

RESISTANCE VALUES IN PALESTINIAN HIP-HOP MUSIC

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This research aims to describe popular culture of Palestine Hip-Hop and the values of songs. This research has purposes 1) to describe popular culture in Palestine Hip-Hop, and 2) to find resistance value in hip-hop songs. This research used popular culture approach of Adorno that analyzes three songs of DAM group, they are Who is the Terrorist?, Ghareeb fi Biladi, and Olive Trees. This research shows that 1) Hip-Hop music is the source of resistance Palestine through music media, 2) three of Hip-Hop songs not only give entertainment, but also have resistance values that have influences in national and international mass. Hip-Hop music is one of Palestine voice for Palestine in particular and Middle East in a wider context, so it describes the emergency condition of the regions.

Key Words: Hip-Hop music, resistance value, and Palestine

Introduction

Music is part of the culture created by man. Formerly, all kinds of sound were music, although it did not produce musical tones. However, everything will evolve as well as music. The development of music is dictated by evolution of taste and by continually changing esthetic concept. The taste and value in the society will change varying from belief changes that influence attitudes and behavior of a person, to group or community change (Adi, 2010: 114).

Music as a medium of entertainment is one of the popular culture products. Popular culture refers to the beliefs and practices and objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population. This includes folk beliefs, practices and objects rooted in local tradition, and mass beliefs, practices and objects generated in political and commercial centers (Mukerji, 1991: 3). One of the destinations of popular culture product is for amusement and for commercial purposes. It is one of destinations in entertainment music. So, music is one of popular culture products for commercial purposes.

In a variety of life, music plays an important role in various aspects. One of the examples of the influence of music for political reasons is hip-hop music that is known as rap music. Resistance songs that are carried out by Palestinian rappers give a new discourse that music as popular culture not only contains entertainment element and is used to get money, but also contains resistance element. Hip-hop was popular in American culture at the end of 1970. Hip-hop music appeared in the Afro-American context as part

of the responses to racism, deindustrialization and alienation (Chang, 2005). This research is done by Tricia Rose about rap music in America. Rose (1994: 82) says that rap music is mediated criticism to criticize the main ideology of American society. Rap represents an alternative interpretation. Rap does most of the criticism of institutions like the court institutions, police institution and education institution that are seen as exhibit institutions and reproduce racial inequality.

One type of streams in hip-hop or rap music is one spread out in Palestine. This music was adopted by the Palestinian Arab immigrants in the U.S. It also contains many elements of the revolution and politics. According to Jossep Massad (2005), a Palestinian rap music was produced by young Palestinians in the form of political revolution and underground music. Palestinian political music was started in 1950 by combining elements of the nationalist poetry in Arab-Western musical instruments. Palestinian music is still using Arabic lyrics like *zajal*, *mawal* or *saj*, and another form.

Hip-hop is one of the media to voice the apprehension of Palestinians. In addition, hip-hop music voices about racism and injustice that happened in Palestine caused by Israel, accusation from the United States as terrorist and also insurgency to the government. Hip-Hop musicians pour their ideas about Palestinians in the lyrics of their songs in order that the whole world listen Palestinian shrieking through their lyrics indirectly.

So, hip-hop music as an entertainment, in this context, not only offers a mere entertainment, but also contains ideology elements in music lyrics that were sung by Palestinian rappers. The

memorable lyrics of the Hip-Hop songs contain resistance values indicating resistance or opposition of the Palestinians. So, Hip-Hop song is interesting to be investigated in resistance values in the lyrics of the song.

B. Theory

According to Hirsch (1991: 315), cultural products may be defined tentatively as nonmaterial goods directed at a public of consumers, for whom they generally serve an esthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly utilitarian function. One of the goals is to create and satisfy consumers. This definition indicates that music is a product of popular culture. According to Adorno (cited in Strinati, 2007: 69), the pop theory associated with the pop culture industry theory and commodity fetishism. The purpose of commodity fetishism is an industry effort undertaken in such a way to create the false worship of cultural industries product to the community. The cultural industries create tastes and trends of the masses, so it creates awareness false needs. The cultural industries try to obscure the real needs of society. Cultural industry is very effective in carrying it until we do not realize what was happened.

According to Adorno, pop music is produced through two processes of cultural domination industry: standardization and quasi individuality. Standardization describes the challenges and problems faced in terms of pop music originality, authenticity or intellectual stimulation. Standardization of pop music has similarities in terms of tone and taste from one another as interchangeable (Strinati, 2007: 73). In other words, there are fundamental similarities in pop music that can be exchanged become an own commodity. Quasi individuality is making an individual freedom in choosing pop music that standardized by elite industry. So, the freedom exists because of standardization itself.

In the context of the Palestinian hip-hop, standardization set is a mixture of Arab and Western instruments that characterize the Palestinian rap because this hip-hop music or rap music was born in Palestinian Arab, but the West serves as a source of rap music. In this case, quasi individuality is the freedom of the rappers to pour their ideas in the lyrics of their songs.

Based on the definition offered by Hirsch, hip-hop music Palestine is a different thing. Hip-hop music or rap Palestinian not only presents entertainment that many people like a lot or just to get the money alone, but Palestinian hip-hop music also represents a resistance movement and against injustice in Palestine. By this music, rappers try to voice Palestinian shrieking at the national or international world by musical lyrics.

So, this paper tries to see the values of resistance in the Palestinian hip-hop.

C. Discussion

1. Hip-Hop Music and The Influence

Hip-hop or rap is one of the most popular genres in the world. Palestinian hip-hop or rap contains messages that are more easily accepted by young Palestinians. The uniqueness of Palestinian rap music is combination between eastern and western instruments. It uses of Arabic percussion rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies and urban hip-hop.

Since late 2010, hip-hop with political design complexion has become a soundtrack pro-democracy movements in the Middle East and North Africa. It may be surprising for some people that Hip-hop as the product of American culture or as Western genre has become meaningful for to the grassroots movement by Arab identity characteristics (www.tempointeraktif.com).

One of Palestinian rappers is Shadia Mansour that known as the first female Arab hip-hop. She is an English singer-blooded Palestinian. For Shadia, hip-hop became a channel to express her nationalism and identity of the Arabs, because she was born overseas. Shadia's music is political stance that describes decades political conflict in the Middle East. She sings when Israeli attacked on Gaza since December 2008. That incident killed more than 1,300 Palestinians and 13 Israelis. Another rapper is Darg (Da Arabian Revolutionary Guys), hip-hop group who has campaigned actively against the illegal blockade to the Gaza.

The famous rapper in Palestine and the Palestinians is DAM group. DAM is a Palestinian hip-hop group fronted by Tamer Nafer, Suhell Nafer, and Mahmoud Jreri. They started their rap show in 1999. After that, the rising popularity makes this rap group known in Palestine. This group was born in the slums of Lod, a small town which has mixed population of Arab and Jewish, about 20 km from Jerusalem. Their songs always reflect the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as the Palestinian struggle for freedom and equality. In addition, they also raised other controversial issues such as terrorism, drugs, and women's rights (www.metimes.com).

One of the DAM group members, Naafer Tamer (Maira, 2007: 166) says that hip-hop song was inspired by Tupac Shakur's ideas about racism and poverty. The Songs that were sung brought positive messages for the Palestinian listeners. Finally, they became the main subject of the documentary film presented by Jackie Salloum. The film called Slingshot Hip-Hop that

has been selected to appear in the Sundance Film Festival. This film described the emergency situation in the Middle East with music scenes. In that film, the rappers described that poverty was rampant. The difficulty in understanding between cultures and beliefs makes a variety of problems at any point on the border checks and other obstacles. Slingshot Hip-Hop is created as an alternative form of resistance to the colonizer, Israel's blockade on the Palestinians, and the mobilization of large-scale Jewish residents in 1948.

Resistance Values in Hip-Hop Lyrics

Lyric of the song is a verbal symbol created by humans. The lyrics are an important part in a song. Song lyrics are part of expressions of feeling of the songwriter and it has its own meaning to be conveyed to the audience. According to Hubbell (via John Scattergood, 2005:39), the lyrics is the commonest, and yet, in its perfection, and the post modern, the simplest, and emotionally bound; and it is more expressive, more intimate than other types of verse indicating the personality of the poet.

It can be understood then that song is one of the most common ways of expression. It is perfect, modern and also the most simple but emotionally because of the depth expression from the writer (poet or lyricist in this case). It could be said that the lyrics of the song was written as a poem. It is written in depth for pouring and expressing various emotions. Hubbell (1949: 22) says "the lyric, then, gives us ideas and themes and calls up pictures in appropriate language, Greenwich is rich in suggestions, Pictorial power, an Sensuous beauty". So, the lyrics contain an idea in suggestion, power and beauty.

One of the lyrics that is interesting is the lyrics of hip-hop music from Palestinian hip-hop DAM group. One of the popular songs is Meen Erhabi which has been translated as "Who's the Terrorist?" This song was released in 2001 and downloaded more than one million people until the year 2008. Here are the lyrics of the song:

Who's the terrorist?

*Who's the terrorist?
I'm the terrorist?
How am I the terrorist,
When you have taken my land?
Who's the terrorist?
You're the terrorist!
You have taken everything I own,
While I'm living in my homeland
You want me to go to the law?
You're the witness, the lawyer, and the judge.*

*I'll be sentenced to death,
To end up the majority in the cemetery.
.....
You attack me but still you cry out,
When I remind you it was you attacked me
You silence me and shout,
"Don't they have parents to keep them at home?"*

This song is a critique of the contradictions of Palestinian citizens of Israel where 48 percent of the population in Palestine, 19 percent is Israel. The song was also critical of Israel as a Democratic State that concerned to inequality and discrimination and established itself as a Jewish State to legalize and to get what is expected (in Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, 2005, 160).

From the title hip-hop song "Who's the Terrorist?" Sung by the DAM, it is clear that the Palestinian rappers try to ask who actually a terrorist is. The song begins from the quote general U.S., Ramsey Clark, who declared that the Palestine and Iraq as "the most terrorized people on earth". That American general phrase was be inspiring song that called "Who's the Terrorist?" song is part of the attitude Palestinian resistance to the accusation as terrorists. In the last lyrics of this song, "We fight for our freedom, so you've made That a crime. And you the terrorist call me the terrorist!" shows that Palestinian pushes this accusation and push over to the West that they are the real terrorists.

Resistance or resistance in the lyrics of the song "Who's the Terrorist?" is a voice of the Palestinian who would not be willing to be considered as terrorists. In fact, the song tries to turn back the real terrorists are they (the Israelis) try to seize Palestinian land even the land was the place of living of Palestinians. The warning was ignored by Israel and they attacked Palestinians. The last of the lyrics, DAM asked back to Israel to show that their attitude is not respectful "if they do not have parents who keep them at home".

Another DAM song that describes Israel arbitrariness is "Gareeb fi Biladi". This song is a form of Palestinian youth awareness that there are thirteen Palestinian youths who had been killed by Israeli police. The assassination led to massive demonstrations in October 2000. So, the song is titled Gareeb fi Biladi. This song is part of DAM response to the thirteen young Palestinians who died in October 2000. The lyric *Gareeb fi Biladi* is:

*Who cares about us? We are dying slowly.
Controlled by a Zionist democratic government!
Ya, democratic to the Jewish soul,
And Zionist to the Arabic soul,
That is to say, what is forbidden to him is forbidden to*

me.

And what is allowed to him is forbidden to me.

And what's allowed to me is unwanted by me.

The song above, shows how Israel do arbitrariness in control of law and Palestinian lives. Israel prohibits the Palestinians freely, but they did not want to be banned. This attitude makes young Palestinians feel occupied until the thirteen young Palestinians rebelled to Israel and shot by Israeli police bullets.

Another song often sung by another rapper, Iron Sheik, about the conflict in Palestine is a song called Olive Trees. The song describe the transfer, the history of the Zionist and anti-Arab racism. The following is the lyric of song sung by Iron Sheik:

*Trouble began before 1948
When Zionists founded the Israeli state
Zionism called for a Jewish homeland
But they picked Palestine as a land with no man
One major flaw with all of this:
They forgot the indigenous populace!
Native Arab Muslims and Christians
Didn't they notice that something is missing?
They left native Arabs all out of their view
Zionism's goals were heavily skewed
Newcomers settled up in the country-side
In separation just like Apartheid
Jewish roads, schools, and hospitals
But also paramilitary patrols
These are the seeds of 48'
From colonial control to the Jewish state
It's not a mistake, though
It's not a mistake, no
Life in exile, is that our fate?
Life in exile, that's our fate.
Life in exile, that's our fate.
They exiled us and stole our homes
Now all we have are old keys and new poems
They turned us into refugees*

From the song lyrics above, it can be said that Palestinians were disappointed to the Israel actions. Israel has stolen Palestinian homes that caused them to evacuate or move to another place. Palestinian displacement to other countries caused "alien" feeling for them. The phrase can be seen in the lyrics of "Life in exile". Alienation felt by Palestinians associated with their identity as migration to another country or diaspora. Julaine Hammer (2005: 83) states that the memory of the Palestinians in the isolation and alienation is nationalism that is showed by the symbol "Homeland" which means their country.

According to Erich Fromm (1955:111), alienation (exile) is a mode of experience in which

the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, as Might Become says, estranged from himself. It means that alienation is an experience that categorizes himself as a stranger. The reality happened and alienation occurs when a person leaves their country or when the time of war or disaster (Gohar, 2011: 107).

Alienation in the lyrics of the song above is an expression of the attitude of resistance against Israel, who had stolen the homes of Palestinians that caused them to leave their homes and even their country. Resistance is expressed by the sequence history of the struggle for Palestine by the Zionists (Israelis) and ended by alienation feeling as a result of the fight of Israel.

Conclusion

From the description and explanation above, it can be concluded that the hip-hop music or rap in Palestine is not only a popular culture that presents mere entertainment but contains resistance values carried by the Palestinian rappers to defend the Palestinians. The resistance values in the lyrics of the song are the resistance that represents the Palestinian. The resistance values carried in the lyrics of rap songs had their influences in the world both nationally and internationally. Resistance values are carried in a hip-hop song received an appreciation and one of rappers was selected to play in Palestinian documentary film titled Jackie Salloum Slingshot. This film was selected to appear in the Sundance Film Festival to describe the condition of Middle East emergency by the music scenes. So, hip-hop music is the root of Palestinian resistance by music media.

Resistance values in the hip-hop music in lyrics of DAM under the title "Who is the terrorist?" indicates a resistance to Israel that accusation to Palestinian as terrorists is not true as an American general said, but terrorists are those who have robbed their homeland. The song of "fi Ghareeb Biladi" by DAM shows a response to the murder of thirteen young men who were shot dead by Israeli police. The last song entitled "Olive Trees" shows the history of Israel aggression to the Palestinians until they were evacuated and moved to other countries and feel alien and exile in other countries.

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