

# Israeli Hip Hop as a Democratic Platform

## Zionism, Anti-Zionism and Post-Zionism

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by Yael Korat

FOR HIS BAR-MITZVAH PARTY IN 2004, MY BROTHER WROTE A RAP SONG in Hebrew describing what it's like to live with us, his family, and celebrating his rite of passage. We performed the song together in front of dozens of guests, backing my brother up for the chorus as he rapped and tried a little break-dancing with his hip hop baggy pants and basketball jersey to the sounds of one of Subliminal and the Shadow's latest hits. The performance received loud applause. The star of the evening was initiated to his coming of age and we were initiated to the popularity of Israeli hip hop.

A product of African heritage and American culture, originating in the 1970s Bronx, hip hop initially depicted ghetto-life hardships, expressed African-Americans' deep frustrations and celebrated inner-city party culture.<sup>1</sup> By the 1990s, however, hip hop's international outreach had extended far beyond its original African-American context as it became a popular global medium of self-representation and empowerment. Indeed, today scratching, graffiti, hip hop fashion, dance and rap music can be found in different countries around the world. Rappers from France, South Africa and Japan<sup>2</sup> rap in their respective languages about local and national life-experiences and social concerns. White English kids from New Castle rhyme about Brown Ale as a cause for local problems,<sup>3</sup> Franco-Maghribis articulate a complex immigrant identity confronted with French racism

and Muslim fundamentalism,<sup>4</sup> and Italian posse rap in regional dialects to censure the corrupt Christian Democratic government.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than erasing local culture as a process of Americanization or McDonaldization, as hip hop gets heavily disseminated through the mass media, this once-local-now-global phenomenon has been translated to fit the circumstances of those who choose to employ it. It serves as a clear example of the process of glocalization, or of complex “global flows” of ethnoscaping, mediascaping, and ideoscaping that construct the social imagination and inform cultural identities.<sup>6</sup> With democracy as a global “master term,”<sup>7</sup> different groups aim to define themselves in terms of nation and ethnicity, to enhance the construction of a state or to oppose it, and to freely express diverse opinions.<sup>8</sup>

So how do rappers imagine Israel? Who is included and who is excluded in their representation? What are their concerns? How are these concerns expressed in their lyrics or image? What identity do they represent? Through answering these questions I will assess the extent to which Israeli hip hop is a democratic tool used to express the diverse cultural identities of Israel.

For the purpose of this paper, Israeli hip hop can be seen as divided into two camps: mainstream and minorities. While the mainstream is preoccupied with national identity and the secular side of the Jewish Israeli story, minority rappers focus on the social or institutional Israeli oppression and racism that they experience by highlighting their ‘ethnic’ identity or regional home-town identity more than the national one. This paper offers a close reading of examples from a selection of principle actors in the Israeli hip hop field. Among these are prominent mainstream Jewish Israeli rappers as well as three Arab Israeli rappers, and an Ethiopian Jewish rapper. The first aim is to give a general scope of the different identities expressed by hip hop in the Israeli context to show how it allows for a cross-section representation. The second is to present a nuanced interpretation and analysis of exemplary lyrics and visuals in order to provide a glimpse of the nature of this specific form of representation.

## THE ORIGINS OF ISRAELI HIP HOP

The Israeli version of hip-hop as a musical genre began in the 1990s when the rock band “Shabak Samech” started to rap in Hebrew. Shabak Samech’s Beastie-Boys-style songs focused on fun, party and sex. Like the early days of American “old school” hip hop, they endorsed self-aggrandizing lyrics like this refrain from a 1995 hit: “Shabak Samech is an empire/See how all the females get hysterical.”<sup>9</sup> A video-clip of the song shows the band members in hip hop clothes walking in a dusty Israeli street with a lot of young people having a good time around them as they jump on cars and smash a window for fun.<sup>10</sup> If they represented an Israeli identity, it would be that of middle-class secular youth with a taste for global mass media. It was cool, trendy and rocking. It was not political.

By 2004, Hebrew-language Israeli hip hop embraced a trend of social commentary. It was common to hear a rap song about “the Israeli situation” on Galgalaz, the popular music station of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) or to see Israeli rappers on television talk shows and children’s programs. The three best known artists in this mainstream hip hop scene are Mook E, an ex-member of the now-defunct Shabak Samech whose music leans more towards reggae than rap, HaDag Nachash, a Jerusalem-based band which consists of seven members lead by MC Shaanan Street, and the rapper Subliminal, who created the label TACT Family (meaning Tel-Aviv CiTy), which promotes Israeli hip hop. Singing about inequality, political corruption, questions of national identity, the hardships of war, and the hope for peace among other Israeli and personal concerns, these rappers represent their mainstream audience, which comprises Israeli secular Jews, to a large extent.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, at least two Israeli minority groups are known to have representative rappers: Ethiopian Jewish immigrants, most of whom arrived to Israel after 1990, and Israeli Arabs, Palestinians who stayed in Israel after the 1948 war and became Israeli citizens. These rappers criticize Israeli racism and represent counter-hegemonic resistance as they express their ethnic identity through language and music. Jeremy Cool

Habash, for example, an Ethiopian Jewish rapper and “graduate of yeshiva, a Jewish religious Orthodox school system,” raps in both Hebrew and Amharic about his Ethiopian Jewish heritage and the frustrations of many Ethiopian Jews in Israel who live in low-socioeconomic areas.<sup>12</sup> Habash also created a hip hop seminar with the goal of empowering Ethiopian immigrant youths to cultivate their cultural heritage, thus further encouraging an Israeli-Ethiopian hip hop scene.<sup>13</sup> Israeli Arab rappers like DAM, SAZ and MWR<sup>14</sup> all rap in Arabic and incorporate a heavier Middle Eastern musical style than the Israeli mainstream hip hop does. Rapping since 1998, DAM uses hip hop music as a platform for political protest, rapping in Hebrew and English in addition to Arabic.<sup>15</sup> SAZ, from the Jewish Arab mixed city of Ramle, fuses Arabic and Hebrew, collaborates with Israeli Jewish rappers like Sagol 59 and HaDag Nachash<sup>16</sup> and performs at peace activism demonstrations.<sup>17</sup> His music and biography were documented by a Jewish Israeli director in *SAZ: The Palestinian Rapper for Change*.<sup>18</sup> MWR, an Israeli Arab group from Akko, rap in Arabic only, making their music significantly less accessible to most Israelis. Nonetheless, their Arabic-language song “Because I’m an Arab,” about Israeli police harassment, became a local radio hit in Haifa, one of Israel’s largest mixed cities.<sup>19</sup>

## Israeli Hip Hop and National Identity

In *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*, Motti Regev and Edwin Seroussi describe five variants of Israeliness: Hebrewism (‘Ivriut) or traditional Israeliness, globalized Israeliness, Mizrahiyut (Orientalism) or ethnic Israeliness, religious Israeliness and Israeli Palestinianness or Palestinian Israeliness.<sup>20</sup> Regev and Edwin explain that much of national culture in Israel, in general and in music specifically, deals with the vexing question of Israeli identity. Interestingly, they also note that Israel’s intense national identity construction and the invention of its popular traditions coincided with the intensification of globalization processes that undermine it.<sup>21</sup> Music, from their account, is an important part of the col-

lective imagination and identity of the Israeli nation that challenge the metanarratives or hegemonic constructions of national identity.

Contrary to prototypical rappers, Shabak Samech, Mook E, HaDag Nachash, and Subliminal represent mainstream Israeli popular culture rather than marginal identities or voices of oppressed minorities. Non-mainstream Israeli hip hop artists are more likely to address specific local issues, depicting life in a certain town for example, or the hardship of being minorities. Generally, the content of Israeli mainstream hip hop is preoccupied with national problems from the Jewish Israeli secular perspective, while minority rappers express a resistant, counter-hegemonic perspective.

Mainstream Israeli hip hop is preoccupied with Zionism and national identity. “HaDag Nachash is making Zionist Hip Hop” is the band’s well-known hit refrain. Mook E sings: “This is the Zionist-educational rap/ That’s my word.”<sup>22</sup> Subliminal frequently defines himself and his label as Zionist Hip Hop in explicitly nationalistic terms. At the same time, most of these rappers also represent a globalized identity as they adhere to ideas of peace, love, reggae culture, using materials from American and popular culture with an imagined global community in mind. But Israeli rap is not limited to a celebration of Israeli nationalism; it also challenges Israeli identity in general, and its Zionist core specifically. This is especially the case with Israeli Arab rappers, like DAM, who articulates a bold resistance to Zionism by accusing Israeli policies of racial discrimination and inequality. More often than not, Israeli Arab rappers emphasize their local identity as residents of specific Israeli towns, or their allegiance to hip hop as an African American inspired global tool for expression of oppression, in place of highlighting their national identity as Israelis.

#### REPRESENTATION OF ISRAEL IN “THE STICKER SONG/*SHIRAT HA*STICKER” AND “BORN HERE/*KAN*NOLADETI”

HaDag Nachash’s famous sticker song attempts to democratically include many of the diverse and contradicting political opinions of the Israeli

public. The lyrics and music string together the diverse bumper stickers commonly found on Israeli cars.<sup>23</sup> These bumper sticker slogans become representative of various cultural identities or factions within Israeli society whose opinions they express.<sup>24</sup> In a virtuosic technique of social winks and puns, highly regarded novelist and peace activist David Grossman, who wrote the song's lyrics for the band, manages to both comically entertain many Israeli listeners and to subtly criticize their opinionated aggressiveness by calling for compassion. The song creates an absurd bricolage of contradicting beliefs: religious Jewish sayings about the messiah or blessing God, pro-peace, left-wing, and right-wing statements, army combat units' pride slogans, anti-Arab proclamations (like "Death to the Arabs"), and anti-Orthodox Jews slogans.<sup>25</sup> The song, like the bumper stickers, exercises democracy by engaging in a pluralistic political debate in which citizens can publicly articulate their views or demands. However, it also protests against the abundant hate expressed in most of these beliefs, as it strings together two slogans in the refrain: "How much evil can be swallowed? Father have mercy!"

Another song by HaDag Nachash tries to trace the roots of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It describes the beginning of the century as a time of two peoples fighting and maintains that the situation remains unchanged until the present moment. Implying that neither group has not learned from the past nor that both should learn to get along in peaceful ways, the song goes:

In Palestine-Israel in the beginning of the century  
There lived several tribes on the same land  
They differed from one another in religion and language  
The relationship between them wasn't too good  
They blamed each other in all their troubles  
They were suspicious of each other and argued over borders  
They cried a lot of tears on a sea of victims  
And didn't learn anything, nothing has changed.<sup>26</sup>

Using the distancing word "they" both Palestinians and Israelis are included in an external perspective. "They" are presented with equal

blame, suffering equally from the tragedies of war. Beginning the account from the start of the century avoids the problem of dealing with the arrival of Jews to the land and departure of Palestinians as refugees after 1948. Maintaining that the war between Israelis and Palestinians has endured from antiquity renders the situation hopeless and dehistoricizes the political context, distancing the memory of historical periods of positive cooperation and collaboration between Arabs and Jews in Israel and abroad. However, these lyrics also attempt to portray a land with “several tribes” in a tone that highlights their equal rights. The word “tribes,” with its biblical connotation in the Israeli context, alludes to the Jewish claim on the land, and allows Jews to assert themselves as indigenous to Israel since biblical times. Thus, this song highlights the tension in Israeli society, especially experienced by the left wing, between the Zionist claim of the land with its anti-Arab sentiments and the idealist aspiration for peace that will enable equal rights for both peoples.

While HaDag Nachash certainly tackled the loaded subject of Israeli Palestinian relations with special care, they did not express an explicit critique that fundamentally questioned Israeli mainstream sentiment. In contrast, Israeli Arab group DAM delivers its political messages overtly as it articulates the specific oppression experiences by Palestinians in the town of Lod. DAM’s song “*Kan Noladeti*,” which means in Hebrew “I was born *here*,”<sup>27</sup> echoes the words of a highly patriotic Israeli popular song played in a 1980s Eurovision contest. It connected Jews to the land of Israel with the refrain “*Here* I was born, *here* were all my children born, *here* I built my home with my own two hands,” and so on. Using the title “Born Here” as Israeli Arabs, DAM members assert their own claim to the land of birth and with it a claim to their democratic rights as Israeli citizens and humanitarian rights as Palestinians in a Jewish nation.

#### SUBLIMINAL’S NATIONALISTIC ZIONIST HIP HOP

Subliminal has developed for himself and his label, the TACT Family, a style of pathos and glorification of Israel in an attempt to empower

the audience with Zionist pride.<sup>28</sup> For example, in 2003, on Israel's 55th Independence Day celebration, channel 2 broadcasted Subliminal's show as the headliner of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) hits-parade, a patriotic mainstream event.<sup>29</sup> Together with other TACT Family rappers, Subliminal rapped his song "*Hatikva*," (The Hope) bearing the same title as the Israeli national anthem. Entering the stage through a giant Star of David gate, their keyboard placed on the Israeli flag, Subliminal donned a white-and-blue (the national colors) basketball jersey and sang: "Together we'll survive/Separated we'll fall" to a cheering crowd of soldiers and civilians. The song describes the tragedy of dying soldiers encouraging the audience to have "hope," "dreams" and "love" within them, yet also suggesting that "A strong people, we won't fold/Because the son of a bitch that would stop Israel wasn't born." With a prayer-like verse about the acceptance of hardships and aspiration for strength, the refrain challenges listeners to continue with daily life and be hopeful.

While very popular among many in Israel, Subliminal is often accused by others of being fascist because of his style, lyrics and political opinions. Indeed, Subliminal is preoccupied only with one side of the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Employing a nationalistic emphasis coupled with fascist aesthetic elements, he encourages Jewish Israelis to be strong in their everyday "battle of survival" and to nurture hope for a time of peace when soldiers would not return home dead and civilians would not die in the streets by terrorist attacks. While on the one hand the attainment of peace is a crucial concern in his songs, he entirely ignores the other side of the story, that is, the Palestinians who suffer destruction and death because of the Israeli armed forces and internal and external political policies. Subliminal's imagined Israel is solely a Jewish state, thus excluding its Israeli Arab citizens and adhering to a nationalistic version of Zionism rather than highlighting the democratic, pluralistic principle of equal rights.

When asked about the criticism against him, Subliminal responded: "The lyrics are we (Israelis) should never be divided again. Only together will we survive and maintain Israel. What is so wrong with that?"<sup>30</sup> He

explains that he belongs to the right-wing and many people (read: Israeli left-wing) are opposed to his opinions but even they hold that he should express his views because that is his right.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless, it is important to note here that Subliminal had also supported Tamer Nafar, the Israeli Arab MC from DAM in his first foray into music. Their relationship and their political disagreement, no doubt, lead to their separation and has been documented in the film *Channels of Rage*,<sup>32</sup> but it can be argued that Subliminal plays a more complex role in this story than simply that of a fascist representing the right-wing.

### (POST?) ZIONIST AND ANTI-ZIONIST HIP HOP

Through parody and subversion hip hop style, HaDag Nachash expresses criticism of Israeli history classes, broadening the possibilities of Israeli identity beyond Zionism. One of the group's favorite radio hits, "Gabi and Debi," features the most well known refrain "HaDag Nachash is making Zionist Hip Hop"<sup>33</sup> in a fun-lovin' funky rhythm. The song alludes to two key Zionist figures—Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl and Joseph Trumpeldor—in a critically humorous way that challenges Zionists myths with contemporary Israeli truths. In this imaginary meeting, the speaker in the song tells the state visionary, Herzl, about the "details of the hard reality of Israel," like road accidents, the handicapped strike, high unemployment and corrupt politicians. The song describes the military leader Trumpeldor spitting green goo and distorts his famous slogan by changing "It is good to die for our country" to "It is good to spit on our country." Thus, the group articulates an anti-militant anti-nationalist attitude that differs from earlier Zionism and from the nationalistic attitude expressed by Subliminal.

In the 1990s there was an ongoing debate to re-define Zionism *vis-à-vis* its contradictions with basic ideas of democracy. This "reexamination of the so called major narrative of Zionism" is referred to as the Post-Zionism debate.<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, one online review of Hadag Nachash's concert asserted that the group does their part to re-define Zionism:

What is this Zionist hip hop that Hadag Nachash offers? Zionism as you studied in history classes in high school? People with beards who wanted to create a state? Well people, the state exists and it doesn't seem like it will disappear, and now we are left to wonder what is this state exactly? A place to live in? A place to die in? And if to live here, then for what?<sup>35</sup>

In this respect, it seems that the lyrics of HaDag Nachash reflect a process of reassessment of Israeli national identity. As Regev and Seroussi explain, one of the implications of the post-Zionist debates was “that the commitment to Israeliness as a national culture is being eroded and is even disappearing.”<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless they assert that “whether these new phenomena will indeed undermine the commitment to Israeliness as an underlying doxa has yet to be seen.”<sup>37</sup> Zionism, re-defined or not, is still the “underlying doxa” of Israeli culture, but hip hop certainly manages to engage in the social debates that questions it.

Like HaDag Nachash, DAM challenges Zionism, though operating outside of the hip hop mainstream as Israeli Arabs, and their lyrics and images are distinctly more subversive. Responding to the same symbolic figure, father of Zionism Benjamin Ze'ev Herzl, DAM attacks Zionist idealism with Palestinian Israeli hard truths. For example, in “*Kan Noladeti*,” DAM's lyrics subversively manipulate Herzl's image and motto in order to shatter the Zionist myth of equality. The prototypical picture of the solemn European visionary depicts him leaning on a porch, passionately contemplating the future creation of a Jewish democratic state, captioned with his famous Zionist slogan: “If you will it, it is no legend.” To this DAM responds, “I have a belief in the ‘If-you-will-it-it-is no-legend’-regime/You didn't even leave me a porch to stand on and proclaim it.”<sup>38</sup> The European image of the Zionist leader leaning on a porch to dream his empowering utopian Jewish dream, questionably realized in 1948, is ironically contrasted here with the porchlessness, or homelessness, of many Israeli Palestinians, which is caused by Zionist driven policies. DAM's lyrics thus insist on juxtaposing the cause of injustice with the utopian dream of justice to expose the inherent contradiction of Israeli democracy

in ideals v. practice. Indeed, the group articulates this problem artistically through hip hop: while Herzl envisioned a utopian socialist Jewish state in which Arabs and Jews would be equal,<sup>39</sup> the predicament of contemporary Israel is drastically removed from it.

Public-Enemy-style, DAM boldly accuses the Israeli government and police of racism and demands to be heard and treated equally.<sup>40</sup> The video for “*Kan Noladeti*”<sup>41</sup> shows the group members harassed by Israeli police and images of Palestinian houses ruined by Israeli tractors as they rap about unjust state policies that oppress them in everyday life. Their lyrics double as direct political critique with lines like “It’s not Zionism, it’s racism” that specifically target the city and government racism, as in the following verse:

It’s just that the city didn’t care for the Arabs  
Because the government has a wish:  
Maximum Jews—on maximum land  
Minimum Arabs—on minimum land  
This house didn’t get approved by the law  
And you will not erase! <sup>42</sup>

This verse, like many others in the song, exposes the loaded issue of Israeli territorial expansion and neglect of Arab residential areas to open debate and protestation. Though they sing in Hebrew so that their message reaches Israelis—“you”—the refrain of this particular song is in their mother tongue, Arabic. Through rap, they try to reach the Israeli public to protest against inequality as they are empowered by artistic self-expression.

Interestingly, the production of the song, the video clip, and DAM’s international tours were funded by the “Mixed Cities Project” of Shatil, an organization affiliated with the New Israeli Fund. The project encourages civil society activity in Israeli cities of mixed Palestinians and Israeli populations.<sup>43</sup> The project’s website and the small print following the clip state that “the song’s lyrics reflect the artists’ standpoint and not necessarily the standpoint of the project partners—Shatil and the European Union.” Thus, in a democratic fashion, an Israeli organization empowers

DAM to express their oppositional opinions and to disseminate them nationally and internationally despite the latter's anti-Zionist stance. Valuing civil rights more than Jewish allegiance marks this as a post-Zionist act rather than a Zionist one. This highlights the tension between Israel as a democratic state and as a Jewish state, which has been the underlying and inherent contradiction of values at the core of Israeli statehood from its inception.

IN THIS ESSAY I HAVE EXAMINED ISRAELI HIP HOP AS A DEMOCRATIC TOOL for the expression of cultural identities. I have shown how hip hop as a global genre is employed by Israeli rappers to represent various Israeli identities in local terms. Specifically, rappers sing in Hebrew or Arabic, using local slang as well as biblical language or style and borrowing religious or national symbols and material from popular culture. Hip hop serves as a common aesthetic platform for a spectrum of political opinions and local perspectives. Thus hip hop gives a voice to Zionism, post-Zionism and anti-Zionism. In doing so, in the Israeli context, music proves capable of strengthening national identity even as it empowers resistance.

Israeli hip hop engages the question of identity, which has preoccupied previous Israeli musical genres as well. The question remains: what does it mean to be Israeli today? In some cases, especially in Israeli Arab rap, the focus is on the more localized identity of specific Israeli towns. Israeli hip hop is tied up with the construction of national identity on the one hand, and the expression of frustration felt by Israeli minorities, on the other.

The more explicitly political and local the songs are, the more they seem to adhere to 'authentic protest hip hop,' as a form of specific uprising against oppression rather than a general call for equality or justice reggae/hippie style: "make love not war" isn't as specific as saying 'the Israeli police stops me because I am an Arab.' Hip hop as an art form has the function of empowerment through articulation. In exercising freedom of speech and disseminating the music to a wide, even global audience,

Israeli hip hop is democratic. Nevertheless, the question of access remains crucial: who is listening to the voice of protest? To what extent does each community use the genre to strengthen its own identity *vis-à-vis* the other, and to what extent is there a (real) dialogue, enabled by the articulation of diverse voices? Future studies may also wish to focus on the conflicts and collaborations among Israeli rappers from various factions of Israeli society and perhaps to assess its impact as a catalyst for change. For now, what is certain is that in the Israeli social context, hip hop has been used by a cross-section of Israeli culture to address national concerns of both mainstream and minority groups, blending a local identity with a global aesthetic of artistic expression. If only politics echoed art, in this case, it seems, equal rights and true democracy would not be merely the stuff of legend. ❀

## NOTES

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6 Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996), 27-47.

7 Appadurai, 37.

8 Ibid., 37-38.

9 These lyrics, and all subsequent lyrics have been translated from Hebrew by Yael Korat. Shabak Samech, "Emperia," *Shabak*, (NMC Music Ltd., 1997).

- 10 Shabak Samech, "Emperia," *You Tube* video clip, added May 30th 2007. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVAhd7X6tJc>>
- 11 Other, less famous Israeli rappers include Sagol 59, Kele 6, SHI 360, Fishi Hagadol, and Quami De La Fox to name a few. See Neal Ungerleider, "Levantine Hip-Hop 101 Who's Who in the Middle East Rap Game," *Slate Magazine Online*, <<http://www.slate.com/id/2147822/>> (18 Aug 2006).
- 12 Loolwa Khazzoom, "Israelies Using Hip-hop Music to Express their Cultural Identities," *The Boston Globe*, <[http://www.boston.com/ae/music/articles/2004/01/04/israeli\\_rappers\\_prove\\_hip\\_hop\\_will\\_translate\\_to\\_any\\_language/](http://www.boston.com/ae/music/articles/2004/01/04/israeli_rappers_prove_hip_hop_will_translate_to_any_language/)> (4 Jan 2004).
- 13 "Youth Torn Between Two Worlds of Rap," trans. Idit Avrahami and Omer Barak from the Hebrew title "How Will the Ethiopian Community Look? It Depends to Which Rapper You Listen," *Haaretz News*, <<http://www.tharwaproject.com/node/1277>> (14 Jan 2005).
- 14 DAM stands for Da Arab MCs and means *blood* both in Hebrew and in Arabic. SAZ are the initials of MC Samech Zakout. MWR are the initials of the members' first-names: Mahmoud, Wassim, and Richard.
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- 19 Jason Keyser, "Israeli Arabs Adopt Rap: Groups Use Music to Send a Message of Social Protest," *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, <<http://www.jsonline.com>> (13 July 2002).
- 20 See Moti Regev and Edwin Seroussi, "A Short Introduction to Israeli Culture," *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*, (Berkeley: U of California P, 2004), 15-25.
- 21 Bar Haim cited in Regev and Seroussi, 19.
- 22 Shabak Samech, "Al Tagidu Li/Don't Tell Me" and "Be'Atifat Mamtak/Sweet Wrapping" (NMC Records, 1997).
- 23 HaDag Nachash, "Shirat HaSticker/The Sticker Song," *Chomer Me'komi/Local Stuff*, (Hed Artzi Records, 2003).

- 24 The clip of this song, like the bumper stickers, presents a cross section of prototypical Israeli characters singing the slogans—an orthodox Jew, a woman settler with a baby, a macho-male, a cop, an Israeli woman soldier, an Arab, a secular Israeli, a religious Jew, an Israeli rapper, an Ethiopian-Israeli soldier, a suicide bomber, a businessman, a showgirl/prostitute and a rasta-man. The slogans become further parodied when they are sung by a character against which they protest. For example, the suicide-bomber sings: “No Arabs, no terror.” While the clip includes representation of two Arab prototypes—a suicide bomber (man with dynamite on his body) and a man wearing a kaffiyah, the slogans themselves do not represent Israeli-Arabs at all. HaDag Nachash, “The Sticker Song/*Shirat HaSticker*,” *You Tube*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Omt29oQe5RI>>
- 25 For example, the bumper sticker “mandatory enlistment to everyone” is the political demand directed by secular Jews at Orthodox Jews who do not serve the obligatory army term yet influence much of Israel’s foreign policy.
- 26 HaDag Nachash, “*Be’reshit*/In the Beginning or Gensis,” *Chomer Me’komi/Local Stuff* (Hed Artzi Records, 2003).
- 27 The official title of the song in English is “Born Here.” I have emphasized the word ‘here’ since in Hebrew it is emphasized by being first linguistically: “Here Born.” In Hebrew, both word orders are grammatically correct, so the choice of using *Kan* first emphasizes it.
- 28 Subliminal frequently uses Zionist-national signs like the Israeli flag, its blue-and-white colors, or the Star of David abundantly in his artwork and on stage. One of his album features a fist emerging from the mud holding a Star of David pendant (*Haor Ve’HaTezel/The Light and the Shadow*, (Helicon Records, 2002)). Another album is titled *Ha’Or MeTzion/The Light from Zion*, (Helicon Records, 2000).
- 29 Subliminal and The Shadow, “*Tikva*/Hope Live” *You Tube*, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45DO58ELXvI>>
- 30 Universal Sea, “‘Israel’s Eminem’ Wins Fans, Angers Critics,” *U Magazine Online*, <<http://www.universalmetropolis.com/magazine/articles.php?article='Israel's+Eminem'+wins+fans%2C+angers+critics>> (5 Dec 2003).
- 31 Universal Sea.
- 32 *Channels of Rage/Arotzim Shel Za’am*, Anat Halchmi, dir. (2003).
- 33 Other rappers have also used this term to identify their music, as previously noted: Gabi and Debi, *LaZooz/To Move*, (Hed Artzi Records, 2003).
- 34 Regev and Seroussi, 25.
- 35 David, “Nitzanim Groove (Iam, HaDag Nachash, Tea Packs),” *Qube.co.il Website*, <[http://www.qube.co.il/liveshow\\_rev.asp?sid=&aid=87&ar\\_id](http://www.qube.co.il/liveshow_rev.asp?sid=&aid=87&ar_id)>
- 36 Regev and Seroussi, 25.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 To clarify, my *interpretation* of this line is: I believe in Zionism, and the democratic

dream of Herzl of the Jewish utopian state, which includes me in it, but you, Israeli-Jews and Israel as a state, do not enable me to even have the basic right of having my own home, let alone a porch, or a voice to proclaim my belief, be it patriotic or not. Also note the choice of the word “regime” which makes the critique of state-power explicit.

39 Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land/Altneuland*, Lotta Levensohn, trans. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co. and Herzl Press, 1960). <<http://www.hagshama.org.il/en/resources/view.asp?id=1600>>

40 For the analysis of song lyrics and video clips by veteran old school American rappers like Public Enemy and KRS One against police harassment of African Americans read Tricia Rose’s “Prophets of Rage” in *Black Noise*.

41 A clip of “Born Here,” directed by Israeli-Arab Julian Marr, is available on *YouTube*: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIo6lyP9tTE>> DAM’s Official Website is <<http://www.dampalestine.com>>

42 Ibid.

43 “Kanoladeti,” *Shatil Website* <<http://www.shatil.org.il/site/static.asp?apd=39>>