

Name:

Course:

Tutor:

Date:

### **Influence of African American oral traditions on American Music and Literature**

African American oral traditions refer to the cultural contributions of African Americans to the existing culture in the United States. These oral traditions originated from the experiences of the African American mostly people in the West and Central Africa and had great influence on the American culture. The traditions of the African Americans allowed them to express themselves in the form of music and arts.

The African American oral traditions were condemned in the colonial era, where African Americans were forced to embrace spirituality and the American culture. This undermined their traditional song and dance which were then only done in secret without the knowledge of the colonialists (Sambol-Tosco, 2004). However, with time, the American culture quickly adapted to the African traditions and folk tales traditions and soon the African Americans were able to sustain the American realms. The current American song and dance were influenced by the African American traditions which were deeply rooted throughout the United States (Terrell, 2015).

The legislations that denied education to African Americans contributed to the maintenance of oral traditions among the black Americans, which was a common feature of the African culture. African Americans could only find music, arts, and traditional performances as a

way of preserving their history. This music, song, and dance and traditional African performances have, over the past years, become part of the African American culture and consequently impacting the American culture, literature, and music.

The socialization process among the African Americans and the indigenous Americans grew with time and eventually the African Americans engaged in the American music industry. Due to their previous participation in the original African cultural practices and traditions, their music has developed to address, among other issues, their earlier African experiences. The music has then shaped the American culture as a result of the socialization process among the African Americans and the Native Americans.

The preservation of American history involves the use of culture and American Literature. However, the existence of African Americans among the American community today makes the African American oral traditions be included in the American literature meant to preserve the history (Saloy, 1999). Therefore, the American music and literature have been influenced by the oral traditions owned by the African Americans included in the American population.

The origin of most African American music and literature have been the American traditions and culture. This culture and American traditions were developed by the American people, which included the African Americans who settled in America in the colonial period. These early African American "injected" the African American oral traditions into the American literature and music developed to conserve their history. For instance, both the African American blacks and the Latinos (Whites) were involved in jazz music, one of the dominant United States' jazz music (National Humanities Center, n.d.). This diversity in audience, African Americans and Native Americans and Latinos influenced the American music and literature.

Additionally, the African Americans were ready to retain their culture even in the new American environment. The African Americans from the various African nationalities and ethnicities created religious, music and dance as well as rituals for the purpose of conserving and retaining these culture (Trussell, 2000). Social gatherings which acted as foundations of song and dance were rich in African oral traditions and culture, and the resulting music, art, and literature in America contained "pieces" of African American oral traditions.

### Works Cited

- Terrell, D. (2015, June 3). *The untold impact of African culture on American culture*.  
<http://atlantablackstar.com/2015/06/03/cultural-influences-africans-american-culture/>
- Saloy, M. L. (1999). *African American oral traditions in Louisiana*.  
[http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles\\_Essays/creole\\_art\\_african\\_am\\_oral.html](http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/creole_art_african_am_oral.html)
- National Humanities Center. *Jazz and the African American literary tradition, freedoms story*,  
 Teacher Serve, national humanities center.  
<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/freedom/1917beyond/essays/jazz.htm>
- Trussell, J. (2000). *African oral tradition- articles- BlackandChristian.Com*.  
<http://www.blackandchristian.com/articles/academy/swilson-09-03.shtml>
- Trussell, J. (2000). *African oral tradition- articles- BlackandChristian.Com*.  
<http://www.blackandchristian.com/articles/academy/swilson-09-03.shtml>
- Sambol-Tosco, K. (2004). *Slavery and the making of America. The slave experience: Education, arts, & culture*. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/education/history.html>