

## Art Voicing Peaceful Protest: Hip-Hop and Rap in the American and Arabic Cultures

Hanan K. Al-Jezawi, Mohammad A. Al-Abdulrazaq and Mahmoud  
A. Rababah  
*Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan*  
Arwa H. Aldoory  
*Tikrit University, Iraq*

Received: 29.11.2022

Accepted: 4.7.2023

Published on 2.1.2024

**Abstract:** For centuries, poems and songs have been utilized to criticize oppressive and violent regimes, eliciting emotions and aiding the public in coping with hegemony. Rap and hip-hop, blending poetry and music, have emerged as powerful tools for combating oppression and marginalization. Despite the misconception that loud, aggressive music may incite violence, recent research disproves this notion. This study employs Sigmund and Anna Freud's psychoanalytic theory, focusing on defense mechanisms and free association, to analyze data. The study reveals that poets and artists across cultures, including Arabic culture, have employed rap and hip-hop as a means of cultural resistance, fostering a collective identity among young individuals to enhance their understanding of themselves and their culture. The study argues that rap and hip-hop serve as peaceful tools of resistance and function as a therapeutic outlet for managing anger, contrary to claims by some critical theorists that they stimulate violence in society.

**Keywords:** cultural identity, defence mechanism, hip-hop, rap, resistance

### 1. Introduction

*Music and words, and words with music, surely amount to a special kind of musical experience, although we might speculate, and learn from the prehistory of humankind, that it is also the most natural kind of musical experience in its plenitude of engagement with human faculties* (Dunsby 2004: 4).

Poetry and music share a close connection, whether as independent entities or when poetry is integrated into a musical context. Songwriting has embraced the "morganatic union of words and music" as described by Hanslick, blending the "music" of the song with the "poetical" qualities of poetry (Krimms 2000). Throughout history, these two art forms have been considered more authentic and akin to "sisters" or "spouses" in comparison to other pairings. Despite periodic divisions, music and poetry have frequently reunited (Winn 1981: 1).

Music and poetry holds historical significance, as music originated from speech and developed from it. This implies that communication is essential for the existence of music, even in its informal forms. The distinction between metrical and non-metrical language and speech was irrelevant in the original musical recitation, as everything remained within the boundaries of what would later be

known as *recitativo*, where "accent" and "concent" (*accentus* and *concentu*) were inseparable. While liturgical passages were sung, or rather chanted, in prose throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern European period, this practice continued in Biblical oratories and emotional expressions and found a secular equivalent in opera's "*accompagnato*" recitative; the bias persisted.

Poetry, hip-hop, and rap music share a rich history, with rhythm, rhyme, and flow as their foundation. Rap can be traced back to the West African griot heritage or even further back in time. In ancient Greece and Rome, history tellers, poets, and praise singers were known as "griots." The term "griot" may hold different meanings and encompass different roles in various cultures. However, what remains central to a griot is their ability to lyrically and melodically tell stories. Rap and hip-hop have always embraced the innovative use of language and rhetoric found in the griot tradition. Although these terms are often used interchangeably, they are not exactly the same.

Hip-hop and rap emerged in the poorest neighborhoods of New York City as a response to racism, poverty, social marginalization, and economic inequality. The intensity of their beats can be attributed to the extent to which society has attempted to exclude others from its midst. They swiftly became platforms for disenfranchised minorities, particularly black Americans, to express themselves. In order to surpass iconic figures like Michael Jackson, who became the most renowned black musician of all time, it became necessary to utilize rap music to articulate the life perspectives and attitudes of black Americans. It became a visible form of art predominantly employed by young individuals to convey their life stances and outlooks through an artistic medium. Over time, this music thrived and became an effective tool for strengthening black identity and empowering people within an oppressive society.

Hip-hop was born out of the emergence of rap music in the mid-to-late 1970s, but its roots extend much further. Renaissance parodies, in fact, illustrate how hip-hop incorporates music from other genres. Hip-hop encompasses not only rap music but also graffiti art, urban dance styles, language, and fashion, among other elements.

An important precursor to hip-hop was "The Last Poets," a group formed in Harlem in the late 1960s, renowned for their politically charged spoken word poetry accompanied by Afro-centric music. They are widely acknowledged as having laid the foundation for contemporary hip-hop, paving the way for beat masters like DJ Kool Herc and subsequent lyricists. In recent years, hip-hop and rap music have garnered increased scholarly attention as literature, with numerous authors, educators, and researchers studying their artistic and cultural significance. Jay-Z's book "*Decoded*" (2010) is one such example, where he presents rap and hip-hop as narrative poetry, art, and a social movement. He aims to convey to readers that rap is a form of poetry and asserts that rappers should be compared to the greatest authors of all time.

On the other hand, the Arab World has experienced its own set of upheavals and contradictions, including revolutions, sectarian conflicts, and various socio-political issues. As Gana (2012: 31) points out, "Arab rap initially emerged in

relation to the most vexing and defining question of Arab contemporaneity: Palestine." Palestinian rap serves as a prime example of how hip-hop functions as a medium for sharing political oppression and becomes a tool of resistance, shedding light on critical issues concerning the nation.

To raise public awareness, hip-hop artists from different Arab countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan, came together to form a project known as "The Third Line." This initiative serves as a platform to express diverse perspectives on current political events and highlights the widespread struggles occurring in several Arab countries. Ultimately, hip-hop aims to facilitate dialogue among groups with opposing ideas in the midst of Arab upheavals. This form of art enjoys significant support in the Arab world, particularly among young people who rebel against prevailing circumstances and seek political change. After a prolonged silence, hip-hop provides an engaging means of communication with this youthful audience.

## **2. Literature review**

Since the Harlem Renaissance, various forms of art have served as expressions of racial injustice, otherness, and white privilege. According to Hughes (2001: 523), "Art is to be an intensification or enlargement of life or to give adequate comment on what living is like in the poet's own time." Non-European populations, such as African Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans, have relied on their traditions to resist persecution and challenge the dominant culture. Their families, faith, music, and other cultural treasures have become counter-cultural forces (Martinez 1997: 265). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, political and gangsta rap artists used a forceful form of counter-culture to challenge perceived racial constructs, institutional inequality, and urban decay. The message of resistance and social criticism conveyed by these rappers may have foreshadowed the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

In his research titled "Verily, There Is Only One Hip-Hop Umma: Islam, Cultural Protest, and Urban Marginality," Aidi (2010: 119) explores the emergence of Islamic hip-hop by examining the rise of Islam in America. He states that Islam "has emerged as a particularly powerful subgenre and cultural movement within the hip-hop nation, and that Islamic hip-hop speaks truth to power," especially among Latinos and other minorities in Europe who historically did not have a connection to Islam. Similarly, Rateb (2022: 304) explains how imagery represents traumatic experiences, noting that "images of violence, chaos, mass murder, and destruction are also palpable" in poems and other artistic mediums, such as motifs and irony.

MacDonald (2019: 105) argues that the depiction of music performed during the Arab Spring protests in American media was misleading. He asserts that this depiction focused on hip-hop and media, which "sought to control the direction and outcome of the uprisings in the streets and further imposed a neo-Orientalist discourse of American hegemony over forces of reform and democratization in the Arab Middle East and Rap and Revolt in the Arab World." Gana (2012: 6) argues that Arab rap music serves as a form of cultural solidarity. He views "Arab

and Tunisian rap music as an integral element of the rich cultures of resistance to colonial, neocolonial, and late capitalist entrenchments in the Arab World."

Sule and Inkster (2014: 1) contend in "The Hip-Hop State of Mind" that individuals interested in hip-hop are encouraged to enhance positive images of themselves, their future, and their situation. They believe that "hip-hop music, with its rich, visual narrative style, can be used in this form of psychotherapy to address the cultural needs of specific populations." They observe the integration of hip-hop "psych" in various settings, including prisons, nightclubs, and schools, as a means to create a space for discussing mental health from multiple perspectives. They have patients who write rap lyrics as part of their therapy.

Mckie (2014: 14) asserts that there is an awareness of mental health issues in hip-hop art. He argues that it "provides individuals with a sense of empowerment and self-knowledge that could be harnessed to help people tackle their own psychological problems." The author discusses the influence of rap and hip-hop across cultures. This type of music is perceived as a reaction to racism in the United States. In contrast, it serves as a tool of peaceful resistance in various domains, such as challenging hegemony and religious sects in the Arab world. Although music and poetry are distinct mediums, rap and hip-hop bring these mediums together and move in the same direction to give voice to protesters and those who are marginalized, subjugated, and silenced. This allows rappers and their followers to express their feelings through songs instead of resorting to non-peaceful revolutions, which can be seen as a form of defense mechanism.

### **3. Method**

Sigmund Freud (1959) argues that there are various ways to prevent anxiety through defense mechanisms, which are considered psychological methods that unconsciously protect people from anxiety and the uncomfortable feelings or thoughts it evokes. Both Sigmund Freud and his daughter Anna have explored how these defense mechanisms can be used to address mental disorders and concerns. This exploration has led them to investigate the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious mind in order to uncover repressed conflicts, fears, and desires, and bring them to the conscious level through free association. Freud developed free association as a means to help his patients overcome blocks resulting from trauma and the subsequent defenses that arise. He claims that through free association, individuals can examine their thoughts and identify repressed memories and reasons behind them. It can also aid in understanding past traumas and connecting them to issues in previous relationships. During free association, individuals are encouraged to freely share their thoughts, regardless of their coherence. Freud used to ask his patients about the first word that came to their minds in order to analyze slips of the tongue and dreams. This process deepens their self-understanding by examining the words and images that emerge in their minds. The goal of free association is to release anger, which occurs when individuals question their anger towards something or someone. As a result, they may become aware of their anger and fear that it may be inappropriate (Pangestu and Sunardi 2016).

In contrast, Anna Freud (1936: 33–34) defines defense mechanisms as "unconscious resources used by the ego to ultimately decrease internal stress." Defense mechanisms, therefore, explain the ego's struggle against intolerable effects. In her book "The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense," Anna (1936: 33–34) states that "the proper field for our observation is always the ego" because the ego constantly balances the needs of the id and the demands of the superego. She further explains that there are various types of resistance, and observing a person's behavior "toward his free associations in analysis," when left to themselves and managing the demands of their instincts while fending off unwelcome effects, allows us to deduce the nature of their symptom formation a priori. Conversely, the latter allows us to infer a posteriori the structure of their resistance and defense against their effects and instincts (Anna Freud 1936: 33–34).

Furthermore, "sublimation" and "displacement" are two defense mechanisms described by Sigmund Freud. Sublimation is the process of finding a positive outlet for negative feelings. Freud suggests that "all our complex culture is based on sublimation" and defines it as "a form of displacement where the displaced act produces worthwhile results" (qtd. in Malott and Whaley 2013: 402). Sublimation occurs unconsciously when we encounter impulses and urges that are considered unacceptable by society. It is a healthy mechanism that channels anger and pain into a productive project, such as rap or hip-hop. Rappers transfer their anger, which could otherwise lead to violence, into their songs. This defense mechanism leads to a positive outcome that is better than the alternative.

On the other hand, displacement occurs when someone redirects their anger and anxiety towards someone or something else. Freud illustrates displacement as shifting focus from a more important subject to a less important one or transferring a feeling from one object to another. For example, if someone experiences negative feelings towards their boss but fears losing their job, they may release their anger on a non-threatening target.

Anna (1936) explains that while an individual's thoughts and attitudes may not always make sense, the ego is observable. The id seeks to fulfill desires, while the ego attempts to restrain the id, similar to the external demands of society and the internal demands of the superego. Anxiety arises when these aspects conflict and the ego fails to resolve it. To alleviate anxiety and control the id's drives, the ego employs defense mechanisms. These mechanisms transform the conflict and keep it unconscious. However, this unconscious state is detrimental to the person's psyche, and it becomes necessary to bring the unconscious into consciousness. Defense mechanisms, such as repression, protect individuals from the instinctual impulses of the id.

The Freudian theory of the mind, proposed by Sigmund and Anna Freud (1959), provides a functional framework for understanding hip-hop and rap music. Rap and hip-hop poetry differ from other forms of poetry as they rely less on imagery, literary devices, or rhyme schemes, and more on strong rhythms and beats, akin to playing the drums. This makes them an excellent example of successfully blending music and poetry. The most powerful hip-hop and rap songs are those that reflect the conflicts between the id, ego, and superego. There are

numerous artists who excel at creating beats and sounds that illustrate the Freudian triangle. The best rapper is one who skillfully mediates conflicts among the id, ego, and superego within the same song, demonstrating self-awareness.

The ego shields itself from three threats. The first threat arises from the id, as its desires can be intense and lead to irrational chaos. The second threat comes from the external world, which poses real dangers. The third threat is from the superego, which detects immoral aspects or unacceptable behaviors, evoking feelings of guilt. However, the ego must strike a balance by satisfying the id. A self-aware rapper or hip-hop artist mediates conflicts among the id, ego, and superego within their songs. Rap and hip-hop serve as therapeutic vehicles in various ways, such as through free association, which unblocks repressed memories and pain. Through the creation, performance, and expression of repressed emotions, this art form acts as an outlet against oppression. In this process, the id finds satisfaction by freely expressing thoughts and anger, while the superego allows the rapper to translate their frustration into something socially acceptable, alleviating any sense of guilt.

#### **4. Results and analysis**

##### **4.1 American hip-hop and rap as forms of defence mechanisms and cultural identity**

Hip-hop is a type of music that encompasses various art forms such as rap music, graffiti art, urban dance styles, language, and clothing. Among African American and Hispanic youth, hip-hop is more than just music; it is a way of life. With its fashion, attitude, and style, hip-hop culture has become a tangible subculture. When rap music breaks through barriers between musical styles and genres, absorbing influences from every possible genre, it becomes an integral part of global culture (Potter 1995). Rap and hip-hop provide complete expressions of cultural identification and offer great music to dance to. They have become powerful tools for cultural and political expression, shedding light on issues such as escalating persecution, limited prospects for progress, and the ever-changing mood on the streets where African Americans strive for survival (Pough 2015). This infectious movement has spread across society and politics, influencing both with its visuals, sounds, and attitude. Hip-hop provides people worldwide with an identity and a way of life through its diverse range of genres.

The postmodern aesthetic of rap is evident in its incorporation of a wide range of musical styles, including rhythm and blues, funk, reggae, techno, pop, and house. Hip-hop and rap have had a profound impact on other musical genres and cultures, breaking traditional barriers between art forms such as classical and popular music (Sharma 2022).

African Americans have valid reasons to doubt the notion of progress in the "progressive" era, as white men have enjoyed the benefits of progress for over four centuries. Despite the longstanding desire for a brighter future filled with opportunities and prosperity, the African American community often faces the sobering reality of historical injustices that hinder upward mobility. Ignoring the knowledge of past oppressions leaves the community with a sense of *déjà vu*,

living in the present while still experiencing the pain of a traumatic past. This "spatial gap" or "split in time" is connected to W. E. B. Du Bois's concept of "double awareness" (Currie 2020). In a country where race and identity are symbolic markers of oppression, African Americans strive to create an authentic sense of self and existence. The constant portrayal of African Americans as the "other" harms their ability to see themselves as a free community. Historically, hip-hop and rap artists were considered outsiders, serving as unpaid witnesses to the deteriorating economic conditions in metropolitan America. Black life in urban centers during the white era was plagued by drug use and poverty, further marginalizing those living in such conditions (Nyawalo 2013).

To illustrate, consider the early hip-hop song "The Message," originally released on July 1, 1982, which provided social commentary and highlighted these issues.

*A child is born with no state of mind and is blind to the ways of humankind.*

*God is smiling at you but frowning because only God knows what you will go through.*

*You will grow up in the ghetto, in substandard housing.*

*Moreover, your eyes will sing a song of venom.*

(lyrics.com)

This hip-hop music serves as a form of therapy for both the singer and the listeners who relate to and repeat the lyrics and ideas expressed. The singer, due to his traumatic life experiences, does not have a healthy relationship with society, and he aims to make those responsible for putting him and his people in this situation feel guilty. His repressed emotions and thoughts manifest through his music, as repression is an unconscious defense mechanism used by the ego to keep undesirable thoughts from entering consciousness, which can be harmful to one's mental well-being. As Sigmund Freud proposed, repression involves pushing something away and keeping it distant from conscious awareness. This unhealthy state of repression can eventually lead to an outburst. Therefore, rap and hip-hop can be utilized as therapeutic forms of expression.

In the context of free association, individuals are encouraged to express their thoughts and ideas without censorship, enabling them to access the unconscious mind. Through free association, one can uncover the root of immediate fears and enhance conscious understanding of emotions by freely expressing thoughts and relinquishing self-censorship. Furthermore, rap music exemplifies the concept of sublimation, as a defense mechanism that reduces anxiety and transforms it into socially acceptable behavior. Instead of inciting a revolution, the rapper and their audience channel their emotions into the art form, allowing for a release and expression within the boundaries of societal norms.

Rap music and hip-hop culture were central to the struggle before they were appropriated, and rappers played a significant role in the emergence of counter-hegemonic ideologies. These ideologies were reflected in both the lyrics and the lifestyle choices of individuals (Mayes, Shavers and Moore 2022: 208). According to Dimitriadis (2009: 16), hip-hop originated as a situated cultural activity that

encompassed various creative endeavors. Dance, music, and graffiti were all equally important in sustaining the movement. Early hip-hop, like much African and popular dance music, cannot be understood solely as an auditory text but must be appreciated as a multi-dimensional event within specific contexts of consumption and production.

Hip-hop transcends class, color, and gender, making it an art form capable of mobilizing diverse marginalized populations. In this sense, hip-hop does not exclude the foolish or the ludicrous from its resistance tactics. The ability to adapt to a rapidly changing reality with linguistic beauty and agility is highly regarded and considered a form of knowledge. Contrary to popular belief, hip-hop remains a distinct genre of music, even among casual listeners and some academics. Rap, which was once associated primarily with young black men, has evolved to encompass artists from diverse ethnic backgrounds and linguistic abilities. Hip-hop artists like Sean Combs (Puff Daddy) and O'Shea Jackson (Ice Cube) exemplify the complex social connections involving race, class, and sexuality and the cultural politics surrounding the construction of black masculinity in public representation. Many African American adolescents, particularly males, adopt the persona of a "rapper." Instead of conforming to the prevailing school culture, they engage in "performing." These artists, like their peers, embody a black identity that challenges and marginalizes whiteness, making blackness a powerful marker of identity.

On the other hand, Muslim Latino American artists blend Latino art with Arabic and Islamic music. Ibrahim Gonzalez, for instance, incorporates rap drums and fiery trumpet sounds combined with Sufi chanting to explore the connection between Latin identity and Islam, particularly with politically charged lyrics that criticize US policies.

*We see what's coming: more scapegoat, jingoistic doublespeak.  
Always blaming the oppressed when it comes to violence.  
It's easy to vilify Arabs, isn't it, Mr. American Policy?  
After all Arabs do not occupy positions of corporate power  
in these United States.  
And the ones you are chummy with oppress their own  
people anyway, and so you can still sell them arms and  
weaponry and maintain the status quo and petro-paradise,  
and still make a killing*

This shows how it is written to represent a peaceful protest by denying violence and blaming others for accusing Muslims of violence.

#### **4.2 Hip-hop in the Arabs' culture**

The oppression endured by Arab rappers in their home countries sets them apart from their European and American counterparts in terms of their musical legacy. While hip-hop in the United States aims to address racism, in Arab culture, it primarily serves as a tool of resistance and has played a crucial role in uprisings across the Middle East. For instance, in Iraq, Gaza, Syria, Libya, and other Arab nations, rap and hip-hop have been instrumental in the fight against sectarian



discrimination and political tyranny. Despite adopting rap and hip-hop into their culture, Arabs have infused their own unique flavor into the genre (Mohamed Nasir 2018).

Hip-hop has taken on a new form that aligns more closely with the cultural identity of specific nations. In Saudi Arabia, for example, artists in this genre have established a connection that links the music with the region's identity by incorporating Gulf music and phrases from the local dialect, which has captured the attention of young people (Khalil 2019). There are various reasons why young people are drawn to this style of music, including personal factors influenced by external pressures or societal factors experienced by many. Arab rap has evolved to portray views and attitudes that reflect the realities of a particular society while adhering to the customs and traditions of the community. According to Nooshin (2011), since its introduction to the West, rap has been associated with the struggles faced by young people on various issues such as unemployment, violence, and prejudice, which are challenges specific to certain nations. Therefore, songs can shed light on social issues and represent cultural identity.

During the Israeli onslaught in Gaza in 2014, rap artists were actively using their music to convey a message to the rest of the world about the atrocities taking place. Instead of focusing on differences between Palestinians and other peoples, the music of the Palestinian resistance movement emphasizes similarities. It addresses Israeli bombings in one context and holds Arab officials accountable in another. Palestinian rappers also released statements denouncing the ongoing nightmare and initiated campaigns to end the division among the Palestinian people. The pulsating beats of the music serve as a means of resistance, unleashing anger and frustration. Many rappers, including innocent children, used rap as a tool to combat violence and to seek sympathy from the world in finding a solution. Their rap serves as a form of peaceful protest that may offer hope in their difficult lives. For example, 12-year-old Palestinian MC Abdul released his first official song titled "Shouting at the Wall."

*I am exhausted. Last night I couldn't sleep, and when I did,  
I heard bombs in my sleep. Huddling in the corner of my room,  
Trying to protect my little brother. As the building shakes like  
It's possessed, but there is nothing stronger than the will  
of the oppressed.*

*The power that I have in my pen, when I'm writing I am unstoppable.  
The microphone is the only escape possible*

This child shows the anxiety Palestinian families experienced during the bombardment of Gaza, which left about 200 dead and more than 1,000 wounded. His song is his only consolation; perhaps the world will listen and defend him.

Similarly, Iraqi rappers were in the same situation. Demonstrators burned down party and government structures during the uprising. Rap music gave rappers who were fed up with the awful service a platform to express their displeasure in a nonviolent manner. Despite the difficulties that the Arab revolutions experienced, they gave rise to a new generation of musicians who utilized their art to communicate societal grievances and hopes for the future. Iraqi

hip-hop has developed into a protest movement against the government. Anhar, a rapper born in the 1990s, experienced both the challenges of daily life and political turmoil in his native Iraq. He sings fervently the following in one of his songs:

*We ae the generation of revenge*

*Revolution of liberators*

*I do not carry guns; my weapons are my ideas and thoughts*

Through these powerful lyrics, Anhar conveys his commitment to seeking justice and liberation through non-violent means, using his music as a tool for change. Anhar's rap has inspired many young Iraqis to take their message to the streets of Baghdad, using it as a form of peaceful protest to bring about political change in the country. His popular hip-hop song "Twisted Tail" has resonated with Iraqi demonstrators, leading Anhar to declare that Iraqis are starting to embrace rap music. Despite rap music being previously frowned upon by society, it has gained recent popularity (Al-Jaffal 2020). Although rappers faced risks for speaking out against the government, they were pleased to see their music gaining popularity and spreading nationwide.

In the early 2010s, the Arab Spring uprising emerged across many Arab countries, fueled by a desire to overcome poverty and authoritarianism and combat corruption. Rappers and hip-hop artists played a crucial role in breaking through the fear barrier by addressing the political issues faced by people in various Arab nations during the Arab Spring (Gabsi 2020). They raised awareness about the prevailing circumstances, using a blend of Arabic and English in their lyrics to make them more accessible to a wider audience. During the Arab Spring, they incorporated Arabic and English in their songs. The initial part of the song is in Arabic and is translated into English:

*Whatever they say about us, we remain free.*

*The most vital voice, dignity, and human freedom*

*With a will, we have healed our wounds,*

*We proved to this world that the love of life, the love of freedom  
are the implications of oppressors' demise?*

*with the will of the Arab people who raised the banner of freedom*

*People want a new day; they are patient and perseverant.*

*They fired back at us with tanks and artillery.*

*Moreover, we shouted, "O world, our revolution is peaceful."*

*It is peaceful. "It is peaceful."*

*This Arabic segment is followed by the following English part:*

*Something is burning in my heart, or something just fell apart.*

*People live; people die.*

*I asked my father, but he did not respond."*

Through these lyrics, the rapper expresses the burning passion within and the desire for change, reflecting on the complexities of life and seeking answers from his father. The rapper sheds light on oppression in various Arab countries and illustrates how oppressors respond violently to their nonviolent protests. He emphasizes the peaceful nature of their revolution, yet oppressors, fearing the impact of these nonviolent protests, resort to shooting them. This demonstrates the

powerful influence of music and songs in peaceful protests, as they raise awareness and inspire people to reject injustice. However, as Freud (1993: 65) suggests, once people become conscious of their situation, they may become more manageable and less dangerous compared to when they were unaware.

People from diverse age groups and cultures gather in large numbers in public squares, chanting these words to the beats of hip-hop and rap. Rappers and listeners are encouraged to freely express their thoughts through a process of free association. The previous rap is an interpretation of displaced or sublimated emotions. Anhar employs this method to showcase his underlying psychological rupture resulting from repression. Unable to control his emotions, he publishes his words and feelings, transforming his thoughts into a form of defense mechanism.

Rap and hip-hop music, with their rhythms and styles, resonate strongly with the younger generation or the generation of transformation. It is well-known that teenage activists played a prominent role in the Arab Spring movements. A sense of discontent fuels protests, particularly among the youth who feel deprived of the right to participate in decision-making. When their voices go unheard, they resort to screaming, singing, and staging nonviolent protests, demanding change. They seek to give meaning to their existence, shape their lives, and contribute to the construction of their society.

The collective identity of Arabs in hip-hop and rap was amplified, particularly during the Arab Spring. Individuals who align themselves with the social movement tend to uphold a collective identity (Taylor and Whittier 1992, cited in Aaltio and Mills 2003: 99). For instance, in Tunisia, imprisoned rapper Bin Ali focused on the revolution and sang:

*Mr. President, I am pleased to meet with you today.  
In my name and the name of all people who live in misery.  
It's 2011, and there's still a man who's dying of hunger.  
He wants to work to survive, but his voice is not heard.  
Mr. President, your people are dead. So many people are eating garbage.  
There, you see what's happening in this country.  
Miseries are everywhere, and people haven't found anywhere to sleep.  
I speak here in the name of the people who were wronged and crushed.  
beneath the feet of the powerful*

Bin Ali's message resonated strongly, and his song became the anthem of the uprising. His anti-regime slogan transcended borders, reaching Bahrainis and Egyptians who employed the same means to express their protest. As the revolution unfolded, Arab individuals, acting as messengers, gathered in public squares, utilizing the same approach as Anna Freud's concept of sublimation. In this context, the rapper or the audience displaces their unacceptable feelings into a more socially acceptable behavior, eliminating the need for destructive activities.

On the other hand, the Bahraini rappers talk about different issues, such as Sunni and Shiite:

*All are Bahrainis, neither Sunni nor Shiite.  
Sunni and Shiite, no matter how different sects are  
We are brothers; how do we kill each other?*

*Where did the faith that used to unite us go under Islamic law?  
Because of rumours and temptation, nations are lost.  
We are walking on one path, and God witnesses our love.*

Many significant issues have been addressed in rap and hip-hop, aiming to unite individuals regardless of their sectarian affiliations and work towards resolving conflicts and building a better future. As mentioned earlier, these songs delve into the relationship between the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind, bringing repressed desires or fears to the surface through free association. Through this process, individuals can freely express their thoughts and ideas, uncovering their inner fears. Free association becomes a means of exploring the inner world, allowing past and present images to emerge and fostering self-understanding. The use of angry expressions and beats in rap and hip-hop serves as a mechanism to channel and control aggressive inner feelings.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the fusion of poetry and music in rap and hip-hop has become a creative form of resistance, denouncing marginalization and exclusion. This art form raises awareness and amplifies the voice of protest, reaching a wide audience. It tackles issues specific to Arab culture, such as religious sects, violence, rebellion against authority, and unemployment, which may not be seen as problems in other nations. Therefore, rap and hip-hop serve as tools of resistance in Arab culture, while also addressing issues of racism in the United States.

While some researchers argue that this genre of music promotes unhealthy ideologies, particularly among young people, this study contends that it can actually aid youth in understanding themselves and their fears. By engaging in rap and hip-hop, repressed complexes and anger from the unconscious are brought to the forefront of consciousness, and the feeling of frustration can be channeled and controlled through artistic expression.

The combination of poetry, music, and body language in rap, hip-hop, and poetry makes them effective tools for expressing tension and anxiety. The rhythmic nature of this art form conveys powerful messages that liberate individuals from their anger. It can serve as a therapeutic outlet and a means of anger management. Although rap and hip-hop are considered mild forms of resistance, they can have a significant impact on authorities and officials, who often respond with violence to suppress the voices of rappers. On the other hand, this peaceful protest among groups, particularly among youth, represents unity and cultural identity, providing a sense of security and support.

Hanan K. Al-Jezawi (Assistant Professor)  
 Al-Balqa Applied University  
 ORCID: 0000-0003-4004-1467  
 Email: [jeezawi@bau.edu.jo](mailto:jeezawi@bau.edu.jo)

Mohammad A. Al-Abdulrazaq (Assistant Professor)  
 Al-Balqa Applied University,  
 ORCID: 0000-0003-2656-9716  
 Email: [malabdulrazaq@bau.edu.jo](mailto:malabdulrazaq@bau.edu.jo)

Mahmoud Ali Rababah, PhD. – Corresponding Author  
 Al-Balqa' Applied University,  
 ORCID: 0000-0002-0930-4030  
 Email: [mrababah@bau.edu.jo](mailto:mrababah@bau.edu.jo)

Arwa H. Aldoory (Assistant Professor)  
 Tikrit University, Iraq,  
 ORCID: 0000-0002-1814-0031  
 Email: [arwahosaen@tu.edu.iq](mailto:arwahosaen@tu.edu.iq)

## References

- Aaltio, Iris and Albert J. Mills.** (2002). 'Organizational culture and gendered identities in context'. In Iris Aaltio and Albert J. Mills (eds.), *Gender, Identity and the Culture of Organizations*, 3–18. UK: Routledge.
- Aidi, Hisham.** (2004). 'Verily, there is only one hip-hop Umma: Islam, cultural protest and Urban marginality'. *Socialism and Democracy*, 18(2): 107-126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08854300408428402>
- Al-Jaffal, Omar.** (March 11, 2020). Rap becomes battle cry of Iraqi protests. *Al-Monitor*, March 11, 2020.  
<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2020/03/rap-becomes-battle-call-of-protesters-of-iraq.html>
- Currie, Elliott.** (2020). *A Peculiar Indifference: The Neglected Toll of Violence on Black America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Dimitriadis, Greg and Michelle Dimitriadis.** (2009). *Performing Identity/Performing Culture: Hip Hop as Text, Pedagogy, and Lived Practice*. Switzerland: Peter Lang.
- Duinker, Ben.** (2021). 'Segmentation, phrasing, and meter in hip-hop music'. *Music Theory Spectrum*, 43(2): 221-245.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtab003>
- Dunsby, Johnathan.** (2004). *Making Words Sing: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Song*. Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, Jabari M.** (2019). 'Deeper than rap: Cultivating racial identity and critical voices through hip-hop recording practices in the music

- classroom'. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 11(3): 20-36.  
<https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2019-11-3-3>
- Freud, Anna.** (1993). *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. London: Karnac Books.
- Freud, Sigmund.** (1920). 'A general introduction to psychoanalysis'. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 52(6): 548-549.  
[https://journals.lww.com/jonmd/citation/1920/12000/a\\_general\\_introduction\\_to\\_psychoanalysis.47.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/jonmd/citation/1920/12000/a_general_introduction_to_psychoanalysis.47.aspx)
- Freud, Sigmund.** (1959). *Collected Papers* (Vol. 4). New York: Basic Books
- Freud, Sigmund.** (2014). 'Psychoanalysis'. In Robert Ewen (ed.), *An Introduction to Theories of Personality*, 11-51. Psychology Press.  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315793177-3/psychoanalysis-sigmund-freud>
- Gabsi, Zouhir.** (2020). 'Rap and Mizoued music: Claiming a space for dissent and protest in post-Arab Spring Tunisia'. *Sociological Research Online*, 25(4): 626-643. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780419898494>
- Gana, Nouri.** (2012). 'Rap and revolt in the Arab world'. *Social Text*, 30(4): 25-53. [https://read.dukeupress.edu/social-text/article-abstract/30/4/20\(113\)/25/33730](https://read.dukeupress.edu/social-text/article-abstract/30/4/20(113)/25/33730)
- Hughes, Langston, Dolan Hubbard, Leslie Catherine Sanders, Donna Sullivan Harper and Steven Carl Tracy.** (2001). *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*. University of Missouri Press.
- Jay-Z.** (2010) *Decoded*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.
- Johannsen, Igor.** (2017). 'Keepin' it real: Arabic rap and the re-creation of Hip Hop's founding myth'. *Middle East-Topics & Arguments*, 7: 85-93.  
<https://doi.org/10.17192/meta.2017.7.6329>
- Keith, Anthony and Crystal Leigh Endsley.** (2020). 'Knowledge of self: Possibilities for spoken word poetry, hip hop pedagogy, and "blackout poetic transcription" in critical qualitative research'. *The International Journal of Critical Media Literacy*, 2(1): 56-82.  
[https://brill.com/view/journals/jcml/2/1/article-p56\\_56.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/jcml/2/1/article-p56_56.xml)
- Khalil, Joe F.** (2019). 'Neo-Tajdeed? Rap in Saudi Arabia and Tunisia'. In Tarik Sabry and Joe F. Khalil (eds.), *Culture, Time and Publics in the Arab World: Media, Public Space and Temporality*, 113-126. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Krims, Adam.** (2000). *Rap Music and The Poetics of Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lyrics.** <https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/20949481/Grandmaster+Flash/The+Message>
- MacDonald, David.** (2019). 'Framing the "Arab Spring": Hip hop, social media, and the American news media'. *Journal of Folklore Research*, 56(1): 105-130. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/jfolkrese.56.1.04>
- Malott, Richard and Donald Whaley.** (2013). *Psychology*. Lulu. Com.
- Martinez, Theresa.** (1997). 'Popular culture as oppositional culture: Rap as resistance'. *Sociological Perspectives*, 40(2): 265-286.

- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2307/1389525>
- Mayes, Renae, Marjorie Shavers and James Moore.** (2022). *African American Young Girls and Women in PreK12 Schools and Beyond: Informing Research, Policy, and Practice*. Emerald Publishing Limited.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/S2051-231720220000008013>
- MC Abdul** - Shouting at The Wall (Official Video) – YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8qay1A17Dc>
- Mckie, Robin.** (October, 11, 2014). Hip-hop therapy is new route to mental wellbeing, say psychiatrists. *The Guardian*. Retrieved March 19, 2023, from <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/oct/11/hip-hop-rap-therapy-mental-healthpsychiatrists-pharrell-happy>
- Mohamed Nasir, Kamaludeen.** (2018). 'Hip-hop Islam: Commodification, co-optation and confrontation in Southeast Asia'. *Journal of Religious and Political Practice*, 4(3): 374-389.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20566093.2018.1525902>
- Nooshin, Laudan.** (2011). 'Hip-hop Tehran: Migrating styles, musical meanings, marginalized voices'. In Jason Toynbee and Byron Dueck (eds.) *Migrating Music*, 108-127. Routledge.
- Nyawalo, Mich.** (2013). 'From "badman" to "gangsta": Double consciousness and authenticity, from African-American folklore to hip hop'. *Popular Music and Society*, 36(4): 460-475.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2012.671098>
- Pangestu, Nathania Astria and FX Dono Sunardi.** (2016). 'An incomplete psychological novel: A psychoanalytical analysis of Hazel Lancaster in John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*'. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 16(1): 20-28.  
<http://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=2982729&val=10038&title=An%20Incomplete%20Psychological%20Novel%20a%20Psychoanalytical%20Analysis%20of%20Hazel%20Lancaster%20in%20John%20Greens%20The%20Fault%20in%20Our%20Stars>
- Potter, Russell A.** (1995). *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and The Politics of Postmodernism*. State University of New York Press.
- Pough, Gwendolyn D.** (2015). *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere*. North-eastern University Press.
- Rateb, Mohamed Saad.** (2022). 'The prophetic voice of a war-traumatized poet: Representation of trauma in the early poetry of Robert Lowell'. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, 14(2): 287-308.  
<https://journals.yu.edu.jo/jjml/Issues/vol14no22022/Nom4.pdf>
- Reavey, Catherine Anne Elizabeth.** (2017). Poetry as a practice of freedom: Martin Luther King's somebodyness as a challenge to the langpo dismissal of self in American poetry. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Union Institute and University.  
<https://search.proquest.com/openview/ba5d96c6edcd2d626ebfb2778dd0775f/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>
- Reyes leBled** (President of the Country).

<https://cmes.arizona.edu/sites/cmes.arizona.edu/files/7.%20Hip%20Hop-El%20General.pdf>

- Richards, Arnold and Martin Willick.** (2013). *Psychoanalysis: The Science of Mental Conflict*. Routledge.
- Sule, Akeem and Becky Inkster.** (2014). A hip-hop state of mind. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 1(7): 494-495.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(14\)00063-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)00063-7)
- Taylor, Verta and Nancy E. Whittier.** (1992). 'Collective identity in social movement'. In Jo Freeman (eds.), *Victoria Johnson Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties*, 169-194. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Wellek, Albert.** (1962). The relationship between music and poetry. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 21(2): 149-156.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/427187>
- Winn, James Anderson.** (1981). *Unsuspected Eloquence: A History of the Relations Between Poetry and Music*. Yale University Press.