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When Hip-Hop Shoots with Two Kanons: Lotfi's Hip-Hop Poetry through an Algerian Mother Tongue

Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive exploration of the profound impact of hip-hop and its expressive medium, rap music, in addressing a diverse array of societal challenges spanning their historical trajectory. It advocates for the rightful recognition of rap as an autonomous and distinctive art form, shedding light on its complex association with poetry, while emphasizing the imperative to perceive them as distinct yet interwoven creative spheres. Additionally, the study delves into the concept of "mother tongue," offering a brief examination both of its broader connotations and, notably, those within the unique context of Algeria. Moreover, in a landscape where neither rap music nor Algerian *dāriğa* enjoy official endorsement as established forms, this research employs linguistic and poetic analyses to unveil the genuine essence of both through Algerian rap music. Ultimately, this type of music serves as a compelling testament to the remarkable evolution of rap into a poetic medium, while Algerian Darja emerges as an autonomous and distinctive linguistic creation in its own right. Collectively, they exemplify the enduring and transformative potential of artistic expression in transcending boundaries and redefining established norms.

Keywords: Lotfi Double Kanon, rap, hip-hop, Algerian *dāriğa*, poetry

1. The Emergence of Hip-Hop Culture in the 1970s

In the 1970s, after the failures of the campaign for civil rights, the underprivileged African-American communities went through a period of disillusionment.[1] In New York, and the South Bronx in particular, the streets "were marked by an unprecedented growth of street gangs."[2] The latter were directly connected to the early hip-hop movement. Despite enduring challenging circumstances, a generation of mostly Black and Brown youngsters developed a lively culture based on speech, song, art, and movement. Therefore, rap emerged as the representative of this culture, expressing its vitality and inventiveness through rhythmic performances.[3]

1.1. Differentiating Hip-Hop from Rap

Before delving further into the background, clarifying the distinction between hip-hop and rap is crucial, as these terms are often conflated and used interchangeably. Hip-hop serves as a comprehensive category encompassing various elements, including rapping, graffiti art, B-boying (breakdancing), and DJing.[4] This perspective positions rap as merely one component within the broader context of hip-hop culture, rather than an equivalent term. As Baker aptly suggests, "Rap is part of a larger culture, while hip-hop is the culture itself."[5] Contrary to prevailing belief, it is important to note that hip-hop music should not be exclusively linked to rap music. Instead, it extends its influence across diverse musical genres, including blues (R&B), soul, funk, jazz, and rock and roll.[6] To support this point, Bradley and DuBois argue that individuals often associate rap with "commercialized music" and hip-hop with "the sounds of the underground."[7] They substantiate their argument by quoting KRS, a rapper and music producer, who states, "Rap music is something we do, but hip-hop is

[1] Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination*, New York 2016, p. 5.

[2] Martin Lamotte, 'Rebels Without a Pause: Hip-hop and Resistance in the City', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (2014), p. 687. https:// DOI:10.1111/1468-2427.12087.

[3] Gates, Henry Louis, CHUCK D, and Common. *The Anthology of Rap*. Edited by Adam Bradley and Andrew Dubois, New Haven 2010, pp. xxx–xxxi.

[4] Soren Baker, *The History of Rap and Hip-Hop*, Michigan 2012, p. 8.

[5] Ibidem, p. 9.

[6] Ibidem.

[7] Gates, Henry Louis, CHUCK D, and Common. *The Anthology of Rap*, ed. Adam Bradley and Andrew Dubois, New Haven 2010.

something we live."[8] Additionally, Bogazianos further asserts that some individuals tend to perceive rap in a somewhat "pejorative" light, while they regard hip-hop as "more pure, organic, and authentic."[9] In simpler terms, it is imperative to recognize that rap represents merely a fragment of the broader cultural phenomenon known as hip-hop. Thus, these two terms should not be employed interchangeably.

1.2. Rap's Universal Evolution: From Ancient Roots to Global Influence

According to Bradley and DuBois, rap can be defined as "an iconoclastic spirit, and a virtuosic sense of wordplay" that has a "long-standing practice in the African American oral tradition" and is indeed "the poetry of hip-hop."[10] Rap, characterized by its bold and occasionally explicit auditory content, serves as an emancipatory platform for marginalized individuals, empowering them to vocalize their suppressed perspectives and exercise their right to self-expression. This liberating ethos prevalent in hip-hop culture and rap songs can be attributed to a rich history of artistry. Throughout human history, artistic expression has served as a vital channel for conveying emotions that may otherwise prove challenging to articulate. Artists often draw inspiration from their predecessors, forging novel forms of expression that evoke profound sentiments. In the case of rap music, its distinctive essence can be traced back to its influences, which, as Bradley and DuBois assert, extend beyond the African Diaspora to encompass musical traditions such as jazz, blues, funk, gospel, and reggae.[11]

This form of music not only draws inspiration from contemporary Western musical traditions, but it also traces its roots to ancient civilizations, levels of consciousness, and religious ideologies. Friedel Wiedemann, in his doctoral thesis exploring Arabism in Arab(ic) rap, contends that this kind of rap is often described as "conscious," drawing significant influence from the "US Black nationalist movement, the Black Power movement of the 1960s, and from Afrocentrist ideas focusing on a shared Black cultural heritage in Africa and especially in ancient Egypt."[12] In a similar vein of thought, who would have ever thought that such expressions as "word", "what's up, G?," and "peace" were Islamic themes and symbols implemented in rap culture, which influenced the

[8] Ibidem.

[9] Dimitri A. Bogazianos, *5 Grams Crack Cocaine, Rap Music, and the War on Drugs*, New York, p. 59.

[10] Gates, Henry Louis, CHUCK D, and Common. *The Anthology of Rap*, p. xxiv.

[11] Ibidem, p. xxx.

[12] Felix Friedel, 'Wiedemann, 'Arabism in Arab(ic) Rap Local Languages, Translocal References and Virtual Networks' (PhD diss., University of Bamberg), p. 30. https://doi.org/10.20378/irb-51714.

"hip hop lexicon and that of mainstream America."[13] The rap culture of the 1970s experienced profound influences from various movements, including those mentioned earlier. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant impact of Islam during this period. One noteworthy instance is the prominent presence of the Nation of Islam in numerous rap songs, with figures like Malcolm X and Louis Farrakhan frequently being quoted in lyrics.[14] Like a celestial melody traversing continents, the Islamic influence in rap transcended borders, echoing with resonant power amidst the enclaves of minority rap communities in Germany and France. For instance, France embraced the musical genre of rap a decade after its prolific expansion within the United States.[15] Mielusel contends that "this American cultural heritage of revolutionary Islamic rap transmitted to French rap [can be] identified … with the ideas of Muslim movements such as Nation of Islam or Black Panthers Party."[16]

This sudden but quick proliferation of rap music filled with Islamic themes and symbols is not a coincidence. Many reasons can be attributed to the widespread of rap in countries with Muslim minorities. Friedel Wiedemann's perspective on this phenomenon posits that the proliferation of Sunni Muslim rappers can be interpreted as a deliberate and thoughtful response aimed at challenging the constructs of racial privilege and White hegemony.[17] The widespread prevalence and swift ascent of rap music are not mere coincidences; instead, they prompt a thought-provoking inquiry: How did this cultural phenomenon attain such rapid momentum?

Remarkably, the structure, melody, and rhythm of rap possess an astonishing universality that transcends linguistic boundaries. A striking consistency of themes persists across a myriad of diverse songs, bridging cultural divides and uniting diverse communities through shared narratives. Bradley and DuBois expound this in terms of universality as they claim that this "form of expression [is] governed by a set of conventions available to all."[18] They also posit that rap can be "embraced by people of all races and nations" and that "it is now the lingua franca of global youth culture, varied in its expressions but rooted

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[13] SpearIt. *American Prisons: A Critical Primer on Culture and Conversion to Islam*, Florida 2017, p. 74.

[14] Henry Louis Gates, CHUCK D, and Common. *The Anthology of Rap*, p. 128.

[15] David Yesaya, '(P)raising Islam: When French Muslim Rapper Advocate for Peace, Love, and Unity in a Multicultural France', in: *Artistic (Self)-Representations of Islam and Muslims*, ed. Ramona Mielusel, Los Angles 2021, p. 168.

[16] Ibidem.

[17] Felix Friedel, 'Wiedemann. Arabism in Arab(ic) Rap Local Languages, Translocal References and Virtual Networks'.

[18] Henry Louis Gates, CHUCK D, and Common, *The Anthology of Rap*, p. xxx.

in a common past."[19] The rapid and widespread rise of rap music stands as a testament to its universal appeal, enduring impact on global youth culture, and the universality of its narrative.

1.3. Exploring Rap's Poetic Potential

1.3.1. Rap as a Modern Artistic Force

The exploration of poetry within rap songs remains relatively limited in academic scholarship. Among the few that apply this perspective, such as *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* and Ishmael Reed's *From Totems to Hip Hop*, they do so in a representative fashion. While books like *Flocabulary's Shakespeare Is Hip Hop* and Alan Sitomer and Michael Cirelli's *Hip Hop Poetry and the Classics* provide valuable and engaging resources for teaching canonical poetry to middle school and high school students through rap, they do not delve into the unique poetic tradition of rap itself. In addition, *The Anthology of Rap* by Adam Bradley, Andrew DuBois is one of the best examples of identifying rap and poetry together. Despite the existence of some scholarly books and articles, the issue of poetry in rap songs remains inadequately explored, necessitating further scholarly investigation. This topic holds equal importance to other forms of artistry, demanding our attention and scrutiny. Neglecting it solely due to its association with popular culture would be a disservice, as rap music bears a significant impact.

In an illuminating article penned by Heather E. Bruce and Bryan Dexter Davis, the intersection of hip-hop and poetry takes center stage. The authors shed light on a prevailing sentiment among students, who seemingly "groan" when confronted with traditional poetry in conventional educational settings, finding it inscrutable.[20] Poetry, in essence, comprises words, rhyme, and sound, serving as a medium to captivate audiences and convey messages through beautifully crafted and cleverly written verses. One may wonder how such an art form could ever be deemed boring. The answer, however, lies in the fact that modern students often encounter poetry that seems distant from their own reality, replete with antiquated themes that bear little relevance to their contemporary lives. Furthermore, they perceive poetry as being written for others rather than for themselves, and reading it most often obliges them to carry around a dictionary. Thus, it is evident that many young students, according to

[19] Ibidem.

[20] Heather E. Bruce and Bryan Dexter Davis, 'Slam: Hip-Hop Meets Poetry – A Strategy for Violence Intervention', *The English Journal* 89 (2000), p. 121.

the testimony of the teachers, "see the linguistic enchantment of poetry through rap music and slams without any help."[21] Hence, a compelling argument can be made that rap possesses genuine poetic qualities and incorporates poetic elements within its artistic expression.

1.3.2. Distinguishing Rap from Slam Poetry

Now that it is clear that rap holds a poetic essence in its expression, it should not, however, be conflated with slam poetry. Rap maintains distinct characteristics that may clear the confusion between the two. Rap's roots can be traced back to African-American oral traditions; it found its early beginnings in the South Bronx during the 1970s. Conversely, slam poetry emerged through audience-judged competitions within white working-class Chicago bars during the mid-1980s.[22] Andrew defines rap pieces as "lyric poems organized into verses, the standard length of which is sixteen lines. They are performed most often in rhythm to a beat with a vocal delivery that ranges from sing-song to conversational. Their most distinguishing poetic feature is rhyme."[23] Rap is usually performed in the street, but mostly it can be found in recorded songs. Slam poetry, on the other hand, is performed on the spot with "real-time audience [feedback]."[24] Boudreau asserts that rap should not be conflated with nor "confined to" hip-hop culture, "Slam poetry arose from a poet's vision, not limited to a specific culture."[25]

1.3.3. Shared Poetic Elements: Rap and Poetry

If we separate rap from the backdrop of hip-hop beats, we discover an authentic poetic form. Consequently, we can consider rap as more than just a cultural phenomenon; it can be viewed as a legitimate poetic expression. Wood Brent, in his article "Understanding Rap as Rhetorical Folk-Poetry", conducted a study on the three R's: rhythm, rhyme, and rhetoric as rap's main poetic elements. He argues that "Rap is a contemporary form of the ages-old tradition of folk-poetry and (…) it derives its rhetorical power from a unique use of

[21] Ibidem, p. 123.
[22] Henry Louis Gates, CHUCK D, and Common 'Foreword' in: *The Anthology of Rap*, pp. xxxi–xxxii.
[23] Ibidem, p. xxxi.
[24] Kathryn E. Boudreau, 'Slam Poetry and Cultural Experience for Children', *Forum on Public Policy* 2009 (2009), p. 4.
[25] Ibidem.

rhythm and rhyme."[26] Therefore, rap and poetry share significant similarities, including the following:

- Rhythm: Both rap and poetry rely on rhythm to create a pleasing and engaging flow of words.
- Rhyme: Both art forms utilize rhyme schemes, whether it is end rhymes or internal rhymes, to enhance the musicality of the language.
- Poetic Devices: Rap and poetry employ various poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance, and repetition to create sonic effects.
- Storytelling: Both rap and poetry have a strong narrative element, using vivid imagery and storytelling techniques.
- Wordplay: Both art forms use clever wordplay, incorporating puns, metaphors, similes, etc.
- Artistic Expression: Rap and poetry provide platforms for self-expression.
- Language and Imagery: Both rap and poetry utilize language and imagery to paint vivid pictures.
- Personal and Social Commentary: Both art forms often address personal struggles, social issues, and cultural themes.
- Performance: Both rap and poetry have a performative aspect.

These arguments, however, do not seek to equate rap with traditional poetry. It is well evident that poetry constantly uses more condensed language compared to that of rap. Rather, they contend that rap possesses inherent poetic elements, rendering it a distinctive art form deserving of independent examination. The aim is to advocate for the comprehensive study of rap as a legitimate art form on par with other recognized artistic expressions.

2. Rap and Mother Tongue in Algeria

Algeria, the largest country in Africa and the Arab world, boasts a rich natural landscape and a mosaic of cultures.[27] Its populace is characterized by linguistic diversity, communicating in various languages and dialects, including Standard Arabic, Algerian Derja, French, Tamazight, Cha:wi:, and Twa:reg. This linguistic variety reflects the country's multicultural identity. Amidst this diversity, Algeria's musical traditions thrive, embodying a treasure trove of

[26] Brent Wood. 'Understanding Rap as Rhetorical Folk-Poetry', *An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 32 (1999), p. 130.

[27] Faisal Awawdeh and Arash Nejatian, 'Water Resources and Agriculture in Arab Countries', in: *The Arab World and Latin America Economic and Political Relations in the 21st Century*, ed. Fehmy Saddy, London 2016, p. 245.

talent and heritage. From Rahab in the Aures region to the melodious Kabyle songs, the vibrant Bedouin and Rai music in the west, the soul-stirring Twa:reg music in the south, and the captivating Hawzi, Cha3bi, STa:yfi, and Gnawa genres, the musical landscape of Algeria is as diverse as its people.[28]

During the 1980s, Algeria witnessed the emergence of a novel musical genre known as rap music. Pioneered by Hamidou with his captivating tracks "Ğaula f-'l-lail" (Journey through the Night) and "Sarwāl lūbiya" (Bean Pants), rap in Algeria initially started as a form of mock rap.[29] However, it quickly evolved into a powerful medium for addressing pressing social issues and expressing political perspectives. Among the early groups to adopt this approach were INTIK, Hamma Boys, MBS in Algiers, and Deep Voice in Oran.[30] In the North East, a highly influential group, Double Kanon, set a new standard for rap music in Algeria. Notably, it was Lotfi Double Kanon who carried the torch of rap song and achieved unprecedented success during his era.

2.1. What is the Algerian Mother Tongue?

In Algeria, linguistic diversity reflects the nation's complex history and cultural diversity. Three main languages, Arabic, French, and Darja/*dāriğa* (a variety), intertwine with six distinct dialects, each contributing to the rich linguistic landscape of the country. It is important to note that the classification of these languages and dialects remains a subject of ongoing debate, requiring meticulous research and analysis. Belaid Salah, a Member of the Supreme Council of Arabic Language in Algeria, claims that Darja is what controls verbal communication in Algeria, while Standard Arabic and French are only used by the elite.[31] On the other hand, the local dialects are used depending on their regions. He classifies languages in Algeria as follows:

a) Widespread languages: colloquial, Arabic Darija and its variants
b) Local languages: Berber (Tamazight) and its diverse variants
c) Classical language: standard Arabic and standard French.[32]

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[28] IVAr Algerian-Arabic symbols will be deployed throughout all transcripts.

[29] Felix Friedel, 'Wiedemann. Arabism in Arab(ic) Rap Local Languages, Translocal References and Virtual Networks'.

[30] Hadj Miliani, 'Savoirs inscrits, savoirs prescrits et leur expression symbolique en milieu urbain en Algérie. Le cas du rap', *VEI enjeux* 123 (2000), p. 150. https://doi.org/10.3406/diver.2000.1169.

[31] Salah Belaid, 'El-lugha el-2um, wa al-wa:qi3 el-lughawi fil-jaza:2ir', *El-lugha Al3arabiya*, 5 (2003), p. 135.

[32] Ibidem.

The subject of what constitutes a mother tongue in Algeria is indeed a contentious issue, and different scholars have offered varying definitions. According to Khan, a mother tongue is a language learned before any other language, making it the first language a person acquires during childhood.[33] Pokharel, on the other hand, defines the mother tongue as the first language spoken in the family or the language of the country where a person resides.[34] Applying these definitions to the linguistic context of Algeria, we find a complex and multifaceted situation. Algerians do not solely speak Arabic, French, or Tamazight as their mother tongue. Instead, a melting pot of these languages and their variant dialects creates a unique Algerian language that is "effortlessly" spoken and understood by all citizens "without conscious learning."

The intricate issue of identifying a mother language in Algeria has been a subject of significant debate and contention. Various definitions tied to factors such as origins, politics, religion, populism, linguistics, ideology, and regional considerations have attempted to establish strict criteria for determining what constitutes a language. However, by setting aside these restrictive parameters, including prerequisites like being formally agreed upon in the constitution, having its own script, or being studied in academic settings, we gain a more nuanced understanding of Algeria's linguistic landscape. In doing so, we come to recognize that Algerians, much like their neighbors in Tunisia and Morocco, create a unique mosaic of variant dialects and languages. The illustrative table below demonstrates the different situational uses of each language/dialect in Algeria:

	Languages			Local Dialects					
Domain of Usage	Arabic	Darja	French	Kabyle	Cha:wiya	Mizabya	Chenwiya	Twe:rgiya	ChelHia
Family		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Friends		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Religion	X	X		X	X				
Education	X		X	X		X			
Work		X	X						
Government	X		X						

Note. This table is an excerpt from Prof. Belaid's work, translated from Arabic into English.[35]

[33] Muhammad Tariq Khan and Asad Afzal Humayun and Naseer Ahmed Khan, 'Human Resource Development (HRD) Through Education: Is it Beneficial to Educate in the Mother Tongue', *International Journal of Information, Business and Management* 7 (2015), p. 19.

[34] Katherine O. Bawono and Julia E. Rini, 'The Use of Mother Tongue in General English Program for Teenagers in the Second and Fourth Levels', *K@ta*, 2 (2014), p. 46.

[35] Salah Belaid, 'El-lugha el-2um, w al-wa:qi3 el-lughawi fil-jaza:2ir', *El-lugha Al-3arabiya*, 5 (2003), p. 136.

The table proposed by Professor Salah Belaid presents a theoretical examination of Algeria's sociolinguistic landscape. Although French appears and remains widely utilized in Algeria, I hold reservations concerning its categorization in work settings while excluding Arabic from the same category in a country where the official language is Arabic. Additionally, I contest the classification concerning interactions with family and friends as conducted only in French and Darja. In practice, a hybridization of languages occurs, resulting in an Arabized adaptation of French expressions. For instance, phrases such as "J'ai révisé," (I revised) are often transformed into "révisit," where the French verb stem is conjugated according to Arabic grammar rules, specifically reflecting the "t" in Arabic "ت" in the first person when conjugated in the past simple (see the songs analysis section). While standard Arabic words are indeed used, the classification's applicability may be more accurate in larger northern cities, whereas in the central and southern regions, Arabic, Darja, and various dialects tend to prevail over French. This classification can be further refined or adjusted due to the increased prevalence of English and the reduced use of French in the Algerian milieu. This table can be viewed as a starting point. However, it is important to note that classifying languages and dialects is a complex task, and achieving absolute precision is often elusive.

2.2. The Poetics of Lotfi's Rap

Lotfi Double Kanon, born in 1974 in Annaba, Algeria, is a university graduate who holds a master's degree in geology.[36] Often hailed as the king of Arab rappers, he has amassed an impressive discography with numerous albums to his name. He is well-known for his conscious rap, which not only entertains but also educates and gives a powerful voice to the oppressed. Lotfi has frequently confronted Algeria's social and political climate, delving into taboo subjects through his music, radio appearances, and television shows. He has covered a wide range of subjects, including issues pertaining to not only the Algerians, but most of the Arab and Muslim world.

Politically, Lotfi has written and performed several songs ranging from domestic to international politics. His tracks, such as "Ani Ja:y" (I am Coming), "Ble:d Mi:ki" (Miki Country), "America" and "Kle:b" (Dogs) from the album "Kobay" to "System Wella Fou" (System Became Corrupt) from album "Virus,"

[36] Private, 'Yu3ad al-ab a-rruHi li-fen a-rrap wa ka:na mu3a:ridan min Faransa: masa:dir lil-"3arabi: post": Lotfi Doubke Kanon yasta3id lil-3awda ila-al-jaza:2ir', *3arabi Post*, 2023, Viewed 28 July 2023, للجزائر للعودة كانو دوبل لطفي الراي مغني يستعد |1 (arabicpost.live).

as well as “Palestine,” “Pouvoir” (Power), “Ghazza,” “Nifa:q” (Hypocrisy), and “Rissa:la” (Message) featured in the album “Kle:mi” (My Words), have unveiled corruption among officials, nepotism, and the influence of world superpowers.

In addition to his political songs, Lotfi Double Kanon has taken a strong stand against religious extremism and military fanaticism. A noteworthy example that vividly illustrates his stance is the song “Djiha:d Ibliss” (Jihad of Satan), featured in his album titled “Cauchemar” (Nightmare). On a social level, Lotfi Double Kanon has addressed a spectrum of everyday challenges faced by Algerians. He has used his music to critically examine and discuss issues like adolescent struggles, drug-related problems, relationships, poverty, unemployment, inequality, violence, illegal immigration, and more. These themes have been explored in songs such as “Ani Ja:y” (I am Coming) and “Souffrance” (Suffering) from the album “Kobay,” “Trop Tard” (Too Late) and “Quelque Part” (Somewhere) in the album “Kamizol,” “Ah ya la-bHar” (Oh the Sea) and “Wili Wili” from the album “Cauchemar” (Nightmare), and “Cha3b Krah” (People Had Enough) in the album “Kle:mi” (My Words).

While Lotfi’s music often delves into pressing social matters, he also makes room for entertainment, which has played a significant role in his rise to fame. His solo tracks like “Bu:re:ka” (Algerian Popular Snack in Ramadan) and “Ku:n Ma:ji:tch Ana” (If I were not myself) in the album “Virus” and “Lotfi Contre Lotfi le Combat” (Lotfi Versus Lotfi the Combat) from the album “Coupable” (Guilty) exemplify his entertaining side. Lotfi’s distinctive characteristic lies in his high level of education and the educational content of his songs. Notably, he has explored scientific subjects, including biology and physics, in tracks such as “High Technology” and “Science f-Rass Niveau1,2,3” (Science in the Head Level 1, 2, 3) from the album “Kobay”. Having appeared on stages in Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, France, and Canada, he has participated in numerous shows and festivals, leaving a profound impact on the rap scene and inspiring new generations of rappers.

2.3. The Analysis of Lotfi’s Rap Songs

In this analysis, I will delve into two passages from two rap songs by the renowned Algerian artist. The selection of these songs is based on two factors, including:

a) The presence of poetic elements in each verse and the linguistic variations, and
b) The exploration of religious or political themes.

2.3.1. Passage One

The following excerpt is from the song "Helkou l'Bled" (Those Who Destroyed the Country) from the album "Lakamora".

Algerian-Arabic Version (Symbols used in IVAr)	English Translation
Gaddah men waHad raH fel-baTal chu:f el-yu:m huwa win Sab**baH**	How many got lost vainly, see today where he got
Xata:k lbes qami:S xata:k xrej ysalli So**bH**	Just because he wore a Qamis, just because he Prayed SobH
Ken Deyer LaHya w Ken 3endu des princip**es**	He had a beard and he had principles
Malgré xaTi:h la politique HaToh f la cibl**e**	Even though he does not care about politics, he became a target
Saisewh 3a-Sbbah, **circulewh** me-la **rue**	They seized him in the morning surrounded him in the street
Lebsu:h la parure ta:3 les portés dispa**rus**	And had him put on clothes of the missing

*Poetic Elements in the Passage

Lotfi Double Kanon skillfully employs various poetic elements in this passage, creating a captivating and rhythmically balanced composition:

– He masterfully utilizes **rhyme** where each verse seamlessly connects with the following one (e.g., "bah-ed/ es-e-e/ rue-us").
– The passage's **rhythm** enhances its flow.
– Furthermore, the artist exhibits his **storytelling**, painting a vivid picture of a disturbing event.
– Through evocative linguistic **imagery**, he describes the unjust arrest of a religious individual merely based on his appearance.

Linguistically, Lotfi's lines are a mixture of standard Arabic, Algerian dialect, and French. The most interesting linguistic phenomenon here is in the 5th verse. Algerians often hybridize French and Arabic, creating a French verb conjugated in accordance with Arabic grammar. The two words in green are conjugated in past simple with the third-person masculine pronoun in Arabic "they" (هم). By adding "ewh" to the root French verb "saisir" (a second group French verb), it turns out to mean "they seized him" in the Algerian dialect.

***** Political and Religious Elements in the Passage

Lotfi's powerful description sheds light on a distressing scene of an individual facing unjust detention, possibly at the hands of governmental

operatives, due to his physical appearance and religious affiliations. The passage reflects the socio-political context of Algeria during the late 1980s when the country was engulfed in a civil war. At that time, many supporters of the Islamic Party (FIS) faced imprisonment and mistreatment, as discussed by Driessen in his paper on "Public Religion, Democracy, and Islam: Examining the Moderation Thesis in Algeria."[37] The artist's portrayal of this incident highlights the social and political tensions prevalent in Algeria during that period and emphasizes the impact of such circumstances on individuals within society.

2.3.2. Passage Two

The following excerpt is from the solo song "Shku:n Yefhemni," produced by Muslim United.

Algerian Version (Symbols used in IVAr)	English Translation
Yeah, dert rap msh 3aja:l el-buzz	Yeah, I started rap not to go viral
Men bekri wena neshfa wesh ga:l e-shshi:x Ibn Elbez	Since the past and I remember what eshshi:x Ibn Elbez said
El2i:me:n ki el-libes qader yersha wella ya-qde:m	Faith is like a piece of clothing that can get old and worn out
W el-fitna li bi:n ennes ashed mina el qatl wel qite:l	And creating turmoil among people is more atrocious than killing and fighting.
Kunt nesme3 aqwa:l men Shaksepear l ibn rushd	I used to listen to quotes by Shakespeare and Ibn Rushd
W sme3t des cassettes men Peter Tosh lesseyd keshk	And listened to tapes by Peter Tosh to Esseyed Keshk
Tellment 3esht, sheft w ksheft qbal sin erroshd	I lived, saw, and discovered before even reaching the age of majority
Belli eshshshe3b fi ble:dna meshshu sawasiya ki asnen lmoshT	that our people are not as equal as the teeth of a comb

***** Poetic Elements in the Passage

- Similar to the first passage, Lotfi here rhymes every verse ending (e.g., "uzz-ez/ sht-sht-eft")
- In this passage Lotfi's repetition of the sound "sh" creates a melodic internal **consonance**. Here the sound "sh" is prevalent throughout the verses and this repetition creates a sense of cadence and balance.
- The passage is enriched with figurative language in the form of **similes**, exemplified by expressions like "Faith is **like** a piece of clothing that can get

[37] Michael D. Driessen, 'Public Religion, Democracy, and Islam: Examining the Moderation Thesis in Algeria', *Comparative Politics*, 44 (2012), p. 188.

old and worn out" and "that our people are not as equal **as** the teeth of a comb".

* Religious Influence

Lotfi openly acknowledges his preference by sitting on the fence, demonstrating his sincerity in this regard. He affirms that he maintains a genuine approach, engaging with both religious and musical themes and influences. He references prominent Islamic scholars such as Ibn Elbez, Ibn Rushd, and Esseyd Keshk. Alongside his religious inclinations, he admits his appreciation for music, illustrating his dual identity as both a musician who respects and enjoys art while maintaining a religious impulse within his rap lines.

Conclusion

In conclusion, hip-hop and its poetic tool – rap music – have played a significant role in addressing various societal struggles throughout their history. This article argues that rap deserves recognition as its own distinct art form. It explores the nuanced relationship between rap and poetry, highlighting their shared characteristics while emphasizing the need to view them as separate yet intertwined creative domains. This article also investigates what defines a "mother tongue" both in general and within the context of Algeria. Moreover, in a realm where neither rap music nor Algerian Darja enjoys official recognition as established forms of poetic art or language respectively, this article employs linguistic and poetic analyses to discern the true essence of both through Algerian rap music. Finally, this genre stands as a testament to the remarkable evolution of rap into a form of poetry, and Algerian Darja emerges as a distinct linguistic creation in its own right. Together, they demonstrate the enduring power of artistic expression to transcend boundaries and redefine conventional norms. As this research article unfolds its narrative, it serves as a modest inception, sparking profound inquiries about the boundaries of language and art forms, as well as the wielders of authority in shaping both.

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