowed more than a high school education because institutions of higher education, such as colleges hardly existed in Jim Crow south.

In my research I did not find a single blues song containing a reference to the state of black schools. Going along the lines of Maslow pyramid, one conclusion could be that African Americans in the blues era mainly cared about securing their primary needs: safety and income and thus perceived matters such as equal education as trivial. Looking at the problem from the singer's perspective, it could be that such songs were not written because it would not sell and they did not want to mess up their God given opportunity to try and escape poverty with music by getting themselves dismissed from the payroll for singing uninteresting

[82] Tischauser, 2012: 34.
[83] Taken from a book called Race Orthodoxy in the South, and other Aspects of the Negro Question, cit. according to Tischauser, 2012: 35.
[84] Tischauser, 2012: 36.
[85] Tischauser, 2012: 37.

songs. Lastly, despite the fact that blues musicians of the blues era were legends regarding their music, they were often uneducated (for instance, Papa Charlie Jackson could not read or write), violent types (Bukkha White and Leadbelly stabbed a man) that lived a destructive lifestyle. It could be possible that, because of their character profile caused by their *modus vivendi*, they simply did not notice or care for such issues.

2.5 Echoes of Civil Rights movement. Blues and political emancipation.

Jim Crow also effectively disabled 15th Amendment and its universal black suffrage by firstly allowing unpunished threats of violence to black people if they thought about voting in the first place. Another method was to impose poll taxes, which had to be paid in order to vote at a time when most African Americans were penniless farm hands. Such practice was addressed by White:

I ain't treated no better than a mountain goat (x3)
Boss takes my crop and a poll tax takes my vote[86].

In Louisiana, black suffrage was kept under control by restricting voting rights to males whose grandfathers could vote right after the Civil War. In other places, black people had to undergo series of tests in order to participate in the elections, such as literacy tests (in some cases, a knowledge of Latin was required) or the registrar's office was simply closed for days, making it impossible to register for voting Apathy, along with fear, certainly struck the hearts of many.

When starting my research, I did not expect that I would find a single song with the topic of political emancipation because of the similar reasons as those pointed out in the closing paragraph of the previous chapter. Adding to them is the notion that such topics were perhaps especially fiery (because they implied the possibility that a black person runs the government and thus influences the white man's way of life) and problematic to sing about as the singer was in potential danger for doing so (remember the examples of "Strange Fruit" and "Tim Moore's Farm"). However, I was mistaken and was able to find songs that, apart from the one noted above, directly address the main political source of African American troubles, Jim Crow, sung by singers who resided in a more tolerant North of USA. First of them is „Northbound Blues" (1927) by Maggie Jones, in which she is eager to go north to escape Jim Crow:

Got my trunk and grip all packed
Goodbye, I ain't coming back
Going to leave this Jim Crow town
Lord, sweet pape, New York bound.

[86] Josh White, „Southern Exposure" (1941).

Got my ticket in my hand

And I'm leaving Dixieland.

Going north child, where I can be free (x2)

Where there's no hardships, like in Tennessee.

Going where they don't have Jim Crow laws (x2)

Don't have to work there, like in Arkansas.

Although she is bold enough to state the system of segregation laws directly by his name, she still vaguely depicts the discriminative reasons of going north: in the second verse it is hardships and lack of freedom and in the third verse it is unjust or unfavorable working conditions and opportunities one can assume are caused by Jim Crow laws. Leadbelly very boldly calls for Jim Crow's destruction by collective effort, echoing the sentiment of an upcoming Civil Rights Movement in "Jim Crow Blues" (1930):

Down in Louisiana, Tennessee, Georgia's a mighty good place to go

And get together, break up this old Jim Crow.

. . .

I told everybody over the radio

Make up their mind and get together, break up this old Jim Crow.

. . .

I'm gonna sing this verse, I ain't gonna sing no more

Please get together, break up this old Jim Crow.

Last example is a song by Josh White, "Uncle Sam Says" (1941):

Airplanes flying across the land and sea,

Everybody flying but a Negro like me.

Uncle Sam says, "Your place is on the ground,

When I fly my airplanes, don't want no Negro around"

The same thing for the Navy, when ships go to sea

All they got is a mess boy's job for me

Uncle Sam says,

"Keep on your apron, son,

You know I ain’t gonna let you shoot my big Navy gun".

White describes discrimination a black soldier was facing in the American Airforce and Navy, barring them from flying the airplanes or shooting the navy cannons and instead assigning them for cleaning jobs. He goes on to point out a hypocrisy of Jim Crow laws as black people are segregated from white people in the army but are expected to help fight America’s enemy:

Uncle Sam says, "Two camps for black and white

But when trouble starts, we’ll all be in that same big fight".

The song ends again ends in an again surprisingly unusual manner as the singer points out the hypocrisy of American democracy and goes on to demand destruction on segregation laws:

. . .

If you ask me I think democracy is fine

I mean democracy without the color line

Uncle Sam says, "We’ll live the American way"

Let’s get together and kill Jim Crow today.

3 Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children[87]. Civil Rights Movement

Civil rights movement could be best described as series of protests by African Americans which had the goal of ending racial segregation, crushing Jim Crow system of laws and enabling true equality and actual human rights for every citizen of the USA. It lasted from around 1954 to 1968 and it did accomplish the aforementioned objectives to a certain degree, as it is going to be shown in later paragraphs. Before I continue with the analysis of discourse of emancipation in the hip hop era, I must analyze the most important achievements of the movement, which serves as a kind of bridge between the blues and hip hop period and which is, in my opinion, responsible for the change from implicit to explicit discourse in songs.

First, a few reasons can be pointed out as to why such a movement occurred at that particular time. Number one is the Second World War for whose purpose many African Americans were drafted in the still segregated American army. Black man's efforts were needed, but he was supposed to do them while still being humiliated. Such discrimination prompted an enormous pressure that was easier to achieve during the chaotic wartime, to the federal government from the black community led by Phillip Randolph, America's top black union leader. The president FD Roosevelt responded by establishing Fair Employment Practice Committee to prevent job discrimination in war mobilization. Two million black workers thus found jobs in munition factories, giving them greater economic power. Apart from that, many black soldiers attained ranks in the army and were sometimes superior to the white soldier, hence realizing their equality towards white people along with another layer of hypocrisy of fighting to destroy racism in Europe while America's racism still lingers on: "I spent four years in the army to free a bunch of Dutchmen and Frenchmen and I'm hanged if I'm going to let the Alabama version of the Germans kick me around when I get home"[88], one black army corporal proclaimed. Not only the soldiers but the greater public also noticed, through the Nazi holocaust, the repulsiveness and duplicity of racism in America.

Second, millions of black people also migrated from rural areas to the cities in both north and south after the war. In southern industrial cities segregation was "overt and onerous, so the region caste system was questioned as never before"[89]. In the northern cities black people

[87] Sentence from M. Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, 1963.
[88] Dierenfield, 2013: 18.
[89] Dierenfield, 2013: 20.

found high paying jobs and started to join black organization such as NAACP[90], the CORE[91], or the unions were they were taught ideas of human rights, black liberty as well as further developing their consciousness and the notion that black man really was equal to the white man. Southern journalists and writers, such as Howard Odum, Ralph McGill and Wilbur Cash, along with white performers of black music, the most famous one being Elvis Presley also endorsed problems of the black community as well as helped to portray black people as human beings.

Third, in 1954, the already mentioned murder of Emmett Till occurred in Money, Mississippi. Apart from its incredible gruesomeness and miscarriage of justice, the murder is also special because the victim's mother demanded that the casket be opened during the funeral so everybody could see what goes on in Magnolia State for decades. Photographs were taken and published in both white and black newspapers and tens of thousands saw the body as it was put on public display before the funeral. Along with the courage of Rosa Parks, who refused to stand up for a white man during a bus ride in 1955, these were the pivotal events that ignited the lingering spark of Civil rights movement as its cry for liberty and equality spread across the land under the guidance of the brilliant speaker Martin Luther King.

Detailed chronology of the movement is not important for this paper but rather its concrete political accomplishments. Based on political decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson* solidified racism, segregation, inequality and racial violence, political decision was also the only step that could reverse it and start the slow process of change. Civil Rights movement engendered four important political triumphs which ultimately led to a gradual decrease in lynching and other violent practices enticed by racism. Each of them will be explained in short lines below.

First of these was the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), a case which consisted of five lawsuits by parents of black children which exposed inequalities between black and white schools and because of which segregation in schools was deemed unconstitutional and segregated educational facilities inherently unequal. Such a decision provoked a fierce retaliation from the white exorbitant of he the Deep South states, although in many areas outside of it *Brown* was accepted with encouragement from white moderates. Southern politicians, such as Georgia governor Herman Talmadge, South Carolina governor James Byrnes, Alabama gov-

[90] National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People founded in 1909 by W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, was the oldest Civil Rights Organisation which promoted the idea that black people should not accept their „second order" position but rather fight for their equality under the leadership of black elite.
[91] Congress of Racial Equality, founded in 1942 by James Farmer, was an organisation for the promotion of African American rights by using non-violent techniques such as sit-ins.

ernor George Wallace and many others refused to let such a decision be implemented in their states in part because racism was part of their political ideology and they would not be elected ever again if they went with *Brown*. After fierce resistance and many acts of violence and opposition (e.g. Little Rock Crisis), education facilities were slowly desegregated at deliberate speed and eventually *Brown* act was enforced in all of the States[92].

Several passed Civil Acts were aimed at nullifying African American disenfranchisement. First of them was *Civil Rights Act of 1957*, by which U.S. Civil Rights Commission was founded to monitor alleged racial complaints. First of many was the unconstitutional gerrymandering in Alabama to exclude all but four black voters out of five hundred from the district of Tuskegee. *Civil Rights Act of 1960* was more concrete as it required that local voter registrations records be opened to federal inspection and provided criminal penalties for interfering with the right to vote. It also appointed referees to help black people register to vote. Finally, with the 24th Amendment to the U.S. constitution, which prohibits poll taxes as well as the enactment of *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which ensured equal application of voter registration and the *Civil Rights Act of 1965*, which prohibits racial discrimination in voting, disenfranchisement of African Americans was dying out.

The same *Civil Act of 1964*, coaxed from the Government by March on Washington, a protest for ending discriminations for black jobs, "virtually wiped out Jim Crow in a single stroke. It prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and in hiring staff, allowed government agencies to withhold federal funds from any program permitting discrimination. . .it also outlawed job discrimination by creating permanent watchdog federal agency – the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission". Since the Act prohibited any kind of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origins it also guaranteed equality of the law and all the clauses from the 6th Amendment, such as impartial jury, thus became valid for the African Americans.

Civil Rights movement was important because its accomplishments gave Constitutional rights to African Americans. Some of the clauses in them were only valid de jure (as it will be shown in next chapters), but conditions for African Americans improved drastically. Racial violence (especially lynching) vastly diminished as the law now offered actual protection for everybody. Ultimately, perceptions changed, as black people did not see themselves as inferior and also majority of white people did not see them as inferior. This freed the expression in

[92] Dierenfield, 2013: 23-31.

songs, as a new young African American generation was being born in the post-Civil Rights era and young black people used their freedom of thought and words to highlight past and present injustices being done to the black community.

4 Singers from the ghetto. The birth of hip hop

As the snow flies

On a cold and gray Chicago mornin'

A poor little baby child is born

In the ghetto (in the ghetto).

A song recorded by Elvis, "In the Ghetto" (1969) describes the fate of millions of black children whose parents ran away from the racist rural South to seek refuge in a more accepting environment. During the Great Migration, lasting from the 1920s to the 1970s, around a million of blacks from the south migrated to urban areas, mainly in the North and West. Since residential segregation was not defeated, they started to inhabit center-city areas, thus forming ethnically isolated ghettoes in cities such as Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles, Cleveland or New York. In the Bronx, a neighborhood in the Big Apple, hip hop, a new form of music, invented by the post-civil rights generation was being born near the end of the disco 70s. Although pre-war Bronx during the 1920s to the 1940s period was a place for the realization of the American Dream for European middle-class families coming from Italy or Ireland, post-war Bronx started to decay and change radically. Factors such as economic changes (shifts from manufacturing to service occupations) or urban development (building of a thoroughfare caused 60,000 middle class families to get the chance to be relocated to the suburbs) all caused for the change in demographic structure of the ghettos not only in the Bronx but in other areas too. "The mass departure of economically stable families from the central Bronx and the influx of more impoverished [black] families into the Bronx transformed the formerly thriving area into a city of despair[93]".

Life in the ghetto[94] was not easy but rather full of danger. Streets were filled with gang members, drug-addicts, poor people and other denizens without a job and perspective who often took to violent methods for securing money needed for whatever purpose or just to vent out their frustration. For some, there were other means of relieving the pressure such as dancing and music. It was precisely these young artists who created hip hop and its four main elements: the Disc Jockeys (DJs), dancers, Masters of Ceremonies (MCs) and graffiti artists. Although over the years MCs will prevail as a symbol of hip hop, in its formative phase each of these was equally important for its development. With the first rap song "Rapper's Delight"

[93] Price, 2006: 4-7.
[94] Listen to „The Message" (1982) by the Grandmaster Flash for a very realistic desription of a ghetto.

published in 1979, the sporadic song and dance parties of the troubled youth began to take a more concrete shape forming hip hop music scene which soon started to emerge as a global phenomenon.

This was the first time that African American music was so incredibly influential and popular worldwide, with its listeners consisting of all races and hip hop records being sold in millions. This was also the first time that a black man could speak his mind with complete honesty and sing freely without the fear of retaliation. Words like these could have not been said before, using personification to depict a whole nation as a guilty criminal:

America, America, America

I charge you with the crime of rape, murder, and assault

For suppressing and punishing my people

I charge you with robbery for robbing me of my history[95].

This is just one of many examples how not the expression has changed, becoming more direct and vulgar: where McTell would ambiguously say "They got me Accused for murder and I haven't even harm the man", Public enemy would say "Fuck the Police". The times they were a-changing because of the hip hop music that was "a revolutionary tool in changing the structure of racist America[96]". It took a long time to obtain such tool and it was about to be used to its fullest.

[95] 2pac, Words of Wisdom (1991).
[96] Boogie Down Productions, „Exibit A" (1990).

4.1 Can't we all just get along? Hip hop and emancipation from unequal treatment under the law

The words from the title of this chapter were uttered by Rodney King, infamously known as being a victim of a wide-covered case of police brutality. Although the beating was documented in a video, a jury made of twelve people of whom nine were white acquitted all four officers of the L.A. police department involved in the incident. The scandalous decision sparked 1992 Los Angeles Riots during which Rodney King, although he could have enjoyed schadenfreude in some of its events, for instance, in the beating of white truck driver Reginald Denny by black attackers, sent a forgiving and pacific message in an interview to just stop the riots and try to get along. Indeed, police brutality was a disease that plagued the U.S. law enforcement long after the blues era, with multiple such incidents occurring during the hip hop period. One of them is the beating to death of Arthur McDuffie (1979) after which the officers involved were acquitted by an all-white jury just like officer John Vojtas, one of the killers of a black motorist, Johny Gammage (1995)[97]. The list can go further: death of Malice Green (1992), death of Tricia Miller (1998), shooting of Amadou Dillo (1999), etc.

One of the theories speculates on this trend of police brutality towards African Americans. It states that police officers do not act impartially and are not concerned with criminals as such, but with social dissidents, who represent rebels that threaten to undermine values and traditions of the social center. Police are then drawn to any action or behavior that can harm these values of the center. There are whole categories that can be labeled as social dissidents because they have been allocated certain statuses outside the mainstream of society in accordance with the stratification system. Thus African American fit into this group perfectly, having had the status of an inferior for a long time and still occupying the lower class position in the post-civil rights era. Being recognized as such, they fall under sharp police scrutiny and observation[98].

Hip hopers now recognized the police as their main enemy and the source of violence, restriction and harm much more than it was the case in the blues era, which represents a shift as now danger does not come anymore from any white man. Reasons for that will be explained in detail in the next part were I discuss the topic of emancipation from racial violence. Since the police are now seen as the prime antagonist, many of hip hop songs are filled with ac-

[97] Kelley, 2000: 45.
[98] Cooper, 1981: 116, cit. according to Pierce 1986: 49.

counts of police misconduct. 2pac, who experienced this first hand in 1991, raps about police harassment for no apparent reason:

They got me trapped

Can barely walk the city streets

Without a cop harassing me, searching me

Then asking my identity

Hands up, throw me up against the wall

Didn't do a thing at all[99].

While McTell did not tell who had wrongfully framed him for murder, forgery and burglary, 2pac openly names the police as the culprit who tried to plant him drugs he did not have:

Jacked by the police, didn't have my ID

. . .

They tried to frame me

They tried to say I had some dope in the back seat

But I'm a rap fiend, not a crack fiend[100].

However, the reason for this harassment is soon stated and it is the same one on which the system of slavery used to be built upon. 2pac puts it plain and simple:

Cops on my back

just 'cause I'm black, snap[101].

N.W.A gives similar account of such racial profiling as well as the well-known black criminal stereotype that solidified African Americans as the aforementioned social dissidents:

A young nigga got it bad 'cause I'm brown

And not the other color so police think

They have the authority to kill a minority.

. . .

Searchin' my car, lookin' for the product

[99] 2pac, „Trapped“ (1991).
[100] 2pac, „Violent“ (1991).
[101] 2pac, „Soulja's revenge“ (1993).

Thinkin' every nigga is sellin' narcotics[102].

Shifting the viewpoint from the victim of the police to the victim who needs help from the police, Public Enemy shows that there is only negligence when a police is called in the black community:

Going, going, gone

Now I dialed 911 a long time ago

Don't you see how late they're reacting

They only come and they come when they wanna

So get the morgue truck and embalm the goner.

. . .

So get up get, get get down

911 is a joke in yo' town[103].

Black police officers did not get any better treatment than their white colleagues. From the perspective of a black community they were viewed as traitors or sellouts working for the enemy because they were on his payroll thus being perceived as somewhat of a state's lapdog that has forsaken the values of the street[104]. As Goodie mob sings in "Live at the O.M.N.I[105]„ (1995):

I went to jail fo' the cause and to black police

Wouldn't give 'em the sweat off my fuckin' balls

Suckin' on the devil's dick already kissin his ass fo a ten dolla' raise

Bitch beat me down fo' some petty cash, smilin' in my face.

To conclude, resistance against police brutality again comes in the form of violence. But not anymore through celebration of someone else's killing spree, such as Railroad Bill's or Two Gun's. This time it is the singers themselves who are openly conjuring up acts of assault.

[102] Niggas With Attitude, „Fuck The Police" (1988).
[103] Public Enemy, „911 Is A Joke" (1990).
[104] Not only black community viewed police officers as something bad. For instance, a survey of 500 American police-genre films depicts African American officers in a comedic way, „being the target of jokes of all nature. (Wilson et al, 2015: 485).
[105] The abbreviation in the song's title refers to "one million niggas inside" of prison.

2pac, in Violent (1991) deems himself as the rightful punisher, giving the cops a taste of their own medicine:

My homie dropped, so I hit the cop

I kept swingin', yo, I couldn't stop

Before I knew it, I was beatin' the cop senseless

The other cop dropped his gun, he was defenseless

Now I'm against this cop who was racist

Givin' him a taste, of trading places.

Similar desire to fight back and even kill can be observed in the song "Crooked Cop" (1993) by Geto Boys in which the aforementioned unjust beating of Rodney King is invoked now without fear of retribution, showing that now such acts do not go unnoticed anymore[106]:

Yeah, and if I talk back you wanna bust my black ass, G

Just like Rodney King,

after which the hook goes as:

Mr. Officer, crooked officer

I wanna put your ass in a coffin, sir

'Cause you done fucked with niggas like myself for too long.

[106] 2pac also remembers Rodney King, with a snide remark in "Soulja's Story" (1991): „Cops on my tail, so I bail til I dodge 'em/They finally pull me over and I laugh/"Remember Rodney King?" and I blast on his punk ass/Now I got a murder case?".

4.2 In these parts, trespassers get penalized. Hip hop and emancipation from racial violence

Although police brutality is incredibly common topic in hip hop, with almost every rapper mentioning it in one way or the other, racist violence exerted by white civilians is seldom seen as issue in hip hop songs (at least in comparison to police violence), which is not what one could expect at first glance. Fear of retribution no longer seems like a plausible reason for it. Nor does low market appeal of such topics because they are similar to rapping about police violence. The answer lies in a plain fact that such violence carried out by lynch mobs and white vigilantes was a rare sight in hip hop era because of a previously explained mixture of institutional and perceptive changes caused by the Civil Rights Movement. Apart from that, it can be concluded that ghettoes for white people now assumed the symbol of what Mississippi was to black people: white men went there only if they were crazy as numerous armed gangs resided there and vigilante justice just could not be carried out even if eager lynch mobs existed because ghettoes were very dangerous places. As 2pac put it:

> If you're not from the town then don't pass through
>
> 'Cause some O.G. fools might blast you[107].

The only white men who entered the ghettos were police officers. Thus *the po po* came to embody the main form of white existential enemy for the rappers and other African American residents of the projects, the enemy who could physically harm them. That could be the explanation as to why there is such bounteous amount of police rap songs. On the other hand, there is a proliferation of songs with topics of intra-ethnic violence but that can be a topic for another paper.

However, there are still a few tales and depictions of racist white-on-black violence, first of which is displayed in a song by KRS-One, “Uh Oh” (1993):

> White kids! You living in the whitest part of town
>
> You are a white kid but you know you hang around
>
> So you and your friends thinking that you are all of that
>
> When you see a youth walk by and yes the youth is black
>
> One kid say "Hey, what you doing on the block

[107] 2pac, „I wonder if Heaven Got A Ghetto“ (1997).

We don't want no niggers here unless he is a cop"

So the kid pull out a big baseball bat

And them him slap with the bat because the kid is black

Now then the kid fell down but still alive

So he reach in his pants and pull out a four-five

Pop! One friend drop and everyone run

Out of all the white kids now you the only one

You start cry, cause now you gonna die

And it's all because what your friends did to this guy.

KRS One evokes up a situation in which a group of white children notice a black child walking down the street and by conjuring up the Jim Crow spirit of their forefathers, they start harassing the boy for daring to enter their white neighborhood. Eventually one of the children knocks him down with a baseball bat but this time the plot has a twist because, unlike his ancestors, the black youth has a gun to defend himself with. He shots one of the kids but not the one who directly attacked him. The dying child gets a warning in hindsight because now he is going to die for someone else's stupidity. However, the listener can still benefit from the advice given:

You ain't that tough ya

Choose the right friends

You ain't that tough now

Don't make your life end[108].

This last part draws one's attention because it represents an attention-grabbing shift in the hitherto displayed tone of resistance which was also present in the blues: instead of violence as retribution to oppression, the rapper offers consultation on how to avoid such unnecessary and pointless clashes. Just as Blind Lemon Jefferson warned black people to stay away from prison in the first place, so does KRS-One teach black youth to avoid hanging out with troublemaking friends and ending up getting in trouble.

Another report of interethnic skirmish is provided by Paris, in his song "The Hate That Hate Made" (1990):

[108] KRS One, „Uh Oh" (1993).

…

Two black brothers took a walk in the South side

Could've been any brother lookin' for a dope ride

Seein' a white girl wasn't in the plan

But the plan had plans of it's own for a brother man

…

I guess, you suppose you know what a nigga do

To a female that was meant for you

Jealous 'cause your girlfriend screwin' a black man

So you bust caps on an innocent by stand

…

But I guess, we all look the same

A goddamn shame, you don't know my name.

In a modernized variant of Emmett Till's story, the conflict arises because a girlfriend of a white man had sexual relations with another man. Jealousy was amplified by the fact that her lover was black. By stating that the cheated boyfriend killed an innocent African American because they all looked the same to him the singer points out another racist stereotype. Finally, going back to the discourse of violence, the singer demands to be left alone, knowing that such violent and deadly misfortune could happen to him as well next time someone replaces one black man for another. But unlike Emmett Till, he is armed and will defend himself implying with the song's title that he will sense no guilt because white man has only himself to blame for black people hating him:

You dumb motherfuckers just don't know me

You don't control me, so leave me lonely

Step and be prone to a cap to the dome

I don't quit, I'll start tearin' up shit.

2pac goes on to blatantly accuse the United states government as the one who is now being violent and who wants to finish what the Jim Crow enthusiasts did not have the time to achieve in the fullest, extermination by any means:

Killing us one by one

In one way or another

America will find a way to eliminate the problem, one by one

The problem is the troublesome Black youth of the ghettos

And, one by one, we are being wiped off the face of this Earth

At an extremely alarming rate[109].

In the end, three more songs remain that need to be included in this analysis. They both use the newly acquired freedom of expression to the fullest sense and call out the white people for past injustices done to African Americans. It was something that the singers in the blues era could not so directly address. Goodie Mob, a group from Atlanta, Georgia adds to the notion that things have changed, as they state in their song "The Coming" (1995) that racist gatherings and threats of the Ku Klux Klan, such a frequent phenomenon of the south in the past, will no longer be tolerated:

Flag murderer, crosses burnin' in my front yard

KKK throwing them rallies, but no, not no more

In these parts, trespassers get penalized...

The second one is "Revolutionary Generation", depicting acts of discriminations that went undocumented and certainly unprocessed in court (1990):

They disrespected mama and treated her like dirt

America took her, reshaped her, raped her

No, it never made the paper

Beat us, mated us

Made us attack our woman in black[110].

While members of Public Enemy do call for a rebellion in a not so aggressive tone in the later verses of the song, it is the KRS-One, using auditory image of a gun to amplify the experi-

[109] 2pac, „Words of Wisdom" (1991).

[110] It could be that this line is meant to show how, during slavery, slave husbands were powerless to stop white overseers raping their women so, in their frustration caused by humiliation brought on by the white men, they „targeted the female victims of rape rather than the powerful white males who attacked them" (Halpern and Dal Lago, 2002: 233).

ence, who provides the old reliable method, a violent retrospective retribution to past perpetrators in a sort of an epilogue of Public Enemy's tune:

That's for calling my father a boy and, "klak, klak, klak"

That's for putting scars on my mother's back, BO

That's for calling my sister a ho, and for you

"Buck, buck, buck", cause I don't give a motherfuck

Remember the whip, remember the chant

Remember the rope[111].

[111] KRS-One: „Ah-Yeah" (1995).

4.3 I keep on looking for a job but job seems not to like me. Hip hop and the emancipation from unjust working conditions.

Unemployment was another pestilence that plagued the black community throughout the blues and hip hop era. In the latter timespan, the unemployment rate of African Americans was at least twice as high as the unemployment of white people: in 1979, 12.8% of black people were without a job as opposed to 5.1 jobless white people. In 1985 and 1990, their condition has not improved, with the ratios now being 15.1% vs. 6.2% and 11.4% vs. 4.8% respectively. Finally, in the last year of hip hop era, 10.5% of black people were jobless while that number was again more than twice as low for the white population, 4.7% of them[112]. Unemployment produced poverty, poverty generated desperation and desperation gave birth to criminal behavior. Drug dealing is one of the consequences of not being able to generate a decent (or any) income and it is a common theme in hip hop songs:

Every day I see my mother struggling,
Now its time I've got to do something,
I look for work I get dissed like a jerk,
I do odd jobs and come home like a slob,
So here comes Rob he's cold and shivery,
He gives me two hundred for a quick delivery,
I do it once, I do it twice,
Now there's steak with the beans and rice
. . .
Three months later we run our own caper,
My family's happy everything is new,
Now tell me what the fuck am I supposed to do?[113]

There is a wide array of sociological theories about the reasons of ghetto unemployment. One of them presupposes that "dramatic rise in inner-city joblessness and economic exclusion is a product of continuous industrial restructuring[114]". The other line of thought states that the

[112] Statistics taken from The Bureau of labour statistics, in „Unemployment rates, by race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, 1975–2010", https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2011/ted_20111005_data.htm (accessed on the 21st of June, 2019).
[113] Boogie Down Productions, „Love's Gonna Get Cha (Material Love)" (1990).
[114] Wilson, 1993: 2.

ghetto class itself is to blame, because "opportunities for work are widely available . . . [but there is] a disinclination . . . to accept and to retain available low-wage jobs because they do not consider menial work fair or obligatory[115]". Geto boys indeed pointed out the unfairness and consequential problems of such low-paying job:

... McDonald's don't fit
They work you like a dog plus they talk too much shit!
Without them dollar signs
It's like livin and dyin at the same time
And you wonder why a motherfucker sell dope?
He ain't with being broke![116]

They also state that not everyone goes into drug dealing straight away and that some people indeed try to get an educational status. However, they are faced with discrimination in labor market[117], in which even a diploma is not enough if you are black and coming from the ghetto:

I tried to do the right things major
But that didn't put no food on the table
Went back to school to get my G.E.D
But who's gonna hire a motherfucker like me?

The notion of drifting between the unemployment and low paying job was further addressed by Grandmaster Melle Mel & the Furious Five in "Beat Street Breakdown" (1984). He, juxtaposed to Geto Boys, used a more subtle and philosophical tone to again show discrimination of a black man in the world of work, where it seems that, as Bukowski noticed "the worst man have the best jobs, the best men have the worst jobs or are unemployed or locked in madhouses[118]":

You search for justice and what do you find?

[115] Wilson, 1993: 2.
[116] Geto Boys, „I Ain't With Being Broke" (1991).
[117] Statistic data on 3,164 cases of discrimination charges filed by African American men, between 1988-2003 shows that, for instance, 56% of them were discriminatory firing, 25% was harassment and only 4.3% was discriminatory hiring. However, the author give a possible explanation for this: "those who have not been hired for a position may not realize that they have been discriminated against" (Mong and Roscigno, 2009: 8-9).
[118] Bukowski, 2011: 390.

You find just us on the unemployment line

You find just us sweatin' from dawn to dusk

There's no justice, it's, huh, just us.

Goodie Mob's member Cee-Lo mentions such extreme poverty of his family and such hard time they had of sustaining themselves that even child labor in degrading jobs was necessary in order to bring food to the table:

I'm amazed that we made it this far

A poor black family is all that we are

Wishing upon a star for a trace of happiness

. . .

13-and-a-half years old

Standing at the bus stop alone in the cold

On my way to be degraded for a fee

To help get my family off this street called Sesame[119].

In a song of a straightforward title "The Racist" (1990) by Boogie down Productions, the rappers depict and enumerate the types of racist in USA. Thus, retrospectively, they sing about African American loss of land that was given to them after Emancipation Proclamation, but soon taken away by white farmers, who claimed that they were its rightful owners. This, in return, undermined African American chances do develop their own business and is one of the reason that so many of them were sharecroppers and farm hand in the first half of the 20th century:

Number four is the money racist

The one that used the topics of sheer economics

They say, "Owning a business isn't for the black man

He don't want that", yet they went and took his land

What could not have been said directly but rather subtle, in prison songs, such as "Aint it hard to be a Nigger, Nigger", sung by already lost folk who did not fear uttering such bold lyrics at the time because they were in a chain gang for the rest of their life, was put very plainly by

[119] Goodie Mob, „Sesame Street" (1995).

Public Enemy. They uncover the skeletons in the closet and sum up the consequence that decades and segregation have had on Black and White economic power. It is the wage gap where on average, in timespan from 1979 to 1995 white people had around 20% or more higher income then black people[120]. What was once expressed in ambiguous lines like:

The big bee flies high

The little bee makes the honey,

now has transformed into this:

The one who makes the money is white not black

You might not believe it but it is like that.

[120] Wilson and Rodgers III, 2016: 8.

4.4 We Don't Need No Thought Control[121]. Hip hop and emancipation from unjust educational system

The *Brown* decision was indeed a landmark act as it gave better education options and made it more available and accessible to African Americans. Because of *Brown*, "more African Americans are attending elementary and secondary schools; African Americans are graduating from high schools at a higher rate; more African American students are attending college, graduate, and professional schools; and there are more African American professionals in leadership roles as a result of expanded educational opportunities"[122]. However, despite this progress many problems of African American education remained, such as decline in educational performance (white students get higher scores than black students in mathematics, reading, writing and science fields, as well as in SAT[123] and ACT[124] tests), lower than expected four-year college going rates and consequently lower degree attainment. Also, although obligatory segregation by law was abolished, a sporadic re-segregation has occurred as data from 1972 shows that 63.6% of black students were enrolled in schools with less than half White student enrollment, with an increase to 67.1% in 1986. This trend can be explained by white outmigration from urban to suburban school districts and the ineffective implementation of court orders designed to increase integration in schools in late 60s and 70s[125].

None of these topics are discussed in any hip hop songs I have encountered in my analysis. However, an interesting line of thought does reveal that education was indeed an important topic among some rappers because they critiqued teaching of false historical knowledge to the black children by using historic revisionism or omission of facts. Public Enemy, in "Prophets of Rage" (1988) declares that:

They tell lies in the books

That you're readin'

It's knowledge of yourself

That you're needin'.

[121] A lyric from Pink Floyd's „Another Brick in the Wall" (1979).
[122] Garibaldi, 1997: 105.
[123] Scholastic Achievement Test.
[124] American College Test.
[125] Garibaldi, 1997: 106-110.

They touch upon an important idea that hiding information is what is keeping African Americans from reaching their full potential and attaining the truth about themselves. Revisionism, although it can be considered in a positive light, as a "fundamental element that should define the deontological ethics of the historian. . . [aiming at] reinterpreting certain historical events in the light of new facts, elements, and from a scientifically neutral perspective"[126], often symbolizes the action of manipulation of historical events for political ends. Several reasons for such manipulation could be speculated upon: to keep the image and myth of American Dream alive, to act as a therapeutic remedy and America's way to effectively deal with its own dark past or to suppress possible rebellious tendencies and unrest that might arise if history book did objectively portray the past of the USA. Boogie Down Productions touches precisely upon this last point:

What do you mean when you say I'm rebellious

Cause I don't accept everything that you're telling us

. . .

I failed your class cause I ain't with your reasoning

You're tryin' make me you by seasoning

. . .

It seems to me that in a school that's ebony

African history should be pumped up steadily, but it's not

And this has got to stop[127].

In later verses they stress that the problem also lies in the fact that young African Americans are taught in schools how to be servants, to aspire to low-paying manual jobs such as the stereotypical black school janitor whose best pal is his mop instead of becoming an important and admired figure such as an inventor:

Cause you don't know that you ain't just a janitor

No one told you about Benjamin Banneker

A brilliant Black man that invented the almanac

…

[126] Cattini, 2011: 30.
[127] Boogie Down Productions, „You must learn" (1989).

Similar idea is broadened in Boogie Down Productions' other song "Why is that?" (1989) in which the question is why are teachers not developing black children creative potentials and instead teaching them only the necessities thus unnaturally restraining hem and forcing them to be something they are not:

. . .

But here's the question I'm askin'

Why is it young black kids taught black?

They're only taught how to read, write and act

It's like teachin' a dog to be a cat

You don't teach white kids to be black

. . .

2pac remembers the dichotomy between two prominent Civil Rights philosophies of M. Luther King and Malcom X thus implying the omission of facts in American history books as well as pointing out how seeking out the truth and curiosity is unwanted:

No Malcolm X in my history text, why's that?

'Cause he tried to educate and liberate all blacks

Why is Martin Luther King in my book each week?

He told blacks, if they get smacked, turn the other cheek

I don't get it, so many questions went through my mind

I get sweated, they act like asking questions is a crime[128].

He criticizes American education system for not teaching the somewhat radical ideas of Malcom X (black supremacy, white and black segregation and violent retaliation to white oppression if necessary) and instead only pointing out M. L. King's peaceful desire for racial integration and cooperation. He suggests that, by learning the teachings of King, black man has accepted his second class citizenship, a form of life equal to slavery[129], instead of *punching* the white man back. It is just what America wanted to achieve, peace and stability trough the elimination of such dangerous ideas.

[128] 2pac, „Words of Wisdom" (1991).

[129] As Malcom X said in his „Ballot or the Bullet Speech", 1964: „Well, this country is a hypocrite! They try and make you think they set you free by calling you a second-class citizen. No, you're nothing but a 20th century slave.

Boogie Down Productions notice that black pride and sense of self-worth are effectively silenced in yet another manipulation of historical facts, by hiding the true heritage of first humans:

Timbuctu[130] existed when the caveman existed

Why then isn't this listed

Is it because the blackman is the original man

Or does it mean humanity is African

I don't know but these sciences are hidden[131].

KRS One, in his song "Squash the Beef" (1995) calls out for the reform of this crooked education system by focusing on learning about self in metaphysical manner which would lead towards acquiring peace and stability:

If I ruled the schools, from pole to pole

The entire judicial system would fold

I would get rid of the books cause they bogus

And in school, Knowledge of Self would be the focus

Kids would flock to the schools like locusts

Cause school now relates to them, and you would notice

Violence in society would be a minimal

Cause the education yeah, would now be metaphysical

Not livin by laws, but livin by principal.

In the end, again an advice is handed out by a hip hopper. Although it may have its flaws which indeed should be fixed, the trek towards attaining an educational status trough the educational system is the only real way to improve one's life. Knowledge is a tool that can get black youths away from the street and bleakness of the ghetto, drugs, violence and deviant behavior. Even if it may seem that it is unfair, education is nonetheless very important:

Whattaya do in a situation like this?

Get tough - or get dissed

[130] Ancient city in Mali, close to the Niger River.
[131] Boogie Down Production, „Blackman in effect" (1990).

The job is yours to play the boss enforce the laws

Because the source is knowledge, wanna go to college?

Or wannabe GARBAGE?

It's up to do so what you gonna do

I-I prefer to learn, cause this is for your own concern[132].

[132] Big Daddy Kane "Rap Summary" (1989).

4.5 Democracy is coming to USA[133]. Hip hop and political emancipation

The political shield that kept the sentiment of slavery going in the States, Jim Crow, was shattered and thus, African Americans could attain their political rights, the most important one being the right to choose and to be chosen without any barriers. Also, they could sing about their dissatisfaction with politics, actions of politicians and stress their opinion about political topics. As it is going to be presented shortly, singers call out politicians in a ferocious way. Although now they could vote without any restraint, for many of them that was fool's gold, because politicians were evil crooks who are responsible for the condition of black community. Yes, they could vote, but their vote would be going to a con artist, a deceiver who would again do nothing for their needs:

You black people still thinkin' about voting

Every President we ever had lied

You know, I'm kinda glad Nixon died[134]

Stretching this paradigm on the main organizations that represent a bridge between the society and the state, political parties, Public Enemy shortly declares that none of them espouse the interests of a black person:

Neither party is mine,

not the jackass or the elephant[135].

This mainstream political apathy is pinpointed by Paris in "Escape from Babylon" (1990), who again echoes the ideas of Malcom X, illustrating how politics that are being conducted in USA in the 1990s are not solving anything. That is why a more radical approach is suggested:

There is no in-between - you are either free or you're a slave

There's no such thing as second-class citizenship.

The only politics in this country that's relevant to black people

Today is the politics of revolution. None other.

[133] A line from Leonard Cohen's cynical song „Democracy", which represents an irony because wasn't democracy already in the USA in 1992, the year that the song was published?
[134] KRS One, Oh Yeah (1995).
[135] Public Enemy „"By the Time I Get to Arizona" (1991).

This view should not be surprising, as for hundreds of years politics was used to keep African Americans in bondage, with Jim Crow still being fresh in their memories. Having been freed and then enslaved again by a system of segregation which deceived them by promising equal quality of segregated lifestyle, African Americans were tired of suspicious political packages for the good of everyone. Some of them thus wanted concrete steps towards change, a revolution.

However, apathy did not prevail and politics were not disregarded, as many hip hoppers still kept a close eye on the everyday domestic affairs and critiqued them. Boogie Down Productions continuous the notion of politicians 'immorality, with propensity towards corruption:

I look, but it doesn't coincide with my books
Social studies will not speak upon political crooks
It's just the presidents, and all the money they spent
All the things they invent, and how their house is so immaculate
They create missiles, my family's eating gristle
Then they get upset when the press blows the whistle[136].

Apart from the usual '*the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer*' discourse the song implies a concrete illegal activity by a politician who went astray: selling weapons to someone and then getting in trouble when the press finds about it. Not a far-fetched guess, since this song was written around the same time when Iran-Contra scandal (1985-1987) was being discovered (in which senior administration officials of Regan Administration secretly facilitated the sale of arms to Iran that was, at the time, subjected to an arms embargo):

Edgar Hoovar I wish you wasn't dead
So I could put a bullet in your motherfuckin' head
Goddamn faggot motherfuckin' drag queen
I know you put the hit on Martin Luther King
And Fred Hampton, Malcom and the others
You red neck punk motherfucker
Bob Dole keep you motherfuckin' mouth shut
Before a nigga beat your old ass up

[136] Boogie Down Productions, „Stop the Violence" (1988).

Jumpin' on the rap bandwagon ain't helpin' it

You need to be concerned about the motherfuckin' deficit

I'm the type of nigga throw a party when the flag burn

I'm at the point of no return.

Geto Boys, in "The Point of no return" (1996), dismiss the official story that Martin Luther King's murder was the action of a lone gunman James Earl Ray but rather an organized endeavor which included people from the top, led by John Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI. Not to forget, added to his tally are the killings of Malcom X and Fred Hampton, whose murders happened in 1965 and 1969. All of these people Hoover did in fact view as dangerous and a treat to the nation's stability. The last verbal victim of the song is Bob Dole, who was against rap music but only when it was convenient for him, that is, when he ran unsuccessfully for president in 1996.

Dan Quayle, a vice president of the USA from 1989 to 1993, spoke against hip hop, calling 2pac's first album, "2pacalypse Now" a disgrace to American music, stating that "there is absolutely no reason for a record like this to be published. It has no place in our society". He was displeased because in 1992, a year after the album's release, Texas highway patrol trooper Bill Davidson was killed by Ronald Ray Howard and songs from the album supposedly influenced him to commit the crime. 2pac mentions the politician in "Last Wordz" (1993) responding to the accusation:

Dan Quayle, don't you know you need your ass kicked?

Where was you when there was niggas in the caskets?

African Americans who spoke against the rap music were not spared of the hip hoppers' rage either, such as Cynthia Delores Tucker, a former Civil Right activist who depicted hip hop as misogynistic, violent and morally corrosive. Again it is 2pac (along with rappers who came after 1996, such as The Game or Lil' Kim) who labels her as traitor in the community's own ranks, making her acts even worse than those of a white men:

C. Delores Tucker, you's a motherfucker

Instead of tryin' to help a nigga, you destroy a brother

Worse than the others[137].

Going from micro to macro level, there are songs that critique not the individual politicians but the state's institutions and branches. Echoing the same hypocrisy that black soldiers and Josh White noticed during the Second World War, members of Public Enemy do not want to fight in the army of the state that neglects them:

I got a letter from the government

. . .

They wanted me for their army or whatever

Picture me given' a damn, I said never

Here is a land that never gave a damn

About a brother like me and myself[138].

Certainly there was a sentiment of resentment that arisen against the government of the USA in the 1990s. In the eyes of the African American community the government was still a racist mob of people that did not care for them before and does not care for them all that much now:

Cause help the black was a concept never meant

Nigga please, foodstamps and free cheese

Can't be the cure for a sick disease[139].

For them America is the nation in which

The cabs, they don't wanna stop for a brother, man

But damn near have an accident to pick up another man[140].

And the nation in which the government keeps stealing from the black entrepreneurs, using personification to portray IRS as a rapist who just wants a taste of a woman he cannot and should not have:

[137] 2pac, „How do you want it?" (1996).
[138] Public Enemy, „Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos" (1988).
[139] Paris, „The Devil Made Me Do it" (1990).
[140] 2pac, „I don't Give a Fuck" (1991).

The bigger the Blacks get

The bigger the feds want

A piece of that ... booty

Intentional Rape System, like we ain't

Paid enough in this bitch, that's why I dissed them[141].

It is the nation whose government is a hitman for African American political intelligentsia, with murders of Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Medgar Evers, Fred Hampton. For them

The federal government is the number one killer

And destroyer of Black leaders[142]!

Because of these reasons, and all the reasons discussed in the previous chapters of hip hop era, for African Americans the USA holds a mask of being

Land of the free and the home of the brave

But it might as well be the home of the slaves[143].

In the end Boogie Down Productions ask and answer a very important question:

What's the solution, to stop all this confusion?

Rewrite the Constitution, change the drug which you're using

Rewrite the Constitution or the emancipation proclamation[144].

Really, it seems that the answer to the modern African American problems can be solved by yet another political decision; the one that will truly end what The Civil Rights movement has started and ensure a step towards actual equality.

[141] Public Enemy, „Who stole the soul“ (1990).
[142]Public Enemy, „Terminator X to the Edge of Panic“ (1988).
[143] Grandmaster Flash, Jesse“ (1983).
[144] Boogie Down Productions „Stop the Violence“ (1988).

5 Conclusion

This work has demonstrated to the reader one variant of African American resistance, an artistic one, to the racist oppression. It has shown that, although expressed in different intensities because of the existence of Jim Crow laws, there was awareness and often disagreement and rebellion towards various instances of discrimination in both blues and hip hop: in education, under the law, in the labor market, in politics and regarding racist violence. Now, after all the songs have been presented, it can be concluded that inherent differences in lyrical style between the two genres cannot be considered responsible for the different nature of discourse, because, sometimes blues is as bold and direct as hip hop regarding political themes, which can be observed in songs such as "Tim Moore's Farm", "Uncle Sam Says", "Jim Crow Blues" (also in other topics, for example, regarding sex, death, violence or murder). Likewise, although blues is not as political as hip hop, that should not serve as a differentiating factor for this work has shown that there were plenty of examples were politics was addressed in blues.

The foresights regarding my emancipation categories had been corroborated apart from one, as I did not expect to find songs with discourse of emancipation towards unequal political treatment of African Americans in the blues era, as that was, in my opinion, the most dangerous topic to sing about, not only because in that way African Americans showed that Jim Crow was not the best system for them but also since by singing about its destruction they signaled their desire for equality and thus political rights, most fundamental being the right to vote and thus influence the lives of white people.

5.1 Table with results of the work

Categories of emancipation	Emancipation from unequal treatment under the law	Emancipation from violence explicitly motivated by racism.	Emancipation from unjust working conditions.	Political emancipation.	Emancipation from segregated and biased education.
Political explanation of messages of emancipation in blues era (1910-1950)	Jim Crow laws rid African Americans of actual equality and protection under the law, leaving them unprotected against violence from police officers or any other white racists and forbidding them to retaliate, for that means certain death sentence by an all-white jury.	Racist sentiment, harboured for centuries of slave ownership in the minds of white people in the South was institutionalized via Jim Crow laws and thus made violent atrocities (lynching) towards African Americans de facto legal.	FDR's Agricultural Adjustment Act which denied African Americans from having their own land, economic catastrophe, the Great depression which caused for African Americans to remain in poverty and non-existing working rights and exploitation of plantation bosses remade the climate of slavery.	Jim Crow, a political creation, denied African Americans the essential political right, the right to vote by setting various obstacles. It also harbored discrimination in state's institutions, most notable being the army and navy.	Jim Crow proscribed segregation of schools which openly violated "separate but equal doctrine" as black and white schools were no were near equal in terms of quality of buildings or programs.
Political explanation of messages of emancipation in hip hop era (1979-1996)	Focus of police brutality intensifies, with them becoming the prime enemy of African Americans, arresting and beating them only because they are black.	Racial violence decreased severely although it still existed. In addition, the scope turns from micro to macro level, accusing the government as a perpetrator and calling out for past injustices.	Discrimination in the labor market and the need to indulge in crime because of unemployment is being presented.	Outlet of political songs increases, with multiple topic addressed: corrupted politicians, apothecial political parties, way too high taxes, theories of killings ordered by the government, etc.	Schools are integrated but problem of revisionism in school curriculum arises as well as tendency to educate black children to be servants.
Characteristics of implicit discourse in blues	Emancipatory messages are expressed in very secretive way, because of the fear of retribution. Songs have two layers, the outside layer intended for white audience and the real, esoteric layer for black listener. Thus, lyrics are shrouded in metaphors, metonymies, contrasts, symbols and the message is never too direct, but hidden. This means that the object towards which the blame is put up against (the corrupted judge, the mean white boss, the evil sheriff, the lynch mob) is almost never explicitly named as well as his misdoings are often presented with a dose of euphemisms. Also, the language used is not vulgar or aggressive as it is in hip hop songs. The scope of messages is narrower, with education from biased and segregated education not even touched upon.				
Characteristics of explicit discourse in hip hop	Emancipatory messages are expressed in very direct, in-your-face way. Stylistic figures are still present, but rather for the aesthetic purpose, as singers want their message to be clear. Culprits, people and institutions responsible for the past and present problems of the black community are clearly named. Language is now often incredibly aggressive and ruthless, with ample amount of violent images evoked as a means of imaginary revenge towards black oppressors.				

Source: the author.

Future exploits of this topic seems endless. One could give his contribution by comparing old blues and old jazz in depth, for instance, because there are examples of protest jazz, along with the only jazz song observed in this work that indeed had a strong protest message. Also, using geographical criterion, it would be interesting to compare blues songs written by singers who lived in a more progressive north *vis a vis* those who survived on the south since some differences did exist (Josh White is a good example). Third, regarding hip hop, an analogy of old hip hop and contemporary hip hop presents itself as a thought-provoking option that I already mentioned at the beginning of this paper. Fourth, using the criterion of ethnicity, it would be intriguing to observe differences between African American or Latino hip hopers regarding the issue of discrimination, or seek out perspectives and contributions of the topic by white hip hoppers of the 90s, such as the Beastie Boys.

Fifth, a relationship between music and politics could further be explored, with the looking glass now centering on how music influences politics. For instance, the impact politically engaged musicians have on voters could be analyzed: how many indecisive voters opted for Trump after Kanye West declared his sympathies for the then-presidential candidate? Another line of thought could be to explore how music events attempted to change existing or planned policies. Street offers, apart explanation on how activities of musicians and their fans can be understood as political participation, a few examples of such attempts, in events *Jubilee 2000* or *Live 8,* which had a goal of putting pressure on world leaders to change their policy on third world debt[145]. Finally, politicians and political parties often hire musicians to play at their public gathering in order to form a notion that they represent the same values as the chosen musician and his music or to simply gain favor with the voters who listen to the same type of music. Certainly, sometimes their choice can have a certain impact on their voter's perception as "musical taste [is sometimes] a mark of political credibility[146]". It could be interesting to see if it is possible to make an index of preferred musical genres or musicians based on political affiliations and analyze what kind of discourses is it possible to read from their chosen songs (patriotism of "Born in The USA", skepticism in "Masters of War", rebellion in "We're Not Gonna Take It" or optimism in "Believer"?).

[145] Street et al, 2008.
[146] Street, 2003: 113-114.

6 Epilogue: Without a song

There is an old song from 1929, recorded by many but its lyrics written by Billy Rose and Edward Eliscu called “Without a song”. One verse of it goes as:

Without a song the day would never end

Without a song the road would never bend

When things go wrong a man ain't got a friend

Without a song

Indeed, the humans’ ability to express themselves through singing and writing songs is what makes us special and gives us a unique way to cope with our problems. It is one of those noble and surreal activities a human can do and thus show that he cannot only destroy, but also create. The purpose of this work was not to dig up or entice old hatred, but rather to portray how one coped with its troubles. In order to forgive, we must first forget but in order to forget we must uncover the truth and not hide it. Just as

“Nobody could sing the blues

like Blind Willie McTell”[147]

Nobody could reinterpret the times like the people who lived them. However, it is important to try because many of those people never got to tell their story. And their story has valuable lessons to teach us. First of them is that America was hardly the land of the free and the land of the brave for the biggest part of its history. The second one is that, through collective efforts and courage of progressive thinking man and women of all colors, racist institutions along with racist sentiment were eliminated almost completely. Horrors of African American experience must teach us that prevailing political opinion in a nation can lean toward a more left or more right ideas one but it must never lean towards discrimination. One must always be able to

See them big plantations burning

Hear the cracking of the whips

Smell that sweet magnolia blooming

[147] A line from Bob Dylan’s “Blind Willie McTell” (1995).

See the ghosts of slavery ships,

As to never forget what a man is capable of if he falls on dark times in his mind.

Third, this work is one of many that aim to stress the value of blues and hip hop, for they are transcendent chroniclers of events, thoughts, feelings and resistance. For a long time without a song, a black community really did not have a friend. Apart from the whip, stars under the trees, dilapidated apartments in the project, piss in the back alley or the needle, the only thing that a black man had was his song. Blues was not the devil's music and hip hop did have a place in American society. They are invaluable parts of it, a witness on how hard it was to achieve the American Dream if it is possible to achieve it at all.

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8 Summary

The aim of the paper is to explore political messages of African Americans' emancipation from white oppression in blues and hip hop songs. Using discourse analysis and Mill's method of induction combined with most similar system design two hypotheses are formed. 1) songs in blues era (1910-1950) have an implicit and hidden discourse of emancipation, while songs from hip hop era (1979-1996) have explicit and direct discourse of emancipation and 2) variable responsible for such variation is political context, or in other words, existence of racist Jim Crow that denied African Americans their constitutional rights and which were subsequently eliminated via Civil Rights movement. Results, apart from strengthening the notion that music and politics can be intertwined, confirm two presupposed hypotheses, but also signal further research directions of the topic, such as investigating emancipation in jazz or contemporary hip hop, and analysing impact musicians can have on political attitudes or policy decisions.

Keywords: Blues, Hip Hop, Emancipation, Civil Rights Movement, Discourse analysis, Jim Crow laws.

9 Sažetak

Cilj rada jest istražiti političke poruke sa sadržajem emancipacije Afroamerikanaca od opresije bijelaca u *bluesu* i *hip hopu*. Koristeći diskurzivnu analizu i Millovu induktivnu metodu u kombinaciji sa dizajnom najsličnijih sustava oformljene su dvije hipoteze. 1) pjesme u *blues* eri (1910-1950) imaju implicitan diskurs emancipacije, dok pjesme iz *hip hop* ere (1979-1996) posjeduju eksplicitan diskurs emancipacije i 2) varijabla koja je odgovorna za tu varijaciju jest politički kontekst, odnosno postojanje rasističkih *Jim Crow* zakona temeljem kojih su Afroamerikancima uskraćena njihova ustavna prava te koji su postupno uništeni naporima Pokreta za građanska prava. Rezultati, osim što osnažuju ideju da glazba i politika mogu biti međusobno povezane, potvrđuju dvije pretpostavljene hipoteze te predlažu daljnje istraživačke smjerove u kojima tema može ići, poput istraživanja emancipacije u *jazzu* ili suvremenom hip hopu i analiziranja učinaka koji glazbenici mogu imati na političke stavove ili *policy* odluke.

Ključne riječi: *Blues*, *Hip hop*, Pokret za građanska prava, analiza diskursa, *Jim Crow* zakoni.