

Blood, Guns, and Words: Response to Violence in Palestinian and Kashmiri Rap Music Videos

Nimra Tariq

Abstract

In this paper, I explore the response to violence in the rap music videos of youth in Indian Occupied Kashmir and Palestine. This research uses three Kashmiri rap music videos: *Beneath This Sky* by MC Kash (dir. Elayne McCabe 2011); *Criminal* by Mu’Azzam Bhat (dir. Muneem Farooq Itoo, 2018); and *Kasheer* by Ahmer (dir. Vaksh Vimal, 2019) as well as two Palestinian rap music videos: *Khufi e ‘Aulaadi* by MC Gaza (dir. Omar ALemawi, 2012) and *Milliardat* by Dam (dirs. Omar Jabareen & DAM, 2019). I analyze the use of camera shots, low-key lighting, and camera angles in rap music videos to convey the impact of violence on youth in these conflict zones. I engage with the theory of violence given by Galtung to understand the representation of violence and refer to the work of Naik to understand impact of violence on Palestinian and Kashmiri youth. This research finds that there is a strong influence of sociopolitical situations of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) and Palestine on the rap music videos produced by the Kashmiri and Palestinian youth. Youth of these regions use different cinematographic techniques and visual symbols to convey the impact of violence through their rap music videos. This research focuses on a key dimension of non-violent resistance and protest in IOK and Palestine.

Keywords: Occupation, Violence, Conflict, Resistance, Rap, Hip-Hop, Music Videos, Palestine, Kashmir, Youth Culture

Introduction

Kashmir and Palestine have been sites of conflict since the late 1940s. Since then, these regions have witnessed violence and disruption that has had particular impacts on youth. Palestinian youth has been using rap music since 1999 as a site of resistance after a rap group called DAM popularized this genre of music with the release of their song “Who is the Terrorist?” (McDonald, “Carrying Words Like Weapons” 278). Similarly, in Kashmir, local rap music was introduced by Roushan Illahi, who goes by the stage name MC Kash, in the summer of 2010 as a reaction to the killing of hundred Kashmiri protesters (Gaedtke and Parameswaran). In this paper, I explore the impact of violence on Kashmiri and Palestinian youth as depicted in their rap music videos. For my research, I analyze three Kashmiri rap music videos: “Beneath This Sky” by MC Kash (dir. Elayne McCabe 2011); “Criminal” by Mu’Azzam Bhat (dir. Muneem Farooq Itoo, 2018); and “Kasheer” by Ahmer (dir. Vaksh Vimal, 2019). I

also consider two Palestinian rap music videos: “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi” by MC Gaza (dir. Omar ALemawi, 2012) and “Milliardat” by DAM (dirs. Omar Jabareen & DAM, 2019). I primarily examine the cinematography and mise-en-scène of these videos. The first section of this paper discusses the use of camera shots and camera angles in rap music videos to convey the impact of violence on youth in these conflict zones. The second section of the paper analyzes the employment of low-key lighting in these rap music videos. I engage with theories of violence given by Fanon and Galtung to understand the representation of violence in the videos, and to further understand the impact of violence on Palestinian and Kashmiri youth I will be referring to the work of Naik.

Violence in Kashmir and Palestine

Structural violence is both physical and psychological, that is it harms the mind and the body of the victim (Galtung 169, 173). Occupying forces in both Palestine and Kashmir rely on structural violence to accomplish their ends, however this is not the only form of violence in the conflicted regions of Indian occupied Kashmir (IOK) and Palestine as there are armed groups that use insurgency to fight the occupation, while the civil resistance movement also uses tactics like stone pelting in both regions (Zia 7, 8). This insurgent violence, as explained by Fanon, is an outcome of identification of the injustice and the enemy by the occupied; it becomes a means of directing hatred (31). Kashmiri and Palestinian youth are caught in this circle of this violence.

This violence in Kashmir has resulted in hopelessness, fear, anxiety, depression, trauma, and an increased rate of suicides among Kashmiri youth (Naik 125, 126). Similarly, dozens of studies have shown that PTSD and depression are common mental health disorders in Palestinian youth (Ayer et al. 4). Furthermore, in Palestine violence has resulted in functional impairment, or the inability to function in important arenas of life such as education and relationships (Ayer et al.). As a similar consequence of violence, Dar has observed an increase in anti-social behavior and drug abuse amongst Kashmiri youth (qtd. in Naik 122). Similarly drug abuse as a coping mechanism against violence is also observed in Palestinian youth, along with both passivity and hostile confrontation (Ayer et al. 13). Substance abuse is often a mechanism to help people deal with grief and loss along with an uncertain future, which in turn increases the burden on their mental health, as exposure to drugs affects social cohesion and resilience in Kashmir (Naik 126).

Rap Music in Kashmir and Palestine

The aggression theory of conflict states that frustration is a sufficient condition for aggression (Friedman and Miriam 204, 207). Youth in both Kashmir and Palestine have experienced social deprivation and violence in these conflicts which result in anxiety and frustration. Consequently, youth in these regions feel the need to express aggression, and some use creative and artistic ways to express their anger and frustration instead of opting for militancy (Piech 186). Art can be a strategy for survival in zones of conflict. For instance, Rabia Rivera, a rapper from Mexico, has credited her pain in helping her rap (Malcomson 54). Rap becomes a coping mechanism that gives hope along with resistance. In this artistic movement, rap music has been central to Kashmiri and Palestinian youth. Rap is part of hip-hop culture which was started by youth from

marginalized African American communities in the US to assert their identity and individualism in face of injustice and hopelessness (Wheeler 2).

Globalization has been a key factor in rise of hip-hop in these regions as it has increased the exposure of Kashmiri and Palestinian youth to global art forms that has inspired them. African American rappers like Tupac Shakur have been an inspiration for both Palestinian and Kashmiri rappers (Alindah 21). This music has provided the youth of these conflict regions with alternative channels to protest against atrocities. The impact of globalization is also visible in the music instruments, clothing, and language used in these videos. Rappers are primarily shown wearing jeans, shirts, and shorts in both the Palestinian and Kashmiri videos under discussion, indicating the influence of Western street style. Similarly, most of the videos show slogans written in English, which is not the local language of both Palestine and Kashmir. However, a fair percentage of people in both these regions are able to speak and write in English. In addition, social media has made it easy for youth to release their rap music and reach a wider audience. Kashmiri and Palestinian youth use online media platforms like YouTube and Facebook to release their music

Youth from Palestine and Kashmir enjoy rap music because they connect with certain situations and themes discussed by African American rappers. McDonald reports that Tamer Nafar, a Palestinian rapper, describes rap as “spiritual . . . it is the things they say, the things they describe, it is the things I see” (*My Voice is My Weapon* 246). These rappers, like African American youth, decide to convey the pain and suffering of their community through their music. Similarly, Little G an Australian aboriginal rapper also uses rap to channel her anger and trauma resulting from the killings and injustices of aboriginal people in Australia (Mitchell 133). Similarly, Mu’Azzam Bhat describes rap as a depiction of street reality and a medium for the communication of emotions (Aslam). MC Kash, in a radio interview, said that his music is about what he sees in the streets; he attempts to present the human perspective of the conflict (“MC Kash aka Roushan Illahi”). He further says that he opts for MC Kash as his stage name because he wants to speak as a Kashmiri, as a child of conflict.

As a protest and medium of communication audience size is important to both Kashmiri and Palestinian rappers. As a result Kashmiri rapper mostly use English and Urdu for their rap. In various interviews, they have explained that they want their music to be accessible to the international and South Asian community (“MC Kash aka Roushan Illahi,” Aslam). However Palestinian rappers on other hand mostly use Arabic for their rap to increase the solidarity within the Palestinian community. DAM is a group of Palestinian singers based in Israel who use Hebrew, Arabic, and English to communicate with both Israeli and Palestinian youth; their message changes depending on who is in the audience of a given performance (McDonald, *My Voice is My Weapon* 118).

Close-ups and the Impact of Violence

Kashmiri and Palestinian rap music videos use various filmmaking techniques to communicate the effect of violence on in a way that complements the music. Cinematography, such as particular kinds of shots or camera angles, aids the creators in conveying the message with more details like the power relations between different elements and people in the video and emotions in the shot (Hansen et al. 132). In these videos, camera shots are a medium to communicate the

impacts of violence by closely showing the anxiety and aggression along with the symbols that are representative of conflict.

Close-up shots are an important technique used in music videos to communicate impacts of violence. These shots attempt to focus on a certain body part, object, or a thing to create a dramatic effect (Hansen et al. 133). In Kashmiri and Palestinian rap music videos, close-up shots help generate empathy and connection with the rapper. This is seen in “Criminal” when MuA’zzam Bhat is shown holding a chain link fence and facing the camera. Chain link fencing is used in militarized zones to create separation and hinder free movement. In this shot, the wires of the fence are a visual representation of the conflict and occupation. When the audience looks at the close-up of wires along with the aggressive expressions of the rapper, they can understand that there is a link between the conflict and the anger. The conflict has damaged social and economic life in Kashmir leaving emotional scars that cause anxiety and trauma (Naik 125-126). The aggression of the rapper is related to the anxiety and trauma caused by this conflict. Similarly, in the song “Kasheer,” close-ups are used to capture the pained and sorrowful faces of the kids, young men, and old men in a shot where Ahmed is rapping “kids, the elderly, the youth, get killed!” Frowning, pained, and serious expressions looking directly into the camera communicate the confusion and sadness of the Kashmiri people and emphasize the prevalence of death or disappearance at the hands of the state (Naik 122). This is similar to rap in Mexico which has been used by youth to protest against killings and disappearances during the war on drugs (Malcomson 54).

In another shot from this song in the video, there is a close-up of a hand wearing handcuffs. The handcuffs are symbolic of the curbing of the right of self-determination, that means the right of Kashmiris to themselves resolve the conflict by opting to align with either India or Pakistan according to the UN’s resolution on self-determination. They are also symbolic of restrictions on the mobility and freedom of individuals under occupation in the Kashmir valley. In addition, the image of the hand in handcuffs emphasizes the physical humanity of the primary victims and stake holders of the occupation, shifting the popular narrative of that the Kashmir conflict is primarily about land. Similarly, the cover art of “From My Eyes,” an Australian indigenous rap song, showed indigenous men tied with a chain from their neck; the end of the chain is held by a white policeman, reflecting the dispossession and separation of aboriginals from their land (White 123). Like the handcuffs, in this case chains are used to represent captivity and compulsion. Finally, the video of “Beneath This Sky” also uses close-up shots to communicate the emotions of the rapper. He is standing in front of the barbed wires having a sarcastic smile on the face here wires as discussed earlier are figurative of the conflict and violence while the sarcastic smile can be translated as the response of the youth towards the conflict where they try to navigate their lives normally in while there is violence in their surroundings.

Similar to Kashmiri rap music videos, Palestinian videos use close-ups as means to communicate emotions. In the opening shot of the video of “Milliardat,” all rappers are shown lying on the ground with black military shoes crushing their faces while their eyes are blankly looking at the camera, recalling arrests of Palestinians by the occupation forces. This shot uses military shoes as symbolic of military violence while the rappers’ eyes show determination and resistance. The use of a close-up shot helps the spectator observe very small details of the faces like lifted brows, swollen nerves on the forehead, and changing the color of the face. Focus on these expressions connects the audience with the pain and struggle of the Palestinian people under occupation and helps generate empathy. In addition, this shot also shows rappers rapping under the pressure of

shoes which is symbolic of the ongoing resistance against occupying forces. Another Palestinian song, “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi,” shows the side close-up of the face of the rapper while the lyrics “How do I forget. Will forgetting solve my case?” are being rapped. MC Gaza’s face is flushed, his brows are drawn close to each other, and he frowns in frustration. He expresses that he is trying to forget the trauma of the conflict but is failing. The violence witnessed by Palestinian youth has been shown to result in mental health problems such as PTSD (Ayer et al.). This shot illustrates the struggle of dealing with these this trauma and its resultant mental health impacts. These examples show that close-up shots are used in these music videos to communicate intricate emotions like aggression, frustration, and pain.

Medium Shots and Symbols of Violence

Medium shots focus on the person above their waists while maintaining separation between the surroundings and the actor/rapper (Hansen et al. 133). These shots are useful because they allow the audience to see the hand gestures of the rapper along with their facial expression. The backgrounds of such shots often make use of various symbols of conflict and violence. These shots are commonly used in the Kashmiri rap videos under discussion. In his song “Criminal,” Mu’Azzam Bhat can be seen walking through narrow allies lined with rusted tin sheets, a marketplace, and a road with the police vans. Congested space between the walls and the presence of rusted tin sheets are symbolic of suffocation, hindrance, and tension. This illustrates the occupation where youth does not have enough opportunities, their freedom is curbed, and they are subjected to violence. Police vans and check posts hint at surveillance and state violence (Fanon 3). In “Criminal,” most medium shots are immediately followed by close-ups that make the audience connect with the emotions of the shot. These close-up shots help the audience observe details of the facial expressions that, as described above, connect the audience with the feelings of the rapper. The transition from medium shots to the close-up helps viewer understand the kind of violence that is deployed against Kashmiri youth along with a focus on their emotions, showing the human side of the violence.

As in “Criminal,” medium shots are also used in “Kasheer.” In one such shot, young Ahmer (the rapper) is shown from a side profile view while he is praying against a smoky, dark background. Then, in an instant, young Ahmer is replaced by an older Ahmer; in next few seconds, black-masked figures fighting and pelting stones enter the background. The dark background shows tension, sadness, and darkness, stone pelting is a common image of resistance to the state, and the smoke alludes to the memories and the thoughts of Ahmer. The transition of Ahmer from a child to adult is representative of childhood trauma and also represents the idea that there has been no change in the situation in all these years. His focus and calm in prayer show that he has tried to deal with the trauma and violence by connecting with the God and religion. This depiction resonates with Ahmer’s personal life, as his uncle was killed in the 1990s insurgency in Kashmir. This loss and its aftermath affected Ahmer all his life (Kappal). This shows that the impact of violence depicted in Kashmiri rap music videos has a connection with the real-life experiences of these rappers, as “rap music is direct and personal” (Salaam 308).

A similar technique is adopted in the video of the song “Beneath This Sky.” In one shot, MC Kash is seen sitting in front of a board reading “Save Dal” as Dal Lake is visible in the background. This lake is an important cultural site as it is named after the Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded and is also known as the birth site of the goddess Durga. In this shot, MC Kash is rapping

“these self-proclaimed righteous people be using tax money for everything called evil.” In Kashmir, state institutions like the police and the army are used to inflict violence on civilians and construction work on occupied land, all of which is funded by public funding. This violence also threatens creative, folkloric, and traditional practices by the youth (Fanon 20), as this money is also used to educate Kashmiri children and youth according to government-designed curriculum that marginalizes Kashmir’s history and folklore. The sign “Save Dal” here is thus a call to preserve Kashmiri literature, folklore, and other traditions. Similarly, Australian aboriginal rap music like the song “Dream Time” also uses photographs of rocks and waterways with lyrics superimposed on them to promote aboriginal versions of Australian history that is part of aboriginal tradition (Mitchell 126).

Palestinian rap music videos use medium shots in similar ways to Kashmiri videos. In the video of “Milliardat,” three rappers are standing in front of a wall in a police lineup. Here, the medium shot helps focus on the police lineup and body language, and additionally gives glimpses of the expressions of the rappers. This helps the audience understand the position of the rapper as a prisoner along with the symbolic meaning of the police lineup as a tool of surveillance and control. The police lineup emphasizes the restrictions on mobility and choice of Palestinians. Similarly, in “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi,” MC Gaza can be seen rapping in front of a wall with the slogan “*Khufi e ‘aulaadi*” (‘I am afraid for our children’) written on it. Walls are a key tool of separation in Palestine they are built to separate Jewish settlements from Palestinian villages and towns and to regulate and restrict movement between. This slogan on the wall shows that fear is related to the continuation of this occupation and separation for future generations.

Long Shots and Landscape

Long shots are used to connect an object or person with their environment (Hansen et al. 133). Locations provide the background against which narrative is established; they represent the feelings of the rapper along with the mood of the situation (Melbye 3). Kashmiri rap music videos bring the majestic mountains and green meadows of the valley into the frame. These landscapes usually invoke a feeling of pleasure and happiness; however the interpretation of the landscape varies with experiences of the audience (Melbye 4). In Kashmiri rap music videos, these mountains and meadows become a site of pain, longing, and assertion of identity. In “Criminal,” Mu’Azzam Bhat is shown walking on a mountain with his back facing the camera while a close-up of his face is superimposed on the clouds. His face shows no expression, and his eyes also show a disconnect. This walk through the mountains is symbolic of his life in conflict and the resulting pain and suffering. Similarly, in “Kasheer,” the rapper is shown standing in middle of a meadow surrounded by mountains. The camera starts slowly zooming in and focuses on the frowning face of the rapper. Land, as described by Fanon, is a source of dignity for people as it helps them produce their own food, however in the case of occupation indigenous people experience humiliation and violence on this land (9); so land here becomes representative of their violation and suffering. This is similar to a shot in “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi” which shows MC Gaza sitting on concrete rubble in front of a body of water. The debris of concrete and the water represent the destruction caused by violence. Israeli authorities have taken control of most of the water bodies in the area, leaving Palestinians dependent on occupying forces for this basic need. Water, in this case, shows the control and violence perpetrated by Israeli forces. MC Gaza’s hands and upper body movements express energy and confusion with their continuous back and

forth movement that is used to point to the debris of destroyed building. This shot shows the difficulty faced by Palestinian youth while trying to reconstruct the damages caused by the violence.

Low Camera Angles and Power

Camera angles also add to the narrative by giving additional information about the scene they can be used to communicate the power relationship between two people (Hansen et al. 133-134). Kashmiri and Palestinian rap music videos often use low camera angles that show the object or person from a point below the eye level. In these videos they are used to show the rapper and their nation as more powerful than the occupying forces. These shots are used in “Kasheer” where Ahmer is standing on top of a rock wearing a *pheran* (traditional Kashmiri clothing) and the camera is focusing on him from below. The *pheran* is symbolic of Kashmiri identity and tradition; this assertion of Kashmiri identity is similar to use of traditional dance and practices by Australian rappers in their music performances to claim their identity as modern aboriginal people (Mitchell 130, 134). In both cases rappers mobilize their tradition to show their identity. This shot is used to picturize the lyrics “Disgrace! We are not your slaves! Salute to you? That’s not our habit.” These words show resistance against the violence of the occupier. In correspondence with the lyrics, low angles show that the resistance of the Kashmiri people is stronger than the occupying forces, because the size of the *pheran*-wearing person from this angle seems relatively larger as he is rapping about resistance. This angle also helps emphasize his height as he is standing on a rock; elevation is sign of superiority, distinction, and power.

In another example from “Beneath This Sky,” low camera angles are used to assert greater power of Kashmiri resistance leaders. A similar visual framing of resistance leaders is also seen in Australian aboriginal rap music, for example Darah’s song “My Heroes (Salute)” (Clapham and Kelly 13). In the opening shots of “Beneath This Sky,” a low camera angle is used to focus on the face of MC Kash along with barbed wire and sky. Later in the video a low angle shot is used to show MC Kash rapping in front of a poster of Maqbool Bhat, a Kashmiri nationalist *hurriyat* (‘freedom’) leader who was hanged by the Indian Supreme Court for alleged involvement in the murder of an Indian government official (Cheema 56). The lyrics convey that anyone who dares to oppose the occupation is killed by occupying forces for their resistance, but this shot assigns more power and status to Bhat by forcing the viewer’s perspective upward.

Low-Key Lighting and Mood

Lighting is used to create a mood in the shot (Hansen et al. 137). Kashmiri and Palestinian rap music videos often use low-key lighting, meaning there is less light overall which creates areas of shade and light (137). Often the background is dark while lighting is used to focus on the person and object in the shot. Low-key lighting communicates stress, tension, anxiety, fear, and hopelessness in Kashmiri and Palestinian rap music videos. For instance, the opening shots of “Criminal” make use of low-key lighting that reflects on tension and hopelessness in three different frames that are combined into one. In the first frame the rapper is standing near a pole while the camera is showing his face in profile. In the second frame, the rapper is walking through a damp street with green vegetation on the walls, showing a lack of drainage and

sanitation and thus representing through the infrastructure the neglect of the Kashmiri people by the state. The rapper walking through this street shows his experiences in a zone of conflict, neglected by the state in terms of opportunities and facilities. The lighting in this frame is also low-key and the colors are dim, adding tension to the scene. In the last frame the rapper is standing in darkness with only a little light making his face visible. Black is a color associated with mourning and sadness, hence this background is reflective of these emotions; in this frame the rapper is shown rapping aggressively. These three frames together show that rapper has lived through injustice that has resulted in his anger against the occupation. Another example can be seen in “Kasheer,” when a woman is portrayed praying in front of an ethereal window that is a small source of light in a dark room. Darkness is symbolic of sadness, tension, and anxiety, and here the lighting is focused on the woman praying, showing that spirituality in a tense and dark situation is helping her find solace.

Similarly, the Palestinian rap music video “Milliardat” uses low-key lighting most of the video. It uses a dark background with the light focusing on the rappers, and then adds colored lighting when showing Palestinian folk dance *dabke*. Though Palestinians are living with daily violence, they also of course enjoy routine life experiences, and the *dabke* shows that side of the Palestinian experience. These colors in such a dark and tense environment are indicative of life and happiness in the midst of the conflict. This is also a moment celebrating Palestinian identity as the is symbolic of their cultural heritage. In 2018 the *dabke* similarly transformed into a symbol of resistance in a viral video showing a group of youth performing the dance in the middle of shelling and fire by Israeli Defense Forces (Noy). In a shot from “Milliardat,” low-key lighting was used to focus on the faces of rappers dressed in formal shirts and looking through a glass window at prisoners and a police line. Here the rappers have microphones in front of them and there are three wanted posters on the walls, reminiscent of the control center of a prison. The rappers are shown bot in the control center and in the prison, thus they represent the same identity. In this shot from the video the internal political dynamics of the Arab world and specifically Palestine are shown. The lyrics say: “We banned Nawal.¹ We screened Wonder women. You see the hypocrisy?” This shot is communicating the internal violence in the Palestinian and Arab world where they are ready to ban and silence the voices of their own feminist activists while allowing the screening of a foreign film (one lauded as empowering to women) starring former Israeli defense force soldier Gal Gadot.

Conclusion

This paper has analyzed Kashmiri Palestinian rap music videos with reference to cinematographic techniques that add to their lyrical and narrative content. These videos are an expression of youth culture, as young people have been primary victims of violence in the conflicts in both Kashmir and Palestine. This paper has explored the depiction of the impact of violence on Kashmiri and Palestinian youth in their rap music videos. This research found that Kashmiri rap music videos use technical features like camera shots, angles, and lighting to show the impact of violence. It has analyzed the use of long-shots, short-shots, and medium shots in three Kashmiri and two Palestinian rap music videos. These videos frequently use close-up shots to develop a connection between the rapper and the audience, to make the viewers more sensitive

¹ A reference to Egyptian feminist scholar and activist Nawal El Saadawi.

towards the feelings that are communicated by focusing on the expressions of the rappers along with the symbols that are representative of the conflict. In “Criminal,” there is a close-up shot with a focus on the expressions of the rapper and chain link fence that connects the anger of the rapper with the conflict. In “Kasheer” there is a focus on the faces of people bearing expressions of pain, as well as another close-up shot on handcuffs which are symbolic of conflict and violence. In “Milliardat” close-up shots are used to focus on shoes crushing the faces of the rappers. Here shoes are symbolic of the violence while the expressions of the rappers show determination and resistance.

Medium shots are used in these rap music videos to connect the rapper with surroundings while maintaining a separation and focus on the individual. These surroundings have elements that emphasize the violence and conflict in these places. In “Criminal” the background of medium shots features rusted tins, congested streets, police vans, and check posts. In “Kasheer” in a medium shot we see a black and smoky background behind the rapper Ahmer as he transforms from a child to an adult. This setting is representative of tension and pain in the conflict while Ahmer’s transition shows generational trauma. Similarly, in “Beneath This Sky” a medium shot is used to show MC Kash rapping in front of Dal Lake with the sign “Save Dal,” referencing s Kashmiri tradition and culture. In “Milliardat” a medium shot is used to focus on the police lineup along with the rappers’ expressions of anger. Similarly in “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi” medium shots are used to focus on MC Gaza along with the wall. Here the police lineup represents state violence against Palestinians and the wall shows the physical separation between Israeli and Palestinian areas.

Long shots in these videos are used to connect the rapper with their environment. In “Criminal,” these shots are used to show rappers and mountains together where mountains were site of pain, longing and assertion of Kashmiri identity. In “Kasheer” long shots are used to on focus mountains but here they represent a loss of dignity resulting from the occupation, and also position the rapper in middle of the conflict. In “Khufi e ‘Aulaadi” MC Gaza is shown sitting on debris of a building with water in the background, both these are symbolic of violence while pain in the facial expression of the rapper is a response to that violence. Low camera angles are used to visually represent an increase in the power of Palestinian and Kashmiri people. In Kasheer Ahmer is rapping while wearing a pheran, representative of Kashmiri national identity, while low camera angles are used to show him in a position of power. Similarly, in “Beneath This Sky” low camera angles are used to focus on MC Kash looking at portrait of Maqbool Bhat that assigns the convicted hurriyat leader more power than the Indian state. Palestinian and Kashmiri rap music videos are direct responses to the violence in the regions. The youth use these videos to highlight the pain and suffering they have experienced they bring forward their own stories.

References

- Alindah, Lutfiah. “Resistance Values in Palestinian Hip-Hop Music.” *Leksika*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2012, pp. 20-24.
- Ayer, Lynsay, et al. “Psychological Aspects of the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict: A Systematic Review.” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, vol. 18, no. 3, 2015, pp. 322-338.

- Aslam, Peer Viqar Ul. "Meet Mu'azzam Bhat: The Dreadnought of Kashmiri Hip Hop." *YouTube*, uploaded by Rising Kashmir, Mar. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=19NxXPEtn-U&t=180s.
- ALemawi, Omar. "Khufi e 'Aulaadi." *YouTube*, uploaded by MC Gaza old Channel, 13 Jan. 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8Tg_jgFi_o.
- Clapham, Rhyan, and Benjamin Kelly. "I Got the Mics On, My People Speak': On the Rise of Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop." *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2019, pp. 208-232.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove, 1963.
- Friedman, Howard, and Miriam Schustack. *Personality: Classic Theories and Modern Research*. Pearson, 2014.
- Farooq, Muneem. "Criminal." *YouTube*, uploaded by Mu'Azzam Bhat, 3 Dec. 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pyEhOGEcnA>.
- Gaedtke, Felix, and Gayatri Parameswaran. "Rap Captures Voices of Dissent in Kashmir." *Aljazeera*, 21 July 2012, www.aljazeera.com/features/2012/7/21/rap-captures-voices-of-dissent-in-kashmir.
- Galtung, Johan. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1969, pp. 167-191.
- Hansen, Anders, et al. *Mass Communication and Research Methods*, edited by Simon Cottle, Palgrave, 2013.
- Jabareen, Omar and DAM. "Milliardat." *YouTube*, uploaded by DAM officialband, 21 Oct. 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DR0MnwIIvnl>.
- Kappal, Bhanuj. "Ahmer Javed: Rapper Shining a Spotlight on Divided Kashmir." *BBC Music*, 31 Oct. 2019, www.bbc.com/culture/article/20191030-ahmer-javed-rapper-shining-a-spotlight-on-divided-kashmir.
- Khan, Iram Manzoor, and Javeed Ahmad Bhat. "Impact of Conflict on the Youth of Kashmir." *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, vol. 6, no. 4, Apr. 2019, p. 277-280.
- Melbye, David. *Landscape Allegory in Cinema: From Wilderness to Wasteland*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Mitchell, Tony. "Blackfellas Rapping, Breaking and Writing: A Short History of Aboriginal Hip Hop." *Aboriginal History*, vol. 30, 2006, pp. 124-137.
- Malcomson, Hettie. "Contesting Resistance, Protesting Violence: Women, War and Hip Hop in Mexico." *Music and Arts in Action*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, p. 46-63.
- McDonald, David A. "Carrying Words Like Weapons: Hip-Hop and the Poetics of Palestinian Identities in Israel." *Min-Ad: Israel Studies in Musicology*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2009, pp. 116-130.

- McDonald, David A. *My Voice is My Weapon: Music, Nationalism, and the Poetics of Palestinian Resistance*. Duke University Press, 2013.
- “MC Kash aka Roushan Illahi”. *YouTube*, uploaded by 101 India, 10 Feb. 2016.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tn-xuwuKyC8&t=110s>.
- McCabe, Elayne. “Beneath the Sky” *YouTube*, uploaded by MC Kash, 23 July 2011.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPiCzV7-irI>.
- Naik, Abdul Raffie. “Impact of Conflict on Mental Health with Special Reference to Kashmir Valley.” *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2016, pp. 121–129.
- Noy, Orly. “WATCH: Gaza youth dance the dabke in Israeli sniper range.” *+927 Magazine*
<https://www.972mag.com/watch-gaza-youth-dance-the-dabke-in-israeli-sniper-range/>.
- Orr, Yuval. *Legitimizing Narratives in Rhyme: Hip-Hop and National Identity in Israel and Palestine*. 2011. University of Pennsylvania, BA thesis.
- Piech, Magdalena. “Regionalism in the Virtual Era: Cultural Identity of Kashmiri Muslims as Represented in Popular Music.” *Politeja*, no. 59, 2019, pp. 195–206.
- Rabbani, Attar. “Jammu & Kashmir and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act.” *South Asian Survey*, vol. 18, no. 2, 2014, p. 259-277.
- Richmond, Oliver P. *A Genealogy of Peace and Conflict Theory*. Palgrave, 2011.
- Vimal, Vaksh. “Kasheer.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Ahmer, 7 Oct. 2017,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re6y3cd5jQo>.
- White, Cameron. ““Rapper on a Rampage”: Theorising the Political Significance of Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop and Reggae.” *Transforming Cultures eJournal*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2009, p. 108-130.
- Zia, Ather. “Their Wounds Are Our Wounds: A Case for Affective Solidarity Between Palestine and Kashmir.” *Identities Global Studies in Culture and Power*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2020, pp. 357–375.

Filmography

- Beneath the Sky* (dir. Elayne McCabe, 2011)
- Criminal* (dir. Muneem Farooq Itoo, 2018)
- Khufi e ‘Aulaadi*/I am afraid our children (dir. Omar ALemawi, 2012)
- Kasheer*/Kashmir (dir. Vaksh Vimal, 2019)
- Milliardat* (dir. Omar Jabareen & DAM, 2019)