

**CONTESTING NEOCOLONIALISM IN POP  
CULTURE: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED  
RAP-VERSES**

**BY**

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# **Contesting Neocolonialism in Pop Culture: A Textual Analysis of Selected Rap-Verses**

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## ABSTARCT

### **Thesis Topic: Contesting Neocolonialism in Pop Culture: A Textual Analysis of Selected Rap-Verses**

The phenomenon of neocolonialism has been afflicting the Third World nations since the departure of formal colonialism and imperialism. It rose as an overt mechanism of subjugation over the newly independent states, still reeling from the effects of prolonged cycles of exploitation under the colonial oppression. Resistance against colonialism of the past and the neocolonialism of present has existed in different forms. Literary resistance is a part of cultural resistance that comes before, goes along and follows resisting forces and efforts in all forms. Just like other mediums used by the oppressed circles to raise the voices of discontent, rap has been distinguished by the condition of marginality associated with it. In the recent years, the rap anthems of Arab Spring canon that sparked revolutions across several states, illustrated the potential of “rap” as a cogent apparatus of resistance. The neocolonial theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. The researcher sought to determine of the features of neocolonialism and Post 9/11 US neoimperialism using the scholarship that have been expounded and contented in the selected rap-verses “*Soundtrack to the Struggle 2 (ft. Noam Chomsky)*”, *Terrorist*, “*Obama Nation (Part 2)*” by Lowkey and “*The 3rd World*” and “*The 4th Branch*” by Immortal Technique using the textual analysis methodological approach. In the light of the results it can be safely argued that both artists contest the covert and overt elements of neocolonialism while offering counter narratives.

Key Words: Neocolonialism, Neoimperialism, US neoimperialism, Post 9/11 Neoimperialism, rap as a cogent apparatus of resistance, Literary resistance.

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## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this scholarly endeavor with affection to the souls of my late grandparents; my Dada Jee, Haji Ameer Muhammad, my Nana Jee, Haji Nazeer Ahmed, my Nani Ama, Bibi Fatima and my Dadi Ama, Siftan Bibi.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of neocolonialism has been affecting the third world nations even after the departure of formal colonialism and imperialism. It rose as an overt mechanism of subjugation over the newly independent states, still reeling from the effects of prolonged cycles of exploitation under the colonial oppression. These nations were still dependent on their former colonizers, especially for assistance to nurture their infant economies. This financial overreliance made it easier for those colonial powers to maintain their control, and hence neocolonialism continued to proliferate. In the words of Nkrumah, it was the last stage of imperialism, with far sinister dispositions (Nkrumah ix.). As history has it, he foresaw this mutation of colonialism, which spread across the globe through its various determinants and the saga of exploitation in the resourceful Third World continued.

Neocolonialism and neoimperialism are continuation of old ways of colonialism, which have faced contention in different forms from the marginalized circles. The world saw the rise of United States of America as the leader of the “free world” after the WWII, becoming the new face of neocolonial power. The power vacuum created by the fall of Nazi Germany, presented them with a tempting opportunity. The events that ensued, saw the US engaged for decades in the Cold War, aiding and sponsoring genocides across the globe. Departure of communism from the U.S.S.R, ushered in the era of neoimperial endeavors unlike any the world had ever seen before. Following the 9/11 paradigm shift, the neocolonial enterprises embraced an entirely new dimension. This study seeks to identify the determinants and the contention to neocolonialism in the selected verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique. This study explores how Lowkey and Immortal Technique use their lyrics to offer resistance and disputation against such forces. The artists exercise their oration and penmanship to dispute the narratives propagated by the oppressors and exploiters.

#### 1.1 Neocolonialism

With the congé of colonialism in its classic form, it paved the course for neocolonialism to surface as the new face of Western hegemony. Neocolonialism, was properly addressed for the first time by the former Ghanian President, Kwame Nkrumah in his book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). The title of Nkrumah’s book echoed the classification

of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism by Lenin. It suggests that even though many colonized nations managed to achieve political freedom, the former colonial powers as well as the rising superpowers like the US maintained their hegemony over their economies and cultures. This was accomplished by employing new methods for indirectly controlling these states like international financial organizations, multinational companies and lobbies to control the prices in global trade and markets, as well as a number of other non-governmental and educational organizations. Nkrumah even argued that the phantom of neocolonialism was more malevolent and far problematic to detect and oppose than the direct control carried out in the days of colonialism (Ashcroft, et al. 146).

Nkrumah's also classified the modes used by the neocolonialists to establish their control. After the old imperial methods ceased to exist, the neocolonial powers focused on covertly controlling the financial, political, cultural and social bases of a decolonized country. A neocolonial country is controlled institutionally by the presence of imperialist forces. The request for national safety to guarantee the stability of the decolonized nations is made openly for this type of domination. Neocolonialism is practiced by financial means in many of these countries. Neocolonial governments are sometimes compelled to purchase goods produced in imperialist powers which prevent the importation from anywhere else, especially their competitors. Neocolonialism therefore influences a decolonized nation's financial progress. The neocolonial government's institutional policies usually remain under the control of imperial powers to serve their own agendas. For this purpose, oftentimes substantial investment is made by the neoimperialists to run a neocolonial government. Some nations' policy decisions also at times involve international investment, which results in financial dependency. The fabricated concept of welfare state enabled the capitalist nations to endure the post-war situation faced after decolonization (Nkrumah 239-241).

John McLeod defines neocolonialism as "the perpetuation of a nation's subservience to the interests of Europe, supported by an indigenous elite, after colonialism has formally ended" (McLeod 108). The term "Neocolonialism" has seen an extensive use in describing the forms of repression and controls over the former colonized states following their political liberation. The era after the war was testimony to the imperialist states' intentional effort to disintegrate the colonized countries into tiny states so that they could not develop independently and would depend more on financial and political resources owned by imperialist powers. This would force the newly formed states to take their business to the capitalist states, directed by them.

Critics have argued that after the departure of the colonial masters, a new set of elites were given authority of these states. These elites were usually trained and educated by the colonial powers, and they perpetuated policies that aligned with the interests of their former masters. On a broader scale, neocolonialism is also an indicator of the troubles and inability of the struggling economies of impoverished nations the erstwhile so-called Third World, toiling under the pressure of globalization to develop a truly sovereign political and economic identity in the world (Ashcroft, et al. 146).

This study uses the theoretical framework of neocolonialism to analyze the selected verses from five songs; *Soundtrack to the Struggle 2, Terrorist?* and *Obama Nation (Part 2)* by Lowkey; *The 3rd World* and *The 4th Branch* by Immortal Technique. Based on the determinates derived from the works of Nkrumah, Crozier and Shohat, on Neocolonialism, the theoretical framework helped in illuminating these elements in the rap-verses.

## **1.2 Neoimperialism and Post 9/11 Era**

Neoimperialism goes in hand to hand with neocolonialism and both are often used interchangeably. Over the recent years, the term “imperialism” is less often associated with the control and influence of the colonial powers of past. It has taken a new form and shape, as now it is used to address practices of the United States as the sole super power in the world. The imperialist ambitions, neocolonial practices and its expansionist policies of the past and present, gave rise to an uglier, more sinister version of imperialism (Ashcroft, et al. 146).

Imperialism in its classical sense was the practice where a powerful state would appropriate the land, market and resources of a less powerful state, for its own economic and political interests and gains. Following the second World War, the approach of imperializing lands and territories was not the usual tactic of domination by the states with imperial ambitions. The new phase of imperialism saw the powerful states trapping the weaker, newly independent nations, by giving them the illusion of sovereignty. The West still had its nails dug deep into the profitable resources of these states. This parasitic relationship has seen quite a few labels: “Informal empire”, “Colonialism without colonies”, “Neocolonialism”, and “Neoimperialism”. Traditionally, capitalist ambitions of United States had been concerned with securing more wealth as compared to getting hold of more colonies. They preferred to run off with the loot from the resource rich states, without worrying about owning and

administering the people themselves. Using these tricks of neoimperialism, “the flag stays home, while the dollar goes everywhere – frequently assisted by the sword” (Parenti 11).

When the U.S.S.R collapsed and the Cold War came to an end, the United States was facing a dilemma. It needed to redesign a way to maintain its hegemony over the globe. The “universal” threat of Communism was gone and now there was a need for a new broad global level interest to unite the world again, with United States leading from the forefront. This is where the “New World Order” came to life, an idea which was advanced to fill the vacuum left by the departure of communism as a threat to global peace. Boggs echoed these ideas in his 2004 book *Imperial delusions: American militarism and endless war*. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, this rhetoric was given a makeover and labelled by George W. Bush as the “War on Terror”.

Following their independence, the natives of colonized nations realized the evils of being under colonial rule. Unfortunately, with the advent of neocolonialism and neoimperialism, they found themselves getting tossed from a frying pan to an open flame. Even with the awareness of their condition, these countries are suffering unwillingly and with their hands tied under these new forms of oppression. After enduring colonial rules for years, the so called Third World is unable to truly break free from the parasitic relationship with the state that colonized it. They are also bound to stay within the global capitalist circle. The states that dare to free themselves of these restrictions are punished by imposing severe economic sanctions and even military treatment. The latter, usually led by the United States (Parenti 12).

### **1.3 Resistance through Literature**

Literature, both in poetic and narrative forms has the ability to serve as an outlet for the people from the nations under some form of neoimperial and neocolonial subjugation to voice their distress and resist the domination of the oppressor. It has the ability to not only educate but also put a spotlight on the anguish and exploitation of the dominated circles under oppression. Literature can play an important role in unveiling the struggles of people who are being exploited through various means of control. Literature is one of those artistic modes of expression that are universal in nature, and have the power to not only entertain but illuminate human lives.

Resistance finds its origin in Latin language, derived from root-word ‘resiste`re’, which means “to stand against.” Resistance literature has played a very important role and served as

a weapon for the subjugated societies to counter oppression. Resistance through literature is not exclusive to the works that were produced in the third world literary circles. This concept dates back to the early times in English literature. Works of resistance in English literature started pouring in following the arrival of criticism against works from earlier days and as well as the issues in the society.

Following the footsteps of theories like deconstruction, poststructuralism, among other text-based approaches, critics originally wanted to shed light on the literature produced in postcolonial nations as a tool of resistance. Lye suggests in *Some Issues in Postcolonial Theory* (1998), that resistance is a concept that embodies, the “ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality” (Lye 5). The same ideas that would have been painted differently from the perspective of the colonizer. The worldview of the colonizer was usually different from their subjects, who were forced to conform to their ideals. This is where the need for resistance literature stems from.

#### **1.4 Popular Culture and Resistance**

Popular culture does not have a single established definition and has been defined by critics from diverse schools of thoughts differently. From the time it became the subject of discussions, pop culture has repeatedly been characterized against some other concept. Usually, pop culture has seen a use as a ‘discriminating tool’ (“Popular Culture” 228). Pop culture has the ability to serve a domain for both—containment and resistance, even though majority of the creation and supply of pop culture is regulated by the forces that want to assert their dominance. Williams summed up the essence of pop culture by describing it as: “well-liked by many people”; “inferior kinds of work”; “work deliberately setting out to win favor with the people”; “culture actually made by the people for themselves” (Williams 237).

Rap music as a genre is one of the most popular global genres of music (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999). Rap is a part of hip-hop culture, which is a phrase used to refer to a broad artistic movement that consist of rap, break dance, graffiti, and deejaying. Although rap finds its origins in a particular African-American community of 1970s New York City, it saw a surge in its popularity in 2000s, making it one of the most famous musical genres in the world. Nowadays, it is produced and listened across the globe in a wide array of languages and styles, by people from diverse sociocultural and economic backgrounds.

The genesis of rap was a direct product of numerous socio-economic issues during the unforgiving 70s in inner-city, underprivileged New York City, particularly in the African-American and Latino populations. Hip-hop culture was an outcome of the lack of prospects for young black and brown people, with limited opportunities. Rap not only served as a tool for them to raise their voices against marginalization and exploitations but also provided financial opportunities. Among many other art forms used as a mean of resistance, rap music has emerged as a very powerful medium. The infamous rap anthems of Arab Spring fueled the revolution and sparked the flames of uprising. These soundtracks not only moved the people but also got a message across, that resonated with their listeners on such a large scale. Rap has turned into a universal phenomenon, used by artists and bands to express their counter-narratives while tackling political and non-political subjects. The relations between the colonialism and imperialism of past and the neoimperial and neocolonial exploitations of the present have developed a stage where these artists ‘perform’ their critiques.

Ever since its conception, rap has been about more than survival and expression. It has been a very effective medium of resistance. Artists like Melle Mel, Grandmaster Flash, Public Enemy, Run DMC and Eric B. & Rakim were few of the first performers who utilized rap to challenge the status quo and raise awareness about the prevalent racism, mass imprisonment of people of color, and sometimes even capitalism, labeling it as a destructive political economy. Rap continues to be the mouthpiece of cultural resistance until this very day with artists such as Lauryn Hill, Talib Kweli, Dead Prez, Lupe Fiasco, Lowkey, Immortal Technique and many others, who continue to write and rap content that ranges from necessary social reforms to flat-out revolution and liberation of occupied states.

### **1.5 Lowkey and Immortal Technique**

This study analyzes the lyrics of two rap artists; Lowkey and Immortal Technique. Kareem Dennis (born 23 May 1986), is better known by his stage name Lowkey. He was born to an Iraqi mother and an English father; Kareem is one of the most articulate and honest resistance rappers of this era. His lyrical content deals with the issues of racism, class discrimination, Islamophobia, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, US neoimperialism and much more. His 2010 song titled “*Obama Nation*,” was highly acclaimed for unmasking the continuation of US neoimperialist policies under the administration of Obama. Another notable reference in the song was his innuendo that American presidents are controlled by elite handlers, such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Throughout his career, he has worked as an independent artist, refusing to sign with any corporate music labels. Lowkey is one of the few artists to talk about sensitive subjects, for instance the role of Western intelligence agencies in the creation of terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda, the theory that 9/11 attacks were a false flag operation of controlled demolition by the governments of U.S., U.K., Israel and Saudi Arab. He also addresses the authority of the Rothschild family over the banking systems of the world, and the role played by media in defending war criminals. In his 2011 song *Obama Nation 2*, he had predicted the role of Obama in igniting the Syrian civil war by arming and training the rebels, which eventually led to the rise of ISIS. Lowkey said “Drones over Pakistan, Yemen, and Libya — is Obama the bomber getting ready for Syria?”

Second rapper Felipe Andres Coronel (born February 19, 1978), better known by the stage name Immortal Technique is an American artist of Peruvian descent. Apart from being a rapper, he is an activist and a humanitarian. The main focus of his lyrical content are sensitive topics in global politics. He talks about classism, neocolonial and neoimperial exploitations, governmental policies, war, religion, and racism in his deeply profound lyrics. Immortal Technique rose to fame following his independently released debut album where he focused on the issues of economic struggles, religion, corporate greed and racism. He quickly garnered the reputation as one of the most vocal social rappers

By highlighting such sensitive issues and bringing much needed attention to them through his music and lyrics, Technique became a well-respected artist on the independent circle. In an interview with MintPress News' weekly TV show, he condemned the justification of suffering and death triggered in the wake of empire building ventures by America. He also stressed the need for general public to stop believing everything that they are told by the politicians and media and start to think and assess things for themselves. In a 2016 interview to MindPress, he said “It’s not important that you agree with everything I say,” he added. “It’s important that you question every single thing that you’re told” (“Immortal Technique: The US Is 'The Devil's Bank?'”).

## **1.6 Delimitation**

The study is limited to the selected verses of British-Iraqi rapper Lowkey and Peruvian American Rapper Immortal Technique and is only concerned with the lyrical content, and not the musical aspect.



## **1.7 Significance of Study**

The research in this area has vast potential. Contention of the neocolonial narratives through the means other than literature like film, art, music can also be powerful tools and as of late, scholars have become increasingly interested in exploring these mediums. This study aims to educate the masses about the mechanisms of neocolonialism while evaluating of the counter narratives provided by these artists, their relevancy and how they offer a critique of neocolonial narratives and neoimperial practices.

## **1.8 Thesis Statement**

Rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique, classified as political rap, seem to be expounding the determinants of neocolonialism and offer an anti-colonial critique.

## **1.9 Research Objectives**

The intended objectives for this research are as follows:

- To trace the elements of neocolonialism in the rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique.
- To explore how the neocolonial agendas propagated by media, press and politicians are opposed in these verses.
- To highlight how Lowkey and Immortal Technique counter neocolonial discourse.

## **1.10 Research Question(S)**

An anticolonial reading encompasses a way of interpreting literature to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of neocolonialism. Here, works emanating from artists belonging to two former colonies are scrutinized. The two questions that this study attempts to answer through the in-depth analysis of selected rap-verses are as follows:

- What are the facets of Neocolonialism highlighted in the selected rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique to denote consequent sociocultural malaise?
- How do Lowkey and Immortal Technique contest the concepts of neocolonialism to go about their courses of disputation in the selected works?

## **1.11 Structure of the Study**

The study is divided up into 6 chapters.

Chapter 1 incorporates a concise introduction of neocolonialism, neoimperialism, resistance literature, pop culture and resistance through rap, brief introduction of the rappers along with the research objectives, research questions, delimitation and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 covers the literature review of the relevant scholarship on the subjects of neocolonialism, neoimperialism, resistance literature, pop culture and resistance through rap that are relevant to this study in separate subsections.

Chapter 3 encompasses the methodology and theoretical framework for this study are discussed.

Chapter 4 scrutinizes the selected rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique to seek the answers for research questions.

Chapter 5 offers a comprehensive conclusion to recapitulate the arguments and discussion.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the relevant critical scholarship about the key issues pertinent to this study are reviewed. These issues have been briefly touched upon in the first chapter, and now in-depth critical exploration of the existing literature on the topic subject will be done. Literature review enables the researcher to draw a comprehensive critical framework to base the study on after methodically going through all the relevant literature. This chapter encompasses study of works on neocolonialism, neoimperialism and American neoimperialism, resistance in literature and pop culture, rap as poetry and a tool of resistance. All of these aspects are later on looked at and examined in the analysis.

#### 2.2 Neocolonial Exploitation and Postcolonial Legacy

With the decolonization of colonies that were under the control imperial European empires, sadly, the colonization did not come to end. Imperialism did not windup when majority of the colonies achieved liberation after the World War II. Colonization evolved along with imperialism, and took on a new form. Neocolonialism describes the continuation of imperialist oppression and colonial subjugation of past by the former colonizers, using new tools of domination and control to keep their hold over their former subjects. Hence, neocolonialism can be described as a new system of colonial ascendancy that works in a covert way to carry on the imperial tradition of exploitation despite the formal independence of the colonies.

Kwame Nkrumah, the President of then newly independent Ghana, was the one to explicitly use neocolonialism in African context, a term that was coined by Jean-Paul Sartre in 1956. Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) presents a comprehensive criticism of neocolonialism. He wrote at length to argue that metamorphosis of imperialism into neocolonialism, is the final and far worse shape of this system of domination. As the conventional means of colonization ceased to exist, the imperialist states decided to focus their domination subtly on the economy, culture and political systems of a newly liberated nation. Nkrumah adds that a neocolonial control system operates "from outside" and

targets the financial system and economy of a state and thus, gains the control of its political agency (3). He further implies that the neocolonial powers can also exercise control over these new states via “a consortium of financial interests which are not specifically identifiable with any particular State” (ibid). The first endorsed classification was offered in 1961 by the All-African People’s Conference in the *Resolution on Neo-colonialism*, describing it as “The survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which become victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military, or technical means” (Martin 191).

Frantz Fanon is among the most prolific thinkers who highly criticized and highlighted several critical issues related to neocolonialism. Fanon’s highly acclaimed work *Towards the African Revolution* (1964) focuses on pointing out the factors that essentially led to the mushrooming of the phenomenon known as neocolonialism. Along with that, he also pointed out different entrenched fallacies that it encompasses, which will eventually lead to the end of this anomaly. He argues that neocolonialism came to life as an upshot of an “indetermination”, something inherently linked with the process of decolonization itself. (121) The “indetermination” he brings up here speak of the absence of collective national identity and consciousness among the previously colonized communities, who following a number of years of misery and exploitation, now had the colossal task of liberating their countries from neocolonial subjugation. Fanon stresses that commercial interests are among the key reasons imperial powers put on the masks of good will, so that they could continue to exploit the economies of these nominally independent nations.

Fanon also lays out two conditions that enable neocolonialism to be functional. The first mechanism is termed as the “rights” of the ex-colonizers, which is used to evoke a false sense of shared past (120). The continuation of a renewed colonial accord, where the former colonizers and the newly liberated countries agreed to economic and financial arrangement that compromised the economy of these states and stunted their growth. Fanon called the second condition the “zones of influence” (122). He adds that the conditions for independence by the colonizers included their desire to control the economic assets of these states. This included banks, permits, commercial licenses, etc. This shows the unquenchable thirst of the West for the resources of the Third World (121). Sartre’s *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, which includes his acclaimed preface to Fanon's classic *Wretched of the Earth* as well, offers a critique of the neocolonial enterprises in Africa following the independence of different states. He

asserted that there was no differentiation between "good colonists" and "very wicked ones" (31). According to him, a neocolonialist just like his predecessor colonialist, is "fabricated like the native," yet at its core he is "made by his function and his interests" (51).

Rai describes neocolonialism as the persistence of control and domination by the imperial states over the former colonies across the globe, even after their independence. He adds that colonialism stayed alive in spirit and never truly disappeared. He calls the continuation and operation of colonial practices in the international affairs through neocolonialism or new imperialism. There are subtle and devious methods, used by the ex-colonial states to keep their grasp over the newly declared sovereign countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Their intent, among others, was to continue the exploitation of the natural resources found in these regions. Rai underlined few elements of neocolonialism and how it works (440). As per Rai, the major feature of neocolonialism is the influence and interference in the internal politics of the formerly colonized states. The neocolonial powers would install a group of local elites to do their biddings, and these people would essentially have their support to assert domination on the public. He adds that neocolonial powers would sponsor civil and military regime changes, fund different groups and political parties and support puppet governments. This enabled them to have control over the policies devised by these régimes (441). Another mechanism of neocolonialism is the supply of arms by the neocolonial powers. This ties with the conflicts that brewed among the newly independent states, so that they would engage in an arm's race against each other. The neocolonialist, who produce and possess superior military weapons and equipment, would then secure deals with these nations, hence earning another form of dependency and control over the former colonies (441).

Loans and aid are also used as tools to trap the underdeveloped and formerly colonized countries into the web of neocolonial subjugation. Rai argues that the financially weak and struggling states are forced to rely and remain dependent on neocolonial powers for aid and loans. These loans always have high interest rates and strict conditions that not only worsens the misery of these states but also grants the lenders significant authority to dictate the policies of these states. This economic exploitation is carried out through the international monetary bodies like IMF, World Bank, IFG, etc. These institutions are controlled by the neocolonial powers, who prioritize their own agendas while lending economic assistance to the underdeveloped states (441). Rai also highlighted the role played by, what he considers the most devastating weapon used by neocolonialists, the multinational corporations. These MNCs

are owned by wealthy investors, who use their enterprises to further not only their own, but also the schemes of the neocolonial powers. The amount of wealth and control that these entities have, is mindboggling (442).

Ghosh described the concept of neocolonialism as the persistence of the colonial practices even after the colonized Third World countries had achieved their independence politically. They were targeted by their former oppressors, who aimed to administer their control indirectly and through covertly using political, monetary, social and military apparatuses (Ghosh 192). He also added that United States was among the nations who are involved in perpetuation of neocolonialism. Ghosh also identified few of the mechanism of neocolonialism. The primary tool used by neocolonialist is politics. This includes influencing and enforcing control and meddling in the affairs of the country through various political praxes. This practice is closely related to the old colonial political control. Neocolonialists use different political, cultural and social lobbies, labor union missions, joint military exercises, and buy off local governing parties using labels such as aid and funding. For instance, American government sponsored the uprising in 1954, called Guatemalan coup d'état, code-named Operation PBSUCCESS and successfully overthrew the government of Jacobo Árbenz ("1954 Guatemalan Coup D'état"). This shows the importance of puppet governments and officials as pawns of neocolonial powers, who play a vital role in reinforcing neocolonialism (194).

Foreign Aid is another tool at the disposal of neocolonialists, who offer financial support to these emerging countries to assist them economically and speed up development in different projects. As per Ghosh, external aid comes in different shapes with varying purposes. Although, some of these aids are on humanitarian grounds, more often than not, the donors have certain agendas behind them. These agendas are revealed though the terms of agreements signed for securing aid or loan, and usually they are used as a foreign policy weapon by the neocolonialists (195). The rise of multinationals has made them serious and influential non-state actors on global scale. These corporations wield immense authority, due to their financial strength and presence worldwide. They have yearly sales in excess of billions of dollars, which makes them powerful entities with the ability to influence the political matters of developing states (195). Ghosh also believes that the terms of different pacts and agreements signed between the developing countries and the neocolonial powers hugely favor the latter. He says that the financial and trade deals signed with under-developed and impoverished countries

further the exploitation of these countries at the hands of developed states (196). Ghosh also adds that to subjugate a state, their culture and values are also targeted by the wealthy nations to hinder the development of a national identity.

Neocolonialism fully broke out of the shell following the eclipse of colonialism and the mushrooming of US as a neoimperial power. Ella Shohat asserts that “neocolonialism” is a term that suggests the cessation of colonialism in its traditional sense has made it a thing of the past, but has left long lasting political, cultural and economic ramifications. The praxes that caused implications are still being carried out through the continuation of the old colonial *raison d'être*, but now their methods have changed (Shohat 31). Such neocolonial stratagems consist of using supranational organizations, globalization, and international corporations. These entities and stratagems enable the developed countries to keep the less developed and developed countries dependent on them, hence allowing them to exercise control in various forms (Bernault 4). As per Crozier, neocolonial control over a state exists if at least three of the following four conditions are present: economic influence, militarist presence, political meddling, and financial dependence (131).

In *The Black Men's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State* (1992), Davidson outlines the rise of neocolonialism in Africa after the colonized nations achieved freedom from colonialists. He suggests that after African countries started to succeed in their liberation movements against the different European imperial and colonial empires, they unfortunately ended up getting wrapped in a new web of subjection. This new method of control stretched over their entire economy and financial system with conditions (Davidson 196). These financial controls and economic conditions are at the core of the wide sets of interactions within the political global economy, developed by the imperial powers to maintain their hegemony and transform these minor states into their neocolonies. Following the same stance, Babu posits that neocolonialism came to life as an outgrowth of imperialist ideology and economics, mutated by the policies during the Cold War. To further their Cold War strategic objectives, several imperialist states turned African territories into their personal neocolonies. The main purpose of this practice was for the African states to assist their subjugators economically, politically, strategically and in furthering their interests (Babu 15).

In *Twentieth Century Imperialism: Shifting Contours and Changing Conceptions* (1997), Harshe posits that neocolonialism can be considered as a specific phase of imperialism and the system of control and domination linked with it. Neocolonialism is responsible for the

commencement of the nexus of foreign domination with the independence of colonized nations. Practically, neocolonial control is asserted via a number of courses. The main targets include culture, economy, and politics. Loutfi El Kholi observes in his 1976 report *The Fight Against Imperialism*, presented in a seminar Africa: National and Social Revolution, that at the core of neocolonialism, lies the need to guarantee formal political freedom of a state, while making safe that the subordination of the state to imperialism, particularly economically, goes on. Along with that, Kholi implies that neocolonialists make certain that the subservience of the newly liberated states continues by exercising influence and control through financial, ideological, military and political means.

As per Nodari, neocolonialism can be described as “indirect methods of rule and control by economic exploitation through monopolizing the channels of international trade and through unequal exchange” (Nodari 8). In *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of ‘Development’ in Africa* (2017), Mark Langan evaluates Nkrumah's description of the how neocolonialism works by comparing it to the present-day situation. He looked at the labelling of multinational companies and external donors as proxies of neocolonialism by Nkrumah. Langan reaffirms his stance by using the examples of foreign financings in the oil sectors and agroindustry as instances to empirically look at exactly how such investments are geared up to serve neocolonialist agendas (47). Langan also looked at the standing trade deals between African countries and the EU as a case in point to examine how foreign trade agreements are connected to exploitation. He established by agreeing with Nkrumah’s claim that one-sided trade agreements are devices for embedding neocolonialism deep into the economy of a country (138-141).

On the subject of foreign aid and NGOs, Angus Deaton wrote in his 2016 book *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality* “The researcher has come to believe that most aid is doing more harm than good for the countries that receive it. In most cases, aid is guided less by the needs of the recipients than by the donor country's domestic and international interests.” (Deaton 24). In *From Neo-Colonialism to NGO-Colonialism?* An online blog, the author argues that although some may deem the inflow of money from foreign sources as a good thing, it is nothing more than a synthetic boost, which ultimately leads to a dependency on foreign assistance. The areas of operation for these non-governmental organizations become the NGO communities – a form of NGO-colonialism. In another blog titled *Neo-colonial Gangster Organizations (NGO’s)*, the author harshly criticized the role of NGOs by saying that these organizations carry out projects that result in distracting the public



from class struggle and advance forms of collaboration with their oppressors. These bodies fail to offer any long-standing and far-reaching plans that can have any significant impact. Instead, these NGOs deliver limited facilities to few groups and communities.

Political interference is also one of the features of neocolonialism. V.N. Khanna notes in his 2013 book *International Relations* that the Third World states time and time again find themselves in the midst of political turmoil as well as destabilization of elected administrations. More often than not, such instability is stirred and orchestrated by the neocolonial powers, who use their secret agencies for this purpose. Democratic governments fear being brought down if they refuse to comply with the demands and orders of neocolonial powers. Great amounts are paid to escalate political instability in a country. Mostly the secret neocolonial hand brings in puppet governments and overthrows the opposing administrations. Even parliamentary elections in many cases, are influenced to fulfill their neocolonial objectives. Furthermore, the political framework and policy-making processes in these states are usually directed by former colonial powers (243). In *The Roots of Crisis: A Neo-Colonial State*, the writer addresses the status of Philippines as a neocolonial state. He argues “We have been preserved as a neocolonial state through the flagrant and systematic intervention of the U.S. government in our political process and in the creation of a collaborator class” (Lichauco).

There are a few things that separate neocolonialism from postcolonialism. “Postcolonialism” is used to refer to the theory and literature of people who suffered at the hands of colonialism. Therefore, there isn’t any form of direct pressure from external sources to carry on the practices of colonialism, still, the colonial heritage of the past will inevitably continue (Shohat 105). Mere declaration of liberation by the colonized nations was not adequate enough to contest the power structures erected by the colonizers. Therefore, “colonialism” continues to be the central point in postcolonial theory and literature, but without looking for ways to resist (107). On the other hand, neocolonialism encompasses both domination by the powerful nations as well as a different degree of resistance than seen during the days of colonialism.

### **2.3 Predatory Nature of Neoimperialism and American Imperialism**

Neocolonialism and neoimperialism, often used interchangeably and are closely related concepts (Ashcroft, et al. 146). In the wake of dissolution of the USSR, and China adopting capitalistic practices, scholars who view globalization as the perpetuation of old imperial

methods of control, are concerned about the rise of the US as a neoimperial power. Similarly, scholars have made a distinction between the empires and imperialism of the past, and the current forms of imperial endeavors. Thus, Neoimperialism is used to distinguish the modern forms of control wielded over Third World countries by a globalized capitalist economy (146). United States happens to sit atop of the neoimperialist power rankings.

In *South Africa's 'Africa Renaissance' Project: Between Rhetoric and Practice* (2016), Umezurike and Ogunnubi expanded on Kieh's ideas in *Africa and the New Globalization* by describing neoimperialism as "the asymmetrical relationship of domination of a strong state over a weak state (265)." It is particularly troubling due to the imbalance of power that it creates where a stronger nation subjugates a weaker nation using its economic, political and military might. The periphery weak state is coerced by the stronger and oppressive core power to serve their usually exploitative agendas. The writers suggest that this type of association implies that the leadership of these previously colonized states lacks the fortitude to attain true financial autonomy. These previously colonized states remain dependent on their former colonizers economically, who have no intentions of letting these countries out of these pecuniary shackles. Therefore, to describe it simply, neoimperialism is the coarsely one-sided beneficial relationship between a weak and a strong state with the exception of direct governance (265). The mechanisms of neoimperialism work in a similar fashion to neocolonialism. It operates across a multitude of economic, political and military contacts between the oppressor and the subjugated states. In the case of financial or military assistance, it usually benefits the already privileged ruling class of the periphery state. Such relations can be seen among the developed capitalist states and the Third World countries in Asia and Africa (266).

In *Assessment of Neo-Colonialism in Africa* (2015), Ayoola posits that neocolonialism and neoimperialism came to life following the departure of colonialism. Neoimperialism became the primary mode of control once the old imperial methods of territorial occupation were no longer feasible. Hence, neoimperialism emerged as a completely different domain of domination, considering that militarized control was not the suitable method anymore and funneling funds to start civil wars was not an ideal tactic for exercising control over weaker states. Neoimperialism operates efficiently through limited democracy, which is usually controlled to ensure stable circumstances for stress-free exploitation of a neocolonial territory. The dominant core nations are among the most influential economic powers in the world who

possess a solid capital base. Their financial prowess is utilized in maintaining the exploitative relationship with periphery states, who lack such strengths.

In *Contrary Notions* (2007), Michael Parenti suggests that Powerful European states like United Kingdom and France embraced the strategy of neoimperialism following the aftermath of the WWII. Both countries had exhausted their financial reserves after half a decade of conflict. They were also dealing with severe freedom movements from their colonies in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which made the matters worse for them. This led to the decision that covert financial hegemony will have a lower cost and will be more convenient politically as compared to the open colonial control. The newly independent states were under the illusion of complete sovereignty, especially in the eyes of their public as opposed to the rule of the ex-colonizers. Moreover, the cost and responsibility of ruling the state was now shouldered by the local government while the neoimperialists were only concerned with and focused on their exploitation and “skimming the cream” (138).

Throughout the post World War II years, the United States dominated the global progress. US remained at the forefront during the entire second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century owing to its tactics of cultural imperialism and globalization (Gregory, et al. 96). Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) argues that, as a non-traditional colonist, the US believes itself to be a “righter of wrongs”, who is on a universal mission to thwart tyrants and defend the freedom of the globe. The war in Vietnam, the 1991 Gulf War, the 2001 Afghan War and the 2003 intervention in Iraq are just few of the recent examples where the United States exhibited its prowess as a neocolonial and neoimperial power. Just like the imperial powers of the past were fixed on their “civilizing mission,” the US seems to be on a similar quest, to be the hero that fixes political evils and spreads democracy and freedom around the globe (5).

Colas and Saull write in *The War on Terror and the American Empire After the Cold War* (2007) that the United States’ emergence as the most influential global player after the WWII pushed it into a sphere of closed frontiers. The pursuit of opening its doors to capitalist markets followed after that. United States embarked on a mission to make certain that these two conditions ‘closed frontiers and open doors’, requisite for upholding capitalist hegemony were never jeopardized. Whether it was the authority of an American ally being challenged in any way or any state who dared to stand in the path of the expansion of capitalist markets, the United States made sure to project all of its coercive and hegemonic authority to shun them all. United States was and still happens to be very resourceful when it comes to such quests and

ambitions (13). There were quite a few factors that enabled the US to pursue such aims; like being the biggest capitalist economy, it had the advantage of having authority over the market; as the most prominent capitalist country, it benefited from its ability to influence rest of the capitalist countries; as a prominent liberally democratic state, the US was able to bring forth the social, political and cultural compliance among the American public as well as other people of other countries; moreover by possessing colossal military prowess and nuclear capabilities, the United States had no troubles deploying unequaled deadly might by warfare across waters, in air spaces, through land and ultimately space (14).

In *Open Doors and Closed Frontiers: The Limits of American Empire* (2008), Colás adds that the ventures taken under US neoimperialism frequently led to complicated, stretched out and costly military operations. These missions were intended to “stabilize and influence – rather than occupy” states, depending primarily on Central Intelligence Agency handled schemes, proxy wars, operation of UAVs, financial coercion and MNCs (620). The authors of *The Imperialism of Decolonization* (1994) echoed similar ideas that for the US, the ideal course for influence was through covert means. They favored ‘sovereign’ states over overtly colonizing them, and thus were able to more efficiently carry out their neoimperial schemes (Louis and Robinson 472). In *Empires*, Doyle writes on the subject of neoimperialism that there is no distinction between the bodies and powers that propel and shape neoimperialism. Additionally, these forces and mechanisms are not exclusively financial or armed; both of them, along with cultural, social and political devices work in conjunction to make it more effective (11). Generally, foreign policy of United States has exhibited all the features of imperialism described in *Empires*. Above all, Doyle’s description also reveals that the economic imperialism is closely related to neoimperialism and both work in unison.

In *Africa and the New Globalization* (2013), Kieh while discussing the reasons behind US neoimperialism, posits that for the establishing their global hegemony, US was enticed by the possibilities that arose in the wake of a unipolar world. Following the downfall of the U.S.S.R, the blossoming of the US as the sole superpower in the world was uncontested. Several influential neo-conservative figures in the establishment and the ruling party, who held important positions in the Bush administration embarked on promotion of the idea that this was the perfect time for the US to establish its global hegemony. Consequently, the invasion of Iraq was chosen as trial, the first in a planned series of cases where strategically, the US was going to unilaterally intervene and confront the regimes that were either hostile or had any strategic

importance. The eventual objective of the US neoimperialism was and still is, the establishment of a “new world order” where America could bark out orders, and the rest of the world, particularly the Third World states, would bow and conform (23).

Systematic subversion and political meddling have also been a trademark of American neoimperialism. America’s premier intelligence agency CIA has been involved in innumerable covert and overt assassination attempts, instigating coups d’état and sponsoring uprisings against leaders of socialist, democratic and nationalist left (Street). There is a long history of US presidents time after time directing the Central Intelligence Agency to stage coups against democratically elected figures in countries like Iran, the Congo, Chile, Guatemala and many others. Their crime was to nationalize industries and take decisions that were in the interest of their people. This jeopardized the corporate stakes and posed a hindrance to the neoimperial motives of the US. People in the US government deceitfully labelled these figures as Socialists and declared their régimes as national security threats, and sanctioned secret campaigns to oust them and bring in dictators to work for American interests (Emiridge).

Leaders such as Mohammad Mossadeq of Iran, Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, Fidel Castro of Cuba, Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sukarno of Indonesia, Salvador Allende of Chile, and Hugo Chavez of Venezuela faced the American neoimperial wrath. The US punished them and countless others across the Third World for their refusal to bow down and cave in to the American interests, with assassinations, assassination attempts, coup d’état, coup d’état attempts, full scale offensives, COIN missions, proxy wars, surveillance, espionage, misinformation campaigns, and the fostering of partisan and armed resistance inside the defiant countries (Street).

## **2.4 Literary Resistance and Voices of Dissidents**

Literary resistance is a part of cultural resistance that comes before, goes along and follows resisting forces and efforts in all forms. The poetry of resistance is considered synonymous with the act of taking arms against the oppressors in battles and guerilla warfare against foreign occupation. The authors of *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) argued against the dominance of prevailing postcolonial and imperial narratives. Writers and poets wrote back to the Center and challenged the propagated discourses. Barbara Harlow, the author of groundbreaking *Resistance Literature* (1987) suggested that the colonized nations in their struggle for freedom were not just seeking socio-economical control and reclaiming their

culture, they were also producing a noteworthy body of literature in both poetic and prose form. This literature was also accompanied by a wide range of theoretical pieces, analyzing the cultural, ideological and cultural factors revolving around their struggle (12).

Barbra Harlow defined the poetics of resistance by arguing that there exists a fundamental connection between literary resistance and armed struggle (10). She also adds that this cultural resistance is just as important and effective as the armed resistance (11). Said echoed similar ideas about the vital role of literature and art in anti-colonial resistance. He argued in *Culture and Imperialism*, that the literary works of decolonization serve as a basic tool in the struggle against foreign occupation, the oppressive and subjugating forces. He then adds that the notion of resistance is not simply a response to imperialism. While writing back to the center, it offers an alternating perspective for looking at the human history, by dislocating the narrative propagated by Europeans. It replaces those ideas asserted by the oppressors with a narrative that is more powerful and authentic (216).

People from societies under some form of neocolonial dominance adopt different approaches to resist the subjugating structures. As noted by Bhabha in *Location of Culture* (1994) that from the marginalized circles, who have withstood years of oppression, displacement and servitude, we learn the most persistent examples of how to think and live. He added that now there are many theorists who lean towards the ideas that “affective experience of social marginality... transforms our critical strategies” (172). Therefore, resistance can be considered an agent of social change. It can be shown by being silent or being outspoken, or by the use of arms, be it by shooting with real guns or wielding your pen. Like the saying goes, pen is mightier than the sword, it certifies that the resistance literature can be as effective in the efforts against the oppression as armed resistance.

One of the most influential authors and intellectuals of the post-colonial era, Frantz Fanon, presented his anticolonial resistance views in groundbreaking books that are still relevant to this day. In his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), he touches the subject of living as a “black intellectual in a whitened land” and how his criticism of racism that he faced in France was justified. He further adds that he hopes to terminate the substantial psycho-existential complex that has risen as a result of close interaction of Black and White races (14). Fanon stresses the idea that racial issues can be countered by analyzing them. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), he tackles the subject of decolonization. Fanon argues the process of

decolonization is a *de rigueur* revolution that needs to happen because colonialism has caused a great harm on the global scale (27).

As stated by Harlow, the phrase “resistance” was used to describe the Palestinian writings for the first time by the Palestinian poet and activist Ghassan Kanafani in his work on the resistance literature produced in the oppressed Palestine (2). Ghassan Kanafani’s work *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine* (1966), with one of his essays translated by Sulafa Hijjawi in 1968 and included in the collection *Poetry of Resistance in Occupied Palestine*, gives a unique insight into resistance literature following a catastrophe. He talks about the literary resistance and how literature has performed in the subjugated Palestinian land, the distinction between the literature penned under occupation along with the literary works produced in exile (4). He recollects that the certain historical incidents of that took place in the Palestinian lands gave rise to circumstances where a good number of the educated individuals found themselves driven out, resulting in a thriving literary resistance produced by the exiled writers and poets (5).

In the *Introduction to Poetics of Resistance* (2010), Gräbner and Wood discuss the role played by resistance literature in general and poetry in particular. They conclude that “Literature now becomes an arena in which to develop political imaginaries and to re-construct political language” (12). In the words of Slemon, resistance through poetry “can be seen as a form of contractual understanding between the text and the reader, one that is embedded in an experiential dimension and buttressed by a political and cultural aesthetic at work in culture” (7). On the subject of poetic confrontation, the writers of *Engaging the Authoritarian State: Voices of Protest in Syria* (2017) suggest that in the background of the recent revolts in the Arab world, poems and poetic jingles played a significant part in carrying on the long-standing Arab tradition of resistance through literature. There are quite a few contemporary Arab thinkers and writers who deem the role of a poet in politics and society as highly cogent and urged the Arab poets and writers to use their pen for the public, especially as Arabic poetry had a significant impact on the struggles and ambitions of the readers (Athamneh and Sayej 177).

## **2.5 Pop Culture, Rap and Artiste Resistance**

Popular culture remains a largely unaddressed subject among the critics of postcolonialism and neocolonialism. As noted by Simon Featherstone that there has been “insufficient attention to popular cultural forms” in *Postcolonial Cultures* (2005), very few

scholars have evaluated the role of pop culture as both a tool for furthering and reinforcing control and domination as well as a means of resistance (8). As per Stuart Hall (1998), Pop culture in the present age is particularly important for neocolonial and postcolonial scholars as it serves as the arena for the clash between a resourceful capitalist authority on a mission to continuously disorganize and reorganize pop culture, and resistance against these forces. There is a multitude of social forces and power relations that are involved in this process. (447). Stuart further adds that pop culture offers a medium through which the efforts in lieu of and in opposition to the culture of the dominant take place, which elevates its significance as a vital asset with the power to sway this struggle in either direction (453). John Fiske presented a similar notion in *Reading the Popular* (1989) that pop culture can serve the purpose of shaping resistance while recognizing the resources of pop culture like TV, music, apparels, video games, language carry capitalist interest and work in their favor (2).

Cinema and TV are powerful elements of pop culture, and are more than technological constructs. According to Chomsky and Herman, mass media in the US “are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion” (306). Mass media has without a doubt become a more influential medium and socializing agent than ever in history. It possesses the ability to spread and normalize global hierarchal narratives into the lives of a significantly wide and diverse audience in ways never seen before. Sadly, the Hollywood’s representation of people from Third World, their religions and cultures on both big and small screen, has largely been subjective, marginalized and stereotypical. Such representation furthered the narratives propagated against the people from the oppressed sections of life and further aided in the exploitation by acting as propaganda pieces. They are symbols of power, which can be employed to condition the mentalities of the audience (Emelobe 214). As stated by Stam and Spencer, the advent of cinema accorded with the peak of European imperialism so, it should not come as a surprise that Western motion pictures depicted the colonized in such an unflattering fashion (6).

In a Huffpost blog titled *The Black Panther: An Anti-Colonial Pan-African Superhero*, Dwayne Wong suggest that over the recent years, there have been films like Marvel’s *Black Panther* (2018), as well as the comics it is based on and the cartoon series by the same name, that tackle the issues of Western imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism in Africa (Wong). The movie take place in Wakanda, a fictional state in Southern Africa which is



considered to be the most technologically advanced nation in the world. The Wakandans are able to use their resources and develop sophisticated technologies. Wakanda also happens to be the lone unconquered and uncolonized African state, so such a representation begs the question of “what if”, Africa without the intervention of foreign invaders and the natives being able to utilize their own resources (Wong). To address the same stereotypical and Islamophobic tropes being played out in movies and TV series, an online project, called *The Riz Test* was introduced in 2018. This test uses a set of criteria to determine how the portrayal of Muslims on the big and small screen, with the hope to initiate a discussion, to raise awareness and to affect change.

Dana Gioia, in his paper *Disappearing Ink: Poetry at the End of Print Culture* (2003) labelled rap as “The New Oral Poetry,” with the anticipation that it would spur a shift from the restrictions of literary poetry (28). *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip-Hop* (2009) by Adam Bradley addresses one of the misconstructions about rap being a genre of purely improvised and just oral poetry. He posits that the book of rhymes where the MC pens down his lyrics is the site where rap becomes poetry, as it is written before it is performed (11). He further adds that “rap bears a stronger affinity to some of poetry’s oldest forms such as the strong stress meter of Beowulf and the ballad stanzas of the bardic past (15)” In *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994), Rose suggests that rap music blurs the distinction between literate and oral modes of communication (85). The *Anthology of Rap* (2011), distributed by Yale University Press and edited by two English professors, Adam Bradley and Andrew DuBois, can be seen as a piece for cultural patronage, homogenizing rap lyrics to the critical and academic ideals of literary verse. In the introduction, the editors assert the purpose of this endeavor is to tell the tale of rap as lyric poetry and to shed light on the underlying literary and artistic nature of rap lyrics (xxx).

Since its very origin, rap has been distinguished by the condition of marginality associated with it. It rose from the segments of society that were under systematic oppression and faced social segregation. Thus, being deep-rooted inside a lop-sided socio-political framework to combat the inequalities constructed by the subjugators, rap rose as a kind of resistance concerned with the altering local and global realities, by means of linguistic practices (Alim 11). Conscious or political rap addresses and brings forth institutional politics as it is inherently prejudiced in favor of dominating power groups. Political rap is classified by its solidarity for the oppressed circles while contesting and resisting the systematic exploitation

and prejudice of power groups (64). Id est, rap works toward transforming reality by contesting the structural and systematic dominance (Pardue 253). It wouldn't be wrong to suggest that politically conscious rap attempts to fight an ideological fight in a socio-political sphere, whose expression is made possible by language.

In the recent years, the most infamous use of music, and particularly rap for resistance was seen during the Arab Spring. For the Tunisians in 2010, rap was not simply the soundtrack of the uprising that picked a spark from the embers of Muhammad Bouazizi's ashes, but an inspiring factor that brought the public out onto the roads and restructured their political subjectivity, a necessary progress for revolt against social and political power structures (Levine 193). The most well-known example of the role of rap in the Tunisian and later Arab revolts was the track "*Rais Lebled*," or Leader/President of the Country, by at that time mostly unknown artist El General, a song that became an anthem of the revolution (Levine 1284). There are many notable revolutionary rap songs in the 'Arab Spring canon', from Tunisia to Syria, rap songs were produced during all of these revolts, and they played a huge part in uniting and motivating the public while voicing their agonies and hopes, and guiding them out on the streets. Songs like Egyptian Arab Knightz's "*Rebel*", Libyan Ibn Thabit's "*Ben Ghazi*", or Moroccan L'7a9ed's "*Kalb ad-Dawlla*" (Dogs of the State), rap certainly remained at the core of the leitmotif for the revolution. The Syrian revolution, just like in Tunisia, was announced by rap (1285).

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The researcher reviewed selected works for the study ranging from the broad area of neocolonialism, neoimperialism and American imperialism, to the literary resistance and resistance in pop culture generally, and in rap specifically. The researcher has analyzed them in four sections. The review has presented a context for the study and the analysis of primary texts in the forthcoming chapters. The researcher has endeavored to include works which are guiding posts for the research. Some of the works that have been reviewed do not only discuss the primary texts but also other works and scholars as well, that have helped in analyzing primary texts and contextualizing them. The researcher has not purposely included some of the works, which are related to the study, in order to avoid reiteration of the same concepts in the coming chapters. The literature included in the review is inseparable and vital for the study and the researcher has sought to link the reviews to the research and to identify the gaps present in the works. The objective of the review was to analyze the present scholarship on

neocolonialism, neoimperialism as well as the contention offered against those ideals. The genre of rap as a tool of resistance against neocolonialism is one of the unexplored areas (gaps) of research in recent academia. Therefore, this research project focused on how the artists and their selected works offer and contribute to the resistance literature. The next chapter will highlight the theoretical framework and the research methodology for this study, to establish the researchability and to highlight the method that will be adopted for analysis.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This segment of the study certifies the researchability of the topic by connecting it to specific existing spheres of analysis in the domain of literary criticism. Research is closely related to theory; Theory provides a conceptual framework for research. Research, in turn contributes to theory. Both are mutually supplementing and have a reciprocal relationship. So, it is necessary to look through the lens of theories to see the social phenomena vividly to understand it in a better way. The researcher states the theories being taken as the tool to analyze the selected rap-verse to create a rationale for this research. The neocolonial theory is used as the theoretical framework for this study. This qualitative research analyzes the works with the help of close-reading, as the literary tool in this study.

#### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory of neocolonialism is employed as theoretical framework for this study. Deriving from the scholarly works discussed in the literature review, the neocolonialism is grounded on certain pillars. This study uses Kwame Nkrumah as the key theorist and his book *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965) serves as the primary text. Along with him, Brian Crozier's *Neocolonialism* (1964) and Ella Shohat's *Notes on the "Post-Colonial"* (1992) are used as the secondary theorists and text to broaden the scope of the study and incorporate the contemporary facets of neocolonial theory as well.

Neocolonial theory addresses the asymmetrical control asserted by the core states over the periphery states. The discrepancy in national economic, martial and political power dynamics sits at the center of neocolonialism. This lopsidedness in power is then leveraged by the dominant states against the weak states to work on their behest. Furthermore, neocolonialism maneuvers via an extensive range of approaches about how dominant and subjugated circles interact. These methods vary in nature, ranging from cultural, financial and socio-political influence to militaristic and armed interference. All of these concepts make it easier to identify problems and bring into the limelight the resistance against neocolonialism in the verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique. In this act of 'rhyming back', Lowkey and Immortal Technique contest several neocolonial ideologies propagated by the neocolonial

powers. Thus, this research, along with other issues, tried to explore how Lowkey and Immortal Technique subvert these ideologies.

According to Nkrumah, the over-all aim of neocolonialism is economic control at the satisfaction of a few (Nkrumah 35). In the instance of Africa, this reveals itself as imperialistic power without any responsibility (xi) Neocolonialism in its cruelest form is the extension of colonial practices under the semblance of achieving freedom (234). African nations depend on their former imperial state or colonial “mother nation” for defense and internal security. Imperialist powers further their economic neocolonial objectives through various aid schemes under the façade of improving living standards and circumstances. Meanwhile, such powers have little to no interest in developing the countries they offer aid to or improving the social aspects like education (xv). Destructive military aid, instead of helpful multilateral aid, is usually given due to rival imperialistic objectives from Western powers, as per Nkrumah (xvi). The consequent result was Africa’s lion's share of natural resources being utilized to develop the external Western states like the US, Western European nations, and Japan rather than their own economies.

Brian Crozier imagines and articulates the same ideas in a similar manner as Nkrumah did: a country does not become truly independent because an imperialist power confers sovereignty on it and even though it may surrender political power; the imperialist country is able to remain its ultimate control by other means. These can be financial, military or cultural or a mixture of all three (Crozier 15). Ella Shohat suggests that the term “neocolonialism” proposes that colonialism in its classical sense is in the past, but its cultural, economic, and political effects are in the present through a repetition of the old colonial rationale, yet with new distinctive forms of practice (Shohat 31). These practices include international corporation, supra-national bodies, and globalization, which, according to some, require maintaining the dependency of developing and less developed countries on highly developed countries and their corporations (32).

Based on the scholarship produced by (Nkrumah, 1965; Crozier 1964; Shohat 1992) the researcher has identified the following mechanisms of neocolonialism and neoimperialism that enable the powers behind them to assert control and exploit the improvised nations:

- Loans and Foreign Aid
- Political Meddling

- Multinational Corporations
- Capitalist Practices/Globalization
- INGOS and NGOS
- International Economic Institutions
- Media/Social Media
- Arms and Weapons Deals
- Inciting, Arming and Financing Revolts and Regional Conflicts
- Intelligence Agencies' Operations
- Full Scale Military Intervention

### **3.3 The Works**

After extensive scrutiny, five songs were picked from the diverse discography of Lowkey and Immortal Technique, which address different topics and subjects related to neocolonialism, and were most suitable for this study. The selected work for this study includes the following songs:

1. Soundtrack to the Struggle 2 (feat. Noam Chomsky) – Lowkey
2. Terrorist – Lowkey
3. Obama Nation (Part 2) – Lowkey
4. The 3rd World- Immortal Technique
5. The 4th Branch - Immortal Technique

### **3.3 Methodology**

Typically, a thesis methodology describes the approach taken by which research questions are answered; and this study employed Textual analysis as the methodological approach to analyze the selected rap-verses. Analysis of the selected rap-verses is accomplished by employing the textual analysis approach, based on Catherine Belsey's

definition of the concept. Belsey examines the relevance of textual analysis, stating it to be indispensable regarding research within the field of cultural criticism (Belsey 160). A point upon which Belsey places much emphasis is that a researcher should analyze his/her primary texts before referring to secondary sources (171). Thus, only after having noted the questions posed by a text should the researcher set out to answer them. My interpretations of these texts rely in part upon the knowledge. The researcher has gained from my position within a specific historical, cultural, political and social framework, as well as on extra-textual knowledge such as that ascertained from my secondary sources.

Belsey argues that the aim of research is to uncover something new within a specific field, through a process of rearranging ideas that have potentially already been explored so as to create an original supposition (163). She claims that paradigms do not have to shift for research to be relevant, and that the contribution to knowledge made via textual analysis can be slight, but nevertheless meaningful (163). Belsey advises that one should “adopt a critical vocabulary which allows the text to ‘invite’ certain readings and ‘offer’ specific positions to its addressee” (167).

“Any serious textual analysis depends on a grasp of how meaning works. Meaning, then, subsists in the relations between people, inscribed in signifiers, sounds or images including written shapes and pictures. It has its own materiality: meaning intervenes in the world, defining our understanding of values, requiring us to obey rules and, indeed, calling us to arms” (167).

Methodologically, textual analysis allows researchers to draw interpretive conclusions from a single text or a few texts. This approach can uncover meaningful and symbolic content: how meanings are constructed and produced, and the nature and significance of such meaning. Taking a textual approach was the best method for answering the larger questions of this study, because it allowed for analysis and understanding of sources individually and as a whole as “discursive cultural products” (Clark 219) Textual analysis involves investigating how a text is working and why it is working in such a way (McDonald 2)

In the approach adopted to analyze the selected verses, first the determinants of neocolonialism addressed in the chosen rap-verses were identified. Afterwards, the questions brought up or tackled by the artists were examined meticulously in relation to the aforementioned elements of neocolonialism/neoimperialism. In this instance, the textual analysis made it easier to illuminate the artists’ resistance against the neocolonial/neoimperial

states, their practices and ideologies. In a nutshell, Textual Analysis sheds light on the neocolonial resistance in the chosen rap-verses. Lowkey and Immortal Technique's 'rhyming back' therefore, is a demonstration of such resistance. They used these rap-verses to express their discontent, grief, rage and disappointment towards neocolonialism and neoimperialism.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The theoretical framework and research methodology as detailed in this chapter are applied to analyze the works chosen for this study, comprising of lyrics from five songs, in Chapter four. A detailed explanation of the analytical techniques used to achieve objectives of this study has been provided in the chapter. Neocolonialism and Kwame Nkrumah will serve as the primary theory and the theorist for the study, while the analysis of the selected works will be achieved with the help of Catharine Belsey's textual analysis technique. The researched identified determinants of neocolonialism based on the works of Krumah, Corzier and Shohat. The songs chosen for this study are also mentioned in this chapter. Chapter four seeks the answers to the research questions and objective in the light of aforementioned framework and with the help of textual analysis.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONTESTING NEOCOLONIALISM IN POP CULTURE

#### 4.1 Introduction

“The type of pain that cannot be contained in a dissertation” (Lowkey).

One of the most distinguishing features of Lowkey’s music is his masterful use of lyricism. Every verse by Lowkey has multitude of socio-political themes embedded in it, both explicitly and subtly. Textual analysis of his lyrics helps us identify those nuances and the messages he is trying to get across through his music. This chapter encompasses examination of his selected songs to look for the elements of neocolonialism and neoimperialism expounded in his lyrics and how he attempts to contest them.

When you talk about revolution, it's very easy to romanticize picking up a gun or marching in the street, but I think before we take any of those actions, violence of course being the last one, we first have to have a revolution of the mind (Immortal Technique).

Rapper, socialist revolutionary, and activist Immortal Technique addresses several key issues like neocolonialism, politics, racism and religion in his songs. His works are aimed at dissecting and confronting the global power structure. His lyrics are an excellent critique of American state nationalism and patriotism, illuminating how the government interests get painted as the interest of people, when the reality points to the contrary. The government policies serve neocolonial capitalist agendas, and while their warfronts multiply, the people continue to struggle.

This chapter entails the textual analysis of the selected verses by Lowkey and Immortal Technique in the light of the theoretical framework developed in the previous chapter. The textual analysis of each song will be done in four stages; firstly, the literariness of the verses will be looked upon, after that, a deep critical analysis of the text will be done. After that, the researcher will look for the answers of the two research questions separately. This practice will be repeated for all five song, and the lyrics will be analyzed in a similar way. The purpose of this exercise is to extract a conclusion that shows consistency, as the content was scrutinized through the same lens.

## 4.2 Soundtrack to The Struggle 2 - Lowkey Featuring Noam Chomsky

After a long hiatus, with a sequel to the title song of his 2011 album *Soundtrack To The Struggle*, Lowkey made his return with the title song of his highly anticipated album ‘*Soundtrack To The Struggle 2*’ in 2019. This thought-provoking track also has an abreast commentary on the issue of capitalism by the renowned linguist, philosopher, political activist, and critic Noam Chomsky, both in the intro and outro of the song. The song touches multiple issues including global power structures, the financial institutions like banks and corporations, and the elites for their indifference and lack of social awareness. He shares his honest views on subjects like capitalism, terrorism, corporate greed and climate change.

### 4.2.1 Literariness of *Soundtrack to The Struggle 2*

Structurally, the song follows the traditional structure of rap, with each verse comprising of 16 “bars” or lines (“Write Great Rap Lyrics”). This song has three verses of 16 bars each, separated by a chorus which is a vocal sample. The rhythm of this song is maintained throughout by using end rhymes like “innovation...information” multi syllable rhymes like “terrifies the slumbered...energize the numbers” as well as internal rhymes like “paradise...pair of dice”. There is a plethora of literary devices used in this song such as similes “dangerous, like Canadian tar sands”, metaphors like “...an iron lion's diaphragm”, irony like “...if the Queen has a tax haven”, personification like “state committed suicide cannibalized itself”, enjambment like “...better than you/In an environment...”, imagery like “I saw horror in the eyes...”, alliteration like “...Iron Man I've got an iron lion's...” assonance like “economic...ecosystem”, consonance like “devoured...power”, allusion like “His search engine knows...” which greatly help in getting the intended message across (Lowkey ft. Noam Chomsky).

### 4.2.2 The Socio-Economic State of The World Under Capitalism

The song starts with a conversation between Lowkey and Noam Chomsky, where Lowkey references to a statement in Noam’s book “*Optimism Over Despair*” (2017) about capitalism and asks him to expand on it. This sets the tone for the rest of the song as capitalism and the current socio-economic state of the world are the major subjects addressed by Lowkey. Chomsky explains that “really existing capitalism” is how we can describe the practices of major financial institutions in the world, like the JP Morgan Chase bank, who are investing significant amount of capital into dangerous fossil fuel industry, for instance, Canadian tar

sands. Noam's statement refers to this greedy capitalist practice, which is intended to maximize short term profits with no regard for the repercussions faced by the world. He believes that the world will not be able to survive this "really existing capitalism".

In the first verse, Lowkey opens with a question about capitalism as an economic system which now seems to be going against the environment. This sentiment is directly connected to the points made by Chomsky in the intro (1). He continues by rhetorically asking that how 'deep' will be defined after the sea levels rise due to the global warming? It can also refer to the deep-sea fossil fuel mining operations, which are also responsible for this crisis (2). The next line asks another question about being 'woke', while the sleep patterns are commissioned (3). Woke here is referencing to the state of being socio-politically aware, which cannot be possible while living in a capitalist society where corporations dictate everything, like your work timings. Next line directly makes an allusion to the infamous American billionaires, the Koch brothers. Lowkey says that it is difficult for people to hear voices like Chomsky's, when there are people like Koch brothers who finance think tanks, media analysts and politicians to push their corporate agendas ("What Do the Koch Brothers Want?"). The word 'bot' here symbolizes the use of all the above-mentioned tools for their schemes (4). The next line switches the subject slightly, as Lowkey talks about the pointlessness of contemporary practice of "detoxification" ("Detoxification") the body of toxins, while the fossil fuel smoke is polluting the skies, making the air outside toxic (5). Next line jumps to the exploitations by corporations, who have consumed all of the resources. Now, these corporations are bigger than the nation states (6). Lowkey continues by saying that these new "innovative" stratagems are really just sophisticated forms of murders. He could be referring to the new technologies being introduced by these corporations (7). He then talks about the charitable events arranged by the big corporate entities, which really are fronts to mine information (8).

The next line aims straight for the center of capitalism, as he addresses the fact that eight men, who have the same amount of wealth as the 3.6 billion who make up the poorest half of world ("Just 8 Men"). They continue their pursuit of capitalist ambitions with no regard for humanity (9). Lowkey's rhetorical question implies that these people are the actual terrorists and threats against humanity. He touches on the subject of the use of media, and how the search engines record your data and information, then use artificial intelligence to suggest things to you ("Google's Gotcha") (10). The next two lines carry the message of revolt against the situation created under capitalism, where staying silent is not going to protect you as the clash

with the system is now inevitable (11,12). The next line addresses the use of different forms of media to disseminate propaganda, to keep the people in the state of socio-political slumber (13). Lowkey then tries to motivate the people by saying that these corporations can be stopped, if we raise awareness among the masses (14). He stresses the need of uniting against these corporations, as the other option is the end of the world as we know it (15). The last line carries a very strong but bitter message. Lowkey calls the world a “paradise” for the few elites, but for the rest of humanity, it is a “pair of dice”, a gamble (16).

The second verse opens with Lowkey talking about the aftermath of the fire that broke out at Grenfell Tower in 2017, that took the lives of 72 people (1,2). In these two lines, he has used the “frying pan” as symbolism to indicate the inability of fire department to contain the fire and save the lives of people trapped inside as the building burned for 60 hours (“Grenfell Tower Fire”). The next line uses Leviathan, a giant mythical creature of Jewish lore, as a metaphor for the greedy corporations, who, just like Leviathan in the mythology, are the biggest monsters (“Leviathan”) (3). Their protests against these corporations makes them uneasy. Next line carries an allusion to the comic book character, the Iron Man, who is known for wearing a robotic iron suit with special abilities (“Iron Man”) (4). Lowkey uses the metaphor to suggest that he possesses the Iron Lion’s diaphragm, an allusion to Bob Marley’s song, *Iron Lion Zion*, reference to Haile Selassie, who is regarded as the Lion of Judah (“Bob Marley & The Wailers”). He continues by applauding those who are conscious and aware of the impending doom that these capitalist corporations are bent on bringing (5,6). In the next line, he uses the word flag as a symbol for the nation as whole as it is meant to be the representative of everything the country stands for (7). By claiming that it doesn’t exist, he is saying that everything this country, Great Britain, stands for is a lie. He gives the example of the fact that the current monarch, Queen Elizabeth invested £10m offshore, according to the leaked documents called Paradise Papers (“Paradise Papers”) (8).

Lowkey continues by saying that anyone can raise their voice against these oppressors, even if it is through your keyboard, you do not have to be like Braveheart (9). This alludes to the movie Braveheart, based on the life of the 13th-century Scottish warrior, William Wallace, who led an uprising against the English (Braveheart). Next line addresses the human rights violations committed by Frontex, an EU border patrol agency, who have been accused of not helping and letting the refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea drown (“Push-back and the Violence of Frontex”) (10). Lowkey’s claim is backed up by the statistics as according to the

Missing Migrants Project, 8,845 refugees have died while trying to cross the Mediterranean since 2014. Agencies like Frontex are mainly responsible for these deaths ("Missing Migrants Project"). His next lines refer to the haunting images of deceased migrants, whose bodies are found on the shores of EU countries and the fact that those who are unable to escape the warzones have to bury their departed in deserts (11,12). The last four lines echo the message of questioning the narratives of dominant forces. Lowkey says that it is time to stand up against this capitalist corporate system that has been depriving the oppressed of their voice. He stresses the need of stopping them by saying that we better rebel while humanity still has a chance (13-16).

The third verse leads with Lowkey echoing Chomsky's ideas from earlier that by siding with the capitalism, the sharply attenuated democracy of the state has weakened itself (1). Now, the real authority lies in the hands of these corporate entities, and the state is merely at their service (2). He continues by saying that the money that these banks have may make them rich, but that wealth will be of no use. The next line addresses the influence exercised by these corporate entities, who have found ways to legalize corruption (3). Lowkey then talks about the privatization of healthcare systems, where corporations, who are more concerned about profits than human lives are put in charge (4). In the following four lines, he talks about those who decide to resist and stand up against the system. He says that they are the people who want to see a better future for humankind and refuse to buy into any sort of propaganda (5-8). He then says that those who are comfortably profiting off the misery of the oppressed deserve a taste of their own medicine, and those who are suffering at their hands deserve to be comforted. Although, so far majority has chosen to do the opposite (9).

Lowkey continues by questioning the kind of future the next generation will have, while governments around the world are spending over \$5 trillion a year to subsidize dirty fossil fuel, which amounts to 6.5% of global GDP (Coady, et al. 12) (10,11). This alarmingly high number is worrying Lowkey about the future of humanity. The next two lines address the Grenfell Tower incident again with the first line alluding to the failed safety tests, just months before the fire ("Grenfell Tower Failed") (12). The next line is also an allusion to a victim family, who had to helplessly watch their flat burn. The next line refers to the 1979 war movie *Apocalypse now*. The title of the movie, according to the scriptwriter, implies total destruction and death—the end of the world ("Apocalypse Now") (13). Lowkey uses it as a symbol by saying that the accident was a forecaster of what this world will become under the corporations who value

money over human lives. The last three lines see the use of repetition, as he summarizes the entire song and its message by stressing that the CEOs of these corporate giants are focused on maximizing their profits while not caring about the type of the world they will be leaving for the future generations (14-16). The outro of the song sees Chomsky conclude by saying that “this is an institutional problem; not an individual one...” (ibid).

#### **4.2.3 Accentuating Neocolonial Economic Stratagems**

Lowkey has accentuated several elements of neocolonialism and neoimperialism in the song *Soundtrack To Struggle 2* like MNCs, Banks, Political Meddling, Media and Military. With Chomsky setting up capitalism as the biggest threat to the future of humankind, the most prominent tool of neocolonialism is addressed throughout the song. Neocolonial powers use capitalism to propagate their agendas (Mushtaq and Ahmad 96). The song itself begins with calling out capitalism as an economic system, and then he has expanded on capitalist practices such the role of economic institutions like JPMorgan Chase as well as tax evasion by the elite. He also mentions the people behind these corporations, like the Koch brothers, who, along with others with similar agendas use their influence for lobbying in their favor. The corporations behind fossil fuel for example, get \$5 trillion dollars in subsidy across the world. Lowkey also mentioned that the nation state doesn't exist. The point he is trying to make is not that the it has vanished, but that the nation state has to a greater extent become servient to corporate interests and the quest for profits (Bakan). He also mentions the fact that through capitalist praxis, eight men have accumulated same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world. There is also a mention of the role played by media in propoganda and social media like the search engines profiling the users. Lowkey mentions the use of militarist institutions like the cited Fortex has resulted in the deaths of thousands.

He also addresses the privatization of public institutions like healthcare gives these greedy corporations authority over the lives of people, which is simply criminal. Lowkey's use the incident of Grenfell Tower is a recurring motif in the song. This incident was a result of corporate greed taking precedence over human lives as according to the reports, fire spread so quickly due to the low-quality insulating material used and despite failed safety checks, the concerned Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organization (KCTMO) did not take any action (Grenfell Failed Inspections). Lowkey used this motif to warn the listeners, same way Chomsky feared the impending doom for human kind if such capitalist corporations are

not stopped. Fossil fuels may be the most profitable investments for these corporation, but humanity will eventually pay the price.

#### **4.2.4 Contention of Neocolonial Economic Practices**

Lowkey contests the ideologies of neocolonialism by bringing them to the attention of the listeners and calling for them to rise against the capitalist corporations. Fundamentally, he endeavors to raise awareness about the oppressive neocolonial practices that exploit and victimize the people. He achieves this by asking questions like “How we gonna define deep when the seas have risen?”, “thinking silence will protect you” and statements like “In an environment resentful uprising is essential...”, “We can jeopardize their cover if we energize the numbers”, “Collectivize or die...”, “Rebel against this hell while our survival’s still a choice”. He weaves facts into his lines, facts that the average listener might not have access to, given the control of West’s corporate disinformation media over content. Lowkey is aware of the fact that a single person cannot defeat this Leviathan, so people need to unite against these leaches. Such statements are meant to make the listeners conscious of their situations and encourage them to break free from the shackles of oppressions. Capitalism and corporate greed are the biggest threats to human kind and Lowkey wants the listeners to rebel against this system that gives preference to short term profits over the future of humanity.

#### **4.3 Terrorist? – Lowkey**

*Terrorist* is one of the most notable songs by Lowkey that put him in the crosshair of right-wing critics ("Racist Republican Glenn Beck"). The song was featured in his 2011 album *Soundtrack to the Struggle*, which brought his work to the spotlight. Lowkey’s uses his masterful penmanship skills to ask the question about what the word “*Terrorist?*” really means? The title of the song has a very symbolic question mark following the term *Terrorist*, as this suggests that the song endeavors to stir a debate and make the listeners question the stigmatization of Muslims as “terrorists”. Lowkey gives various examples and states different facts about the acts of terror committed by the US and its allies in the defense of his argument that the assumed definition of Muslims as terrorist is wrong and the evidence points to the contrary. This song is a classic example of writing back to the very neocolonial and neoimperial powers that want to further their domination by painting people from an entire religion with a wide brush. A practice that is inherently flawed and needs to be reprimanded.

### 4.3.1 Literariness of *Terrorist*?

Structurally, this song starts with an intro followed by a hook. It has two verses of 16 lines each accompanied by the recurring hook. Both verses end with same four lines. The song concludes with a bridge and an outro ("How to Rap: Song Structure"). The rhyming pattern is varied across the song with end rhymes like "dad...sad" multi syllable rhymes like "bothers me ... be a colony" as well as internal rhymes such as "Irrelevant ...eloquent". Being the lyrical genius that he is, Lowkey has incorporated several literary and poetic devices in his verses like metaphors "man with home-made bomb committing suicide", irony like "...Rag-heads and Pakis are worrying...favorite food is curry and kebab", personification like "drones killing off human lives", enjambment like "...kill themselves/After the war ...", imagery like "when you saw the towers fall ...", alliteration like "...favorite food ..." assonance like "Israelis...allergies", consonance like "...home-made bomb committing...", allusion like "Was Building 7 terrorism?..." which help in conveying the intended message across (Lowkey ft. Mai Khalil).

### 4.3.2 Dissection of Terrorism and Islam's Post 9/11 Stigmatization

The song opens up with Lowkey's intro, a monolog where he questions the listeners to look up the dictionary definition of the word "terrorism". He continues by describing the *Oxford Dictionary* definition as "violent or destructive acts, such as bombing committed by groups in order to intimidate a population, or government into granting their demands" ("Terrorism"). Then into concludes with Lowkey setting up the premise for the rest of the song, so who exactly is the terrorist? The intro is followed by the hook, or chorus, sung by Lowkey and Mai Khalil. This hook reappears two more times in the song, after both the rap-verses by Lowkey. In these lines, Lowkey is perplexed by the designation of Muslims as terrorists, while adding that he, as a Muslim is all about peace and love. He also rhetorically sates that the same people who are labelling Muslims, are aware of what "terror" actually is, and feels insulted that they do not think he is capable of distinguishing the difference. The actions of these people fall in line with the dictionary definition of terrorism, and thus, he is pointing out the fallacy in their judgement.

The first verse starts with the initial four lines addressing the subject of islamophobia, by giving the example of xenophobes in the UK. He makes use of colloquialism, with words like "rag heads" and "Pakis", to highlight the confounded stereotypes held by most of the



people who link extremism with a particular religion or a region (1). “Rag heads” like “towel heads” are racial slurs used towards people who wear turbans, which includes Muslims and Sikhs (“Raghead”). Paki is another slur with offensive connotation which is used to refer to Pakistani immigrants, and sometimes people from India and Bangladesh (“Paki”). Lowkey uses irony here to state that although your father loves cuisine of Arab and South Asian regions, he is concerned about the origin of these immigrants (2). This illustrates the hypocrisy of contemporary British xenophobes towards immigrants. These same immigrants are source of distress for their mother as well (3,4). He continues by saying that this behavior is ironical but it reflects the sad state of the world that we live in. Then he targets the one of the sources that promoted xenophobia, the newspapers like *The Sun* and *Daily Mail*, which are constantly accused of “hate speech” and discrimination in the UK (Dearden) (5). Lowkey adds that these papers do not report any facts which need to be studied. The next four lines switch the subject with Lowkey enquiring the question of what poses a bigger threat to humanity? He compares the BAE Systems, largest arms producer in the UK with an Improvised Explosive Device or an amateur home-made bomb (“BAE Systems”). Although are both horrifying, but a suicide bomber is no match for the terror that the UAV drones produced by such corporation produce (5-8).

Lowkey then makes an allusion to the incident of 9/11, which was televised worldwide and it caused panic and fear among the people across the globe, as media had never shown an attack of this magnitude before (9). He touches on the subject, that it was an act of “terror” but it was not as powerful as the acts carried out by the US and NATO following it (10). The next two lines address the sensitive issue of occupied Palestinian land and their freedom movement which gets labeled as terrorism (11). He states the statistics that more people in Israel die from peanut allergies than Hamas attacks (“Nusar Milbes's Answer”) (12). This ties to Lowkey’s claim that some forms of terror are more powerful. The last four lines reflect back to the original premise of this song. After giving his arguments, Lowkey infers that clearly, the “real” definition never existed and it only came to life after becoming synonymous with Muslims. He then says that it seems like this definition depends on who the US views as an enemy. He finishes it by saying that the fancy of political language does not fool him and he can see through the façade. Now, people deserve to know who is the real terrorist (13-16).

The next verse is preceded by the recurring hook, reiterating the sentiments of displeasure over the wrong association of terrorism with Islam. Lowkey focuses on the

American neoimperial practice of overthrowing opposing leaders and their governments. He says that leaders like Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran and Salvador Allende of Chile were all democratically elected leaders of their states, who were punished for not conforming to US neoimperial agendas ("Disguising Imperialism") (1,2). Lowkey posits that this hypocritical behavior of America, who claims to be the champion of democracy goes against their proclamations ("Is America Still a Champion"). He says that any country that refuses to become a neocolony and does not conform to the exploitative neoimperial policies of the US government gets labelled as a terrorist state (3,4). He then asks if his opposition of US policies qualify him as a terrorist, since that seems to be the criteria (5). He then tackles the subject of suicides committed by war veterans, in this instance, the Vietnam war (6,7). Over 58,000 US troops lost their lives in combat during the war. The number of suicides by Vietnam vets following the war is reportedly three times as much (KETWIG). Lowkey wants to know the reason, what atrocities and acts of terror did they commit that haunted them to eventually take their own lives? The next two lines asks a question about the neoimperial superpower USA's footprint in the world. US is the only country in the world who has more than thousand military sites and bases spread across over 70 countries and territories abroad (VINE). The strongest arm of US empire, ready to serve democracy anywhere in the world (8,9).

Lowkey then tackles the stigma associated with Muslims with the right-wing politicians and critics throwing the term "Radical Islam" around to imply that Muslims are the only ones who have problems with the American brand of liberty (Taylor) (10,11). He mentions the names of two notable Latin-American political figures renowned for their opposition of US neoimperial policies in their countries, and both of them were not Muslims. He firstly mentions Hugo Chavez, who was the president of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013. Hugo was known for his antiimperialist policies, being an eminent opponent of the US' foreign policy and an outspoken critic of US backed neoimperialism and laissez-faire capitalism (Ellner 91). Lowkey then mentions Castro, another thorn in the sight of US neoimperialism (12,13). Castro turned Cuba into the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere in 1959. Castro had a highly hostile relationship with the US, which reached its boiling point in the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (History.com). The last four lines from the first verse are repeated here, reinforcing the message and counter-narrative of flawed definition of terrorism being propagated by the neocolonial powers. The hook returns after the second verse and is followed by a powerful bridge. It has repetition of the phrases "You think that I don't know/But I know, I know, I know/You think that we don't know, but we know" (ibid). This

serves as a message to the neoimperial powers that Lowkey is aware of their tactics. He uses “I” first and then “we”, suggesting a rise in the consciousness among the victims of this war on terror and everything that came along with it (14-17).

In the outro, Lowkey articulately mentions the most infamous instances of the acts of terror carried out by the neocolonial forces to further their neoimperial agendas. He starts with the Building 7 of the World Trade Center, questioning whether it was destroyed as a result of the terror attack or not, since no planes hit the Building 7 of WTC on 9/11. The next line tries to answer the query by naming the alleged culprit behind the fall of the WTC 7 – Nano thermite ("Did Nano-thermite Take Down the WTC?"). He continues by mentioning Diego Garcia, a US Navy based on an island that is a British Indian Ocean Territory but has also been used by the CIA and their private security contactors as a rendition and black site (Doward). The next line mentions the Contras, the right-wing rebel groups funded by the CIA to oppose the socialist Nicaraguan government. Contras were involved in human rights violations like raping women, kidnapping kids, and murdering people, on top of that, CIA was heavily involved in Contra cocaine trafficking (Guzman). The next line alludes to the use of white phosphorous munitions by the US military during the Iraq invasion in the First Battle of Fallujah (Gibbons-Neff). A substance prohibited under the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons against human targets ("Convention"). This line could also be a reference the usage of white phosphorus against Palestinians in Gaza by the Israeli Military (McCarthy). The next line mentions two Zionist right-wing terrorist organizations, Irgun and Stern Gang that carried out hundreds of terror attacks like the Deir Yassin village massacre, King David Hotel bombing, and the raping of children, both are universally recognized as terrorist organizations. ("List of Irgun Operations"; "Deir Yassin"; "Stern Gang"). These groups were responsible for deaths of thousands of Palestinians as well as the British.

Lowkey continues by adding two instances of American neoimperial terrorism, the Hiroshima nuclear bomb, and the Battle of Fallujah. 140,000 people died in Hiroshima by the bomb and its associated effects, which makes it the worst act of terror in the human history ("Bombing of Hiroshima"). In Fallujah, during the 2004 Iraq invasion, the US forces committed war crimes by using violence against unarmed civilians. They also used chemical weapons against human targets, as seen in the documentary *Fallujah, The Hidden Massacre* ("Fallujah, The Hidden Massacre"). The next line alludes to the fact the Nelson Mandela and his anti-capitalist African National Congress, remained on the US terror watch list until 2008.

The ANC were involved in guerilla warfare against apartheid and thus were labeled as terrorists. Despite getting legalized in 1990, the label did not go away, and Mandela, due to his association was labeled a terrorist ("Almost Till His Death"). The next line mentions another political figure Gerry Adams, who led political struggle for united Ireland but was constantly connected to the Irish Republican Army and labeled as a terrorist ("Gerry Adams"). Lowkey calls out Erik Prince and the mercenaries of Blackwater, now known as Academi in the next line, who have received millions from the US government in private security contracts. Blackwater has been accused of several human rights abuses during their time in Iraq including the 2007 Nisour Square Massacre, and Lowkey is calling them out for what they are –terrorists ("Decade After Massacre"). Lowkey mentions another American terrorist, John McVeigh, who was responsible for Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 which killed 168 people in one of the deadliest acts of terrorism in American history ("Timothy McVeigh"). The final two lines resound and summarize the message of this song US and the UK, are the really terrorists. Their neoimperial practices fall in line with the dictionary definition of terrorism.

#### **4.3.3 Neocolonialism and the Post 9/11 Neoimperial Enterprises**

This song addresses the sensitive subject of terrorism and especially the post 9/11 association of this word with Islam. As noted by several scholars, War on Terror was initiated to continue the neocolonial enterprise of United States and its allies following the end of the Cold War. After the Communist threat was exterminated, a new threat was “created” (Kieh 2013; Colás 2008; Colas and Saul 2007; Leonard). The paradigm shift following the September 11 attacks gave rise to a global phenomenon of Islamophobia. The word “Muslim” became synonymous with “terrorist”. This helped the US and its allies further their ambitions while labeling them as promotions of democracy and freedom. As described in Chapter 3, the determinants of neocolonialism come in various overt and covert manners. Lowkey goes on offensive in this song by identifying and contesting several elements of neocolonialism and neoimperialism. The role of media is mentioned like the newspaper The Sun, who distort the facts and give a voice to the neocolonial agendas. He used the name of just one newspaper to symbolize the shameful role of mass media. As noted by Kellner who quoted the words of ex Israeli PM Ariel Sharon, West’s corporate disinformation media played a significant role in aiding this narrative of good versus evil, “humanity” versus “the blood-thirsty,” “the free world” against “the forces of darkness,” which are trying to destroy “freedom” and our “way of life” (Kellner 50). The Patriot Act, Operation Enduring Freedom gave these neoimperial

powers unprecedented control, which they abused to the fullest (52). He also uses racial slurs used to address Arabs and South Asians in the movies and tv shows, which are also responsible for demonizing Muslims and fueling confused xenophobia.

The role of MNCs is also targeted in this song, with Lowkey mentioning the UK's biggest Arms manufacturer BAE Systems, Erik Prince and his private security firm, Blackwater. His comparison of this corporation and the lives taken by their products, such as the UAVs with that of an amateur home-made bomb carrying individual is more of a rhetorical one. He calls such MNCs as a bigger threat to human kind with their sophisticated weaponry like unmanned drones than an amateur bomber. The private security contractors benefit the most from wars as they are paid in millions by the governments ("Privatizing the War on Terror"). The use of militarist force on small scale by neoimperial powers is also mentioned like the use of drones. The practice of inciting revolts is noted by Lowkey, as the US meddled in the internal matters of different countries and sponsored coups. He mentions democratic nationalist leaders, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran and Salvador Allende of Chile, all of whom paid the price for opposing neocolonial agendas (Emiridge). He also adds the names of Socialist leaders Hugo Chavez and Fidel Castro, who remained targets of the CIA because of their anti-capitalism stance. The use of military for furthering neocolonial agendas, like Contras and Diego Garcia are also stated, along with the fact that the neoimperial empire of the US has more than 1000 military bases across the world.

#### **4.3.4 Countering Narratives and Unmasking Terrorists**

The song *Terrorist?* by Lowkey is an excellent example of counter narrative by stating factual evidence to deconstruct the notion of terrorism associated with Islam, especially following the 9/11 attacks. He ingeniously builds his argument from the very basics, by starting with the dictionary definition of the word terrorism. By stating the actual definition, he set up the premise for the rest of his point, which is to show that the real terrorists are the neoimperialist powers. In this process of writing back, he addresses the confused xenophobes, suggesting that if they study the facts instead of buying into the right-wing propaganda, they might like Muslims the way they like their cuisines. The subject of powerful corporations being the real threats to humanity, who orchestrate different scenarios that can help them further their neocolonial agendas, mainly just maximizing their profits. In the present age where armed conflicts are taking place all around the world, arms manufacturers and the private security firms stand to benefit the most (Stephens). They serve as a very effective tool for

neocolonialists, who sell arms to both sides making millions of dollars. The mentioning of the bombings of Hiroshima, the atrocities of the Battle of Fallujah, the Oklahoma City bombing, CIA sponsored Contras, Blackwater killings, the Irgun massacres is an attempt by Lowkey to show that terrorism comes in different shapes, and such instances of terror are even powerful. By also mentioning the socialist leaders like Castro and Chavez and democratic leaders like Mandela and Gerry Adams, who struggled for their people and opposed the policies of US and UK, Lowkey adds that you do not have to be a Muslim to be labeled a terrorist—you just have to speak against the neoimperial US schemes. Lowkey.

The repeated four lines at the end of both verses carry a very strong message. He is telling the listeners that it's like the definition of terrorism did not exist until it was used to describe those who oppose the US, who has repeatedly committed acts that are classified as terrorism, as per the dictionary definition of the word. The fancy peddling of this rhetoric is all based on lies and Lowkey is bringing those walls down with his words. The chorus of this song is very significant as it reiterates the point Lowkey is trying to make. By pointing out the inherent fallacy in the contemporary definition of terrorism and its association with Muslims, he is deconstructing the neocolonial narrative. Lowkey adds that the neoimperialists, themselves are aware of what terrorism is, yet they put the label on Muslims. That is the first step in the resistance against the neoimperialism of this age. Lowkey intends to stir a debate with this song, and after presenting the facts, he rests his case by asking—So, who is a Terrorist? Who are the Terrorists? In this age of chaos and turmoil, largely caused by the prejudicial and fearful acts of the neocolonialists, this is a provocative and critical question to explore.

#### **4.4 Obama Nation (Part 2) – Lowkey featuring Black the Ripper & M-1**

*Obama Nation (Pt. 2)* is a song by Lowkey, featuring verses from Black the Ripper and M-1 from the political hip-hop duo Dead Prez. The song appears on his 2011 album *Soundtrack to the Struggle* and is a sequel to “*Obama Nation*”. The song addresses the American Foreign Policy and neoimperial presidency of the former US president Barack Obama and how the presence of a “Black” president in the Oval Office did not change anything. The song also features two verses from guest artists, M-1 and Black the Ripper, who are also political rappers. The song touches various subjects from the right-wing media propaganda, the use of banned weapons, Obama’s association with secret agencies and the continuation of war on terror, economic exploitation and many more. The song also features interesting literary features and clever use of poetic devices.

#### 4.4.1 Literariness of *Obama Nation (Part 2)*

Structurally, this song starts with a hook that recurs after each of the three verses. Each verse has 16 bars or lines. Following the verses, there is a snippet from a speech by Obama, where he makes a joke about predator drones. The rhythm of this song is sustained throughout by using end rhymes like “site...fight” multi syllable rhymes like “your arm...Pashtunistan” as well as internal rhymes like “the troops...the nukes”. Literary devices are present in abundance in this song such as similes like “Come out in the light, like a WikiLeaks site”, metaphors like “Obama the bomber”, irony like “...First black president ... same president just bombed an African country”, personification like “White power with a black face”, enjambment like “...the dark will...Come out in the light ...”, imagery like “...babies looking like two-headed aliens”, alliteration like “...Osama or from Obama...” assonance like “Colin Powell and Condoleezza”, consonance like “handsome ...Afghanistan...ransom”, allusion like “Last stage of imperialism ...”, homophone like “Obama nation ... abomination” which greatly help in getting the intended message across (Lowkey ft. Black the Ripper & M-1).

#### 4.4.2 Figurehead President and Neocolonial Coercions

The song starts with a chorus that will follow the three verses later in the track. The chorus has two samples; in the first one, the singer refuses to vote for Obama and refuses to accept the idea of an Obama nation. It is followed by two lines that are sampled from the song *Words I Never Said* by Lupe Fiasco, another conscious rapper who was also critical of Obama (“Limbaugh is a Racist”). These lines mention two right-wing media figures Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck, who have repeatedly said racist things and have been involved in drumbeat of conservative misinformation (“Media Matters”). The second line alludes to the attacks carried out by Israel in Palestine during the 2008 Gaza Massacre (“Gaza War (2008–09)”). The three week long confrontation resulted in the death of 1417 Palestinians and 13 Israeli soldiers. Throughout this siege, Obama sided with Israel in their efforts to “defend” their country (Myers and Cooper). This prompted the artist to criticize Obama for indifference over the human rights violations by the IDF.

The first verse by M-1 opens with him positing that once the listeners stop buying into the right-wing rhetoric and narratives disseminated by the neocolonial forces, the reality will become clear as a day to them (1-3). The narratives propagated by the mass media and the neoimperialists, that served as the basis for war on terror and everything that came with it

actually benefit the US more than anyone else. They helped the US in establishing an unprecedented amount of control, especially over the resource rich Middle East (Chengu). He then cites the African heritage of Obama to raise the question—who are the Africans going to blame now for the neocolonial exploitations by the US? (3,4) The next line moves to a serious subject, the use of depleted uranium weapons on the battlefields in Iraq by the U.S. military (5). In 2003, the US forces fired toxic material on the populated areas in Iraq. These munitions have been accused of causing cancer and birth defects, which is mentioned subsequently in that line (Oakford) (6). The next two lines take a jab at the real criminals. M-1 argues that if you follow the money, it will lead you to the real culprits and the masterminds. These lines refer directly to the first order of business in neocolonialism, money ("Lies, Damned Lies, and Neocolonialism") (7,8). He continues by saying that this is just a game that they (corporations) play, they place someone who is good with words and has a great presence in front of the camera. This ties in with a 2014 study by Princeton university researchers, which showed that the US is no longer a democracy and has become an oligarchy, where wealthy elites wield the most power (Gilens and Page) (9,10). The next line addresses Obama's decision to keep the troops in Afghanistan, even a decade after the invasion. M-1 calls Obama a neocolonial puppet, a "black face" representing the agendas of the White powers, who was more than eager to obey their orders (11, 12).

M-1 then calls Obama a master manipulator and a liar. These are criticisms of the continuation of the policies of President Bush by him, despite promising "change" during his election campaign ("Obama Fact Sheet"). Thus, his policies were even dishonorable than his predecessor (13). What makes it worse is that he received Nobel Peace Prize, despite being responsible for intensifying drone program, increasing number of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and bombing 7 different countries (Salhani) (14). The next line points at the theories that Obama's job as a community organizer in Chicago, Illinois was a cover, when in reality, he was working for the CIA (Madsen) (15). The next line pays homage to Deputy Chairman Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, important members of the Black Panthers Party in Illinois (16). They were slain by the FBI following the orders of J. Edgar Hoover ("Who Was Fred Hampton"). He then voices his hope that the reality of atrocities committed by these neocolonialists will one day be revealed (17). He mentions the Wikileaks, who published thousands of classified documents covering everything from the film industry to national security and wars, including the infamous footage of US military helicopter killing civilians in Iraq in 2010 ("WikiLeaks") (18). He then alludes to the words of Nkrumah, who called "Neo-



Colonialism, the Last Stage of imperialism” and argues that he was right in his classification. The last line is also an allusion, with M-1 quoting the words of American musician Marvin Gaye, from his song *Inner City Blues* (1971), where he says “this ain’t living.” M-1 is asserting that life under Obama administration is not what life is supposed to be, immoral and unjust (19-21).

In the second verse, Black The Ripper starts off with spelling out Obama’s name to foreshadow the deconstruction that is about to come (1). He begins by stating that not everyone is buying into the brand of “change” that Obama is selling. He says that the informed and politically conscious people are not duped by the political trickeries that Obama and his corporate orchestrators employ to influence and mislead the public (2). He brings up Obama’s history of working at the Business International Corporation, a front company for the CIA (Madsen) (3). Black The Ripper adds that we are aware of your affiliations with the agency (4). He continues that just the way NSA and other US agencies are monitoring the people, the informed individuals are keeping an eye on the activities of the government (5). He carries on by letting Obama and the powers behind him know that they cannot control the masses as easily as they think (6). There people are going to eventually revolt and an uprising is inevitable now (7). Taking a dig at how the neoimperialists silence their critics, he rhetorically asks them how are they going to stop the opponents? By nuking them or with the help of the US military, as they are known to do (8).

Black The Ripper then argues that Obama’s African American heritage doesn’t really make any difference, now that he occupies the “White House” (9). White House has been a symbol of neocolonial exploitative enterprises initiated by the US presidents. Obama did not do anything to empower the Black communities and in reality, his reign was even worse for African Americans (Riley) (10). He then moves to the subject of American invasion and then stay in Iraq, largely associated with the control over the oil and other resources of the region (Ahmed) (11). Despite Obama’s claims to withdraw the troops from Iraq, he actually increased the number. Black The Ripper wants Obama and neoimperial powers to stop being leaches and leave the natural resources for the Iraqi people (12). As there was no major shift in the policies of Obama from the Bush era, despite the slogans of “Change” during the campaign, Black The Ripper calls him just another neocolonial puppet (13). Similarly, Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, who were African Americans and held positions of Secretary of State during the Bush era, did not make any difference (14). He uses the word “house niggas” for them, a

pejorative term used for the slaves favored by the masters and given easy work ("House Negro") (15). He concludes his verse by condemning the Obamas for the atrocities committed by them, saying that one day they will pay for their wrongdoings, finishing it off with Obamanation (abomination) (16).

Third and the final verse starts with Lowkey comparing Osama with Obama and posing the question—which one of the two is a bigger threat to humanity? A man allegedly hiding in the caves in the mountains of Afghanistan or the man who has the strength of the largest military in the world at his disposal (1). There are no comparisons between a superpower that has its military stationed on bases across the globe, from Chagos Archipelago to the Okinawa Island, and an individual with very limited resources (2). He then continues by saying that not many rappers talk about such issues (3). He is referring to the lack of conscious and political content in the mainstream rap lyrics. He connects this with the never closed Guantanamo Bay (4). A detention facility that was supposed to be shut down by Obama, but it was never closed ("What is Guantanamo Bay?"). He continues by addressing the people who were fooled by Obama's slogan of "change" during his pre-election campaign (Ehrentraut) (5). He hopes that they did not celebrate his victory by erecting a statue in his honor or getting his face tattooed, because things did not change at all. Lowkey starts to list the acts carried out by Obama that were contradictory to his slogans. He mentions the use of targeted killings drone warfare by Obama, which started as soon as two days after he took the office (6). By 2011, he had authorized more than four times the number of attacks that President George W. Bush (McKelvey). The next line alludes to a 2008 Obama campaign claim that he will end the war in Iraq once he becomes the president, as well as the end of war being among his top priorities (7). Lowkey takes a jab at Obama's failure to end the war, and the fact that he opened new fronts (Delman). The following line mentions Obama and the CIA's connection to the 2010 coup attempt in Ecuador against president Rafael Correa, just one year after he took the office (Madsen) (8). Correa's crime was to increase government's control over oil firms in the country and ousting the US forces from their airbase in Manta (ibid).

The next line alludes to the similar Obama sanctioned CIA destabilization and coup attempts against the left-wing Socialist presidents Evo Morales and Hugo Chavez of Bolivia and Venezuela, due to the "threat" that they pose to capitalism (9). The attempts by the US government to topple the left-leaning Chavez and Morales were reported in the documents leaked by the Wikileaks (Beeton and Main). The next line mentions the presence of US military

in Columbia, following a 2009 agreement, to maintain a foothold in Latin America (10). This allowed US soldiers to be posted at seven military bases ("Colombia, U.S. Sign Deal on Use of Bases"). The next two lines carry within them a very deep connotative meaning. Obama, during his time as an Illinois state senator, was greatly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and critical of US policy (11). Obama was often seen attending Arab community events including a fundraiser in 1998, where Edward Said was the keynote speaker. However, during his campaign and following his election, he switched his position to an extremely pro-Israel stance (Abunimah). Lowkey mentions the names of two people who would testify that he is right about Obama; Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian-American journalist, who had interactions with Obama until 2004 and Rev Jeremiah Wright, Obama's former pastor, who was critical of Israel among other socio-political issues in the US (12). Obama distanced himself from Wright and his views once the public became aware of them (Abunimah). The next two lines address the continuation of wars by Obama, who expanded the operations to seven countries including Pakistan, Yemen and Libya (13,14). The following line was quite prophetic, as it was written in 2011, before the Syrian conflict truly picked up. Lowkey calls Obama the Bomber, a wordplay on his name and says that Obama is getting ready to war in Syria ("Timeline of the US Involvement "). The final two lines argue that Obama, despite being the first African American president, for whom the public had high expectations and hopes of change, did absolutely nothing. They hoped that his presidency would be favorable for the Africans. Instead, Obama authorized airstrikes on African states of Libya and Somalia (15,16).

#### **4.4.3 Neocolonial Endeavors During Obama's Reign**

The song touches multiple subjects, from US policies in general and Obama's policies in particular to illustrate the mechanisms of neocolonialism in the contemporary era. All three of the verses along with the chorus brilliantly foreground the US neoimperialism and its oppressive schemes that enable it. The role of mainstream and West's corporate disinformation media in furthering neocolonial agendas is a well-established fact. Media figures like Rush Limbaugh and Glenn Beck serve as mouthpieces for neocolonialist, who feed the masses with the narratives that suits their agenda. Political meddling to install pro-capitalist governments is one of the neocolonial mechanisms that have been mentioned in this song, for example coup in Ecuador, Morales and Chavez, the regime war change in Syria. In the first verse, M-1 outrightly calls him a neocolonial puppet, who is just a "Black" face but the real power is "White", that lies behind him. He is suggesting that Obama has been placed in the White House

by the neocolonial powers as a puppet, the corporate elite who are the real puppeteers. The role of military forces is the most highlighted determinants of neocolonialism in this song. From the use of banned munitions in Iraq to the stay in Afghanistan; presence of military bases all over the world like in Chagos, Okinawa and Columbia to drone warfare and the bombings of seven countries including Pakistan, Syria, Yemen and Libya. They have also mentioned the role of intelligence agencies as proxies for the neoimperialists like Obama's time at BIC, a front company for the CIA as well as their involvement in the coup in Ecuador. Economic exploitation of natural resources is explicitly mentioned like the line "Natural resources ain't yours, it's theirs, give it back". Overall, all major determinants of neocolonialism and neoimperialism have been expounded in these verses.

#### **4.4.4 Contention to Neocolonial Façade of Change**

The relevance of the counter narratives and contention to the narratives and ideologies of neocolonialism in this song are much deeper than just the criticism of a political figure. It also exposes the sinister methods of control used by the neocolonial forces to keep the masses distracted and sell them illusion of change. The start of Obama's reign as the president of the US was deemed as a landmark event. There was considerable hope surrounding him that he would be a catalyst for change. Yet, both of his terms were significantly worst, especially for the minorities and the rest of the world. As mentioned earlier, scholars believe that America stopped being a democracy long time ago (Gilens and Page). Now, corporations, the true perpetrators of neocolonialism bring in candidates of their own choosing, while they pull all of the strings. So, it doesn't really matter if an African American president sits in the White House, he is going to serve their agendas. This point is reiterated throughout the song as Obama just being a face while the neocolonial powers make the decisions. That is why the message of this song is so significant, as it provides a counter to the narratives of Obama administration. It posits to call him and his government for what they truly were, another neocolonial puppet. By mentioning the instances of decisions made by Obama that qualify as neocolonial acts, the artists try to raise canções among the masses who were fooled because of his "articulate and handsome" personality. They want people to know that Obama, the Nobel Peace prize holder bombed seven different countries. M-1's allusion to Nkrumah and his theory on neocolonialism is an excellent example to compare his reign with "Last stage of imperialism". It is important to ask the questions about the presence of forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, so many years following the invasion. The outro of the song, a snippet of Obama's speech where he jokes

about predator drones and “you will not see them coming”, is also symbolic as it sums up the indifference and disregard for human lives by him. Obama’s first authorized set of drone strikes also killed civilians, including a five-year-old child (Hasan). Presenting the listeners with facts and contesting the neocolonial narratives by empirically rendering the counter discourse, this song is a masterpiece of resistance literature.

## **4.5 The 3rd World—Immortal Technique**

*The 3rd World* is the title track of the 2008 Immortal Technique album *The 3rd World*. Immortal Technique describes the horrors of the neocolonial exploitations and oppression in the Third World countries that started during the imperialism era and continues to this day. He mentions states from Latin America, Africa, and Asia who have been subjugated by the neoimperialists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He uses the term “where I’m from” to represent his heritage and connection to the dominated nations, and by describing the experiences of the dominated population, he is offering a true representation of their sufferings.

### **4.5.1 Literariness of *The 3rd World***

Structurally, this song has two verses of varying length. The first verse has 24 lines while the second verse has 34 lines. Both verses are followed by a hook of 8 lines. The rhythm of this song is maintained throughout by using end rhymes like “fist...exist” multi syllable rhymes like “civilized us...despised us” along with internal rhymes like “weapons...elections”. Literary devices are present in abundance in this song such as similes like “makes the hood in America look like paradise”, metaphors like “the passport's an American gun”, irony like “people pray to the gods of their conquerors”, enjambment like “...the only place democracy's acceptable/Is if America's candidate is electable...”, imagery like “...I see the Third World like the rap game”, alliteration like “...they murder Coca-Cola union organizers...” assonance like “where they massacre”, consonance like “children born deformed”, allusion like “where the bombs that they used to drop on Vietnam...” which greatly help in getting the embedded message across (Immortal Technique).

### **4.5.2 Third World Profiteering of Colonial Past and Neocolonial Present**

The first verse opens with a direct allusion to the exploited resource rich regions of the Third World during the colonial eras (1). He is referring to the Gold and Diamond Rush in Africa and the Latin American states that were targeted during the imperialism by the European

powers to extract valuable resources like diamonds and gold ("Impact of Colonialism"). It is followed by a reference to the castles on the formerly known as Gold Coast in Ghana, which were sites where the slaves were kept before getting shipped off to the New World (2). He says that the water is still cursed from all the atrocities that were committed on the slaves here. The next four lines refer to the living conditions of the slums in the Third World, which would make the slums in the US, also called the hood, look like a paradise in comparison. Like the AIDS infested favelas in Caribbean states or the African countries amid civil wars, where streets are flooded with US made arms supplied during the Cold War era ("Report: U.S. Arms to Africa") (3-6). Not to mention the brutality by police in these regions is far worse than the hoods in America. The following two lines address some of the most sinister crimes committed against humanity. There are several genocides that took place in the Third World countries which were discovered years later and the perpetrators had tried to cover them up. Such as, Rwandan genocide, Bosnian genocide, Genocide of Isaacs and many more ("Genocides") (7,8). It could also be a reference to the fact that declassification of documents by the US government takes up to 25 years ("Declassification"). The next line refers to the Third World authoritarian regimes and their oppressive polices towards those who try to oppose them (9). It could also be an allusion to story of communist revolutionary Che Guevara, whose hands were chopped off by the US backed Bolivians after his execution ("Che Guevara is Executed"). The next line is a reference to the plantation of coca plant in Latin American states like Peru, which is used for making cocaine (10). He says that people have no other jobs in these Third World states, so they resort to growing narcotics. Their only job that they can get, are at the production houses of big corporations, which is modern day slave labor (11). The next line mentions that the things are so bad around these parts that even the UN peacekeepers do not come to the aid of the people anymore (12).

Immortal Technique then alludes to the use of bombs laced with banned depleted uranium by the US during the Vietnam War and later in Iraq and Afghanistan which led to different types of cancer and birth defects in newborns (Deraps) (13). He carries on the message of poverty in the Third World by alluding to the Afghans (14). The next four lines address the subject of Afghan poppy. He says that the poppy growers have lost the true meaning of Quran, as heroin, the eventual product of poppy seeds or any other narcotic are prohibited in Islam. He then says that these people are aware of the fact, yet they do not have any other choice because of poverty and years of war in their country (Felbab-Brown). They cannot survive on the unreliable aid supplies, so they turn to poppy fields (15-18). The next line

addresses another remnant of colonial era, the Christian religion. Immortal Technique says that people now follow the religion of their former masters, the same people who colonized them ("Philosophy of Colonialism") (19). The next lines address a sad reality about the Third World countries with colonial past, where political leaders and the people in power are usually corrupt (20). They exploit their own people while serving the agendas of their neocolonial masters and then launder that money through off-shore companies ("Corruption"). The next line refers to the US history of political meddling in the Third World countries to get pro-capitalism leaders elected, who would then be at their service as assets in the US' bid to maintain its global hegemony (21). If there are no democratic leaders who have America's support, then they also have the option to use military dictators (22). The last two lines were foreshadowing at best, as this song was released before the election of Obama as the US president. Immortal Technique says that the victory of a black president in the US will not bring about any change because ultimately, the neocolonial powers control the economy (23,24).

The hook of this song enlists some of the problems faced by the Third World countries with Immortal Technique repeating the phrase in seven lines. The first line is a reference to the parts of the Third World with ongoing armed conflicts like Syria, Sudan, Nigeria, Venezuela and many others ("10 Conflicts"). The places with civil wars and the warzones where everyday life revolves around combat. It could also be a reference to the occupied lands like Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Immortal Technique has been to a lot of these impoverished and war-torn countries like Afghanistan and his native land of Peru ("Immortal Technique: From Third World to New World"). He continues by alluding to the places with ongoing guerrilla war and insurgency movements against the governments. He follows it by saying that the colonizers "polluted" the Third World before leaving. This pollution is not just limited to the environment but every aspect of the lives of the natives, wiping away their real identities. The Third World is still paying the price of the legacies of colonialism. He also mentions the lack of clean drinking water problem, especially in the African countries. He continues by citing the alarmingly high rate of child mortality in the developing countries, especially in Africa. According to the WHO reports, more than 25,000 children under the age of 5 die every day, majority of these deaths take place in the sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. ("Child Mortality"). The final two lines of the hook voice the sad reality of the life in the Third World. Due to the constant colonial and then neocolonial exploitations, the economy of these states is now in tatters. He also voices hope—that the revolution will eventually come and the Third World will see better days.

The second verse opens up with Immortal Technique alluding to some of the racist practices of the Catholic Church and their role in aiding the Europeans and then the Americans exploit the Third World countries (1). Especially the Spanish and the Portuguese conquistadors, often had priests with them to convert the native people to Catholicism ("Christianity and Colonial Expansion in the Americas") (2). His next line touches on the point of racism mentioned earlier, as he alludes to the belief that the Catholic Church decided to use the image of a White person as Jesus, when in reality, he was a brown skinned Middle Eastern Jew (Robyn J. Whitaker) (3). He continues by mentioning the name of one of the most important popes of the late fifth century Pope Gelasius I, who was an African ("Gelasius I") (4). Immortal Technique hints at the fundamentally racist practices of the Catholic Church. He switches subject in the next line alludes to the lack of transparency in the democratic process in the Third World. He is referring to rigged elections by force and the tool most commonly used for it in the Third World is the Russian made AK-47 assault rifle ("AK-47") (5). The next line refers to presence of military and the mushrooming of private contractors, who are paid to protect the investments by the big corporations (6). This line could also be referring to the military dictators in the Third World countries, who use their forces to subjugate their own people. Another neocolonial exploit of the poor Third World countries is mentioned in the next two lines. Immortal Technique addresses the Western practice of sex tourism, especially in the impoverished countries of Africa, Latin America and East Asia. He says that the rich White businessmen are mostly involved in these practices of sodomy (Mendoza 2013) (7,8).

The next line refers to the reality TV show *Survivor*, a show where the contestants have to survive in harsh conditions ("Survivor (American TV Series)") (9). He says that no producer would dare to film a show here, because the realities are too harsh and their contestants will not be able to survive them. He alludes to the use of death squads by corporations like Coca-Cola in Colombia to silence the union leaders who were trying to organize Coca-Cola's plants and raise voices against their exploitative stratagems (Brodzinsky) (10). The next line talks about another issue faced by the developing countries with the Spanish term "está podrido", which means that the justice system is also rotten. It connects with the previous line and carries on the message (11). He continues by saying that the governments use the issue of narcotics for their politic, but never do anything to eradicate them. The word "perico" here is used as a slang for cocaine ("Colombia's Drug Trade") (12). The next line is in Spanish, which translates as "rebel buried alive as/and another argentine disappeared" (13). It is an allusion to the state terrorism and massacre of left-wing supporters in Argentina from 1974 to 1983(14). The United



States-backed forces committed politicide against political dissidents and anyone associated with socialist ideology. Thousands “disappeared” in what is deemed as one of the most gruesome acts of crimes against humanity and genocide in the recent memory ("Dirty War"). It is also a reference to Che Guevara, an Argentinean, and a “well known rebel”, who was buried at a secret location, and thus he also “disappeared”. As CIA and the US government supported these crimes against humanity, Immortal Technique takes a jab at the fact that the CIA is never prosecuted under the RICO laws, despite committing such heinous crimes (15). RICO law refers to the prosecution and defense of individuals who engage in organized crime ("RICO Law"). He continues by adding that not only did the colonizers bleed us dry, but they also destroyed the indigenous cultures in the name of “civilization” (16). As colonization was based on the ideology of cultural hierarchy and supremacy of the Europeans, they sacked of cultural patterns and stripped their cultural values to “civilize” them (Kortright) (17,18).

The next line alludes to the atrocities committed by the imperialists on the native population in the Latin America, especially by the Spanish conquistadors (19). Particularly, the Taíno people, who were the earlier victims of Spanish colonization ("Tainos"). Later, once the African slaves were brought in, they were also treated in the same way. In conclusion, Blacks and Native Americans were the victims of both rape and slavery in the Latin America, which lead to their use of Spanish language, which makes them Latino ("History of Latin America"). The next line refers to the gentrification of the native people by the foreign corporations, who established control over their natural resources (20-24). He says that they used “Agent Provocateur” to divide the people, which is French for “inciting agents”, and is commonly used to describe secret infiltrators employed to provoke social groups to take rash actions, so that they could be condemned or accountable to punishment ("Agent Provocateur") (25). He continues by saying that every revolutionary leader such as Che Guevara and the political figure who tried to stand up against the tyranny of neocolonial powers, they were assassinated (26). The sentiments in the lyrics pick up intensity as Immortal Technique declares that he is going to initiate a worldwide revolt against the neocolonialists, which even the “Anti-Communist dictators” won’t be able to stop (27). This is an allusion to the military dictators who rose to power to fight the socialist movements, with the backing of the US during the Cold War (28). He continues by addressing the free medical aid packages sent to the underdeveloped countries, which usually contain old and expired drugs, like *Theomersal*, a chemical containing high amounts of Mercury found in vaccines ("Thiomersal") (29). He concludes the verse by

comparing the state of highly commercialized rap music industry with the corporations bleeding the Third World dry, both of which in his opinion need a nationalization (30-32).

#### **4.5.3 Neocolonial Exploits and Socio-cultural Malaise in Third World**

Immortal Technique's genius and awareness of the socio-political malaise caused by the neocolonial exploits is evident in this song, with his consummate approach targeting every aspect of neocolonialism. He translates his experience as a "Third World born" through his lyrics, and enlists all of the factors that are responsible for leaving the former colonies as underdeveloped and developing states. His collective representation of the sufferings of the subjugated circles, who are still at the mercy of the legacies of colonialism is a very accurate picture of how neocolonialism is bleeding the Third World white. Immortal Technique expounds every major determinant of neocolonialism as well as the consequences faced by the exploited circles as a result in this song. The role of MNCs and corporations like the mining companies who "rip" the natural resources out, taking them away from the people who rightfully deserve them. The modern-day slave labor in the warehouses and production facilities of these corporations, as well as their tactics to silence any attempts to unionize like Coca-Cola union organizers murders is also mentioned. He also mentions the role of these "Wall Street" corporate powers behind the overthrowing of the governments that hinder their capitalist ambitions, as well as the corporate elite who hold the real power while the US presidents are just the figureheads. The inciting, arming and financing revolts and regional conflicts and intelligence agencies' operations, a classic neocolonial tactic is also mentioned like the reference to US weapons being used in the civil wars in Africa, CIA trained Bolivians who killed Che Guevara, the dirty war in Argentina and the assassination of every revolutionary leader. Political meddling and support of dictators who commit crimes against humanity on the behest of neocolonial powers is also mentioned like the reference to Bolivians, dirty war in Argentina, anti-Communist dictators, only way they accept democracy is if the candidate of their choosing wins and overthrowing of democratic leaders.

Immortal Technique also mentions the cultural imperialism by the colonizers, which continues till this day. Lines like "I'm from where people pray to the gods of their conquerors", "They pray to white Spanish Jesus, who's face is this?" and "Destroyed our culture and said that you civilized us" depict the loss of native and indigenous cultures and religions. The sufferings of the African, South Asian and Latin American impoverished countries are highlighted throughout this song like "AIDS-infested Caribbean slum", "grow coca, 'cause the

job market doesn't exist", "Cause that food-drop parachute does not come every day". His inference that the conditions in the Third World countries make the most underdeveloped and poor parts of the US look like a paradise in comparison is also symbolic. These are just few instances of what the life is like for the marginalized circles of the Third World countries. It is a true to life representation of the miseries that are a direct result of neocolonial practices by the money-hungry corporations and their factotums. The chorus reverberates the despairs of the marginalized by presenting the current situation of the Third World. The final line of the chorus is the most symbolic one; "Constant occupation leaves the Third World torn". First it was the colonizers and now it is the neocolonial forces, trying to maximize their profits at the cost of human lives, leaving the under-developed under-developed and in disarray.

#### **4.5.4 Illustration of Third World Problems and Raising the Voice**

Immortal Techniques description of the grim circumstances of the Third World states in the present age while simultaneously tracing the root causes responsible for their condition is a great way to educate the listeners. He builds his argument by listing all of the maneuvers of neocolonialism in the present day Third World while also linking it to how this exploitation and oppression began in the first place. The song not only serves as a great reminder and an eye opener for the listeners to warn them of the horrors of neocolonial capitalist endeavors but also aims to motivate the subjugated to rise against the systems of oppression. His raw and realistic depiction is also reinforced by his repetition of "where I'm from", which also bolsters the legitimacy of his illustration of the Third World problems and the causes behind them. By highlighting the mechanics of neocolonialism that are used as a justification to maintain hegemony, he emphasizes that the war against communism in the past and the current war on terror are just pretexts for the neocolonial powers to maintain their control. His declaration that "So I'm a start a global riot/That not even your fake anti-Communist dictators can keep quiet" is also very symbolic, as it sums up his aspirations to promote a global consciousness among the subjugated circles. This song takes a confrontational approach and it aims to establish a different narrative. A narrative that is representative of the real condition of the exploited neocolonies. A narrative that illustrates just how sinister neocolonialism and its offshoots are for the people of the Third World. This song is not just an act of writing back, it's an act of standing up to the neocolonial powers.

## 4.6 The 4<sup>th</sup> Branch—Immortal Technique

Immortal Technique's track, *The 4th Branch*, is a part of his 2003 album *Revolutionary Vol. 2*. The song illustrates the significant role of media and its propaganda as a transmitter of the neocolonial narratives. The title of the song alludes to the notion that media has become the 4<sup>th</sup> Estate or the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch of the government. Describing it as "the 4th branch" highlights the extent of power it carries and how it acts as a true political actor instead of being an impartial observer of politics (Lee 102). This song was released following the 9/11 attacks and in the first years of Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Immortal Technique eloquently weaves myriad theses into the principal idea of media as an apparatus for neocolonial enterprises.

### 4.6.1 Literariness of *The 4th Branch*

Structurally, this song starts with an intro, and has two verses of 24 bars or lines each. A refrain of 8 lines follows both verses and the song is concluded by an outro ("Refrain"). The rhythm of this song is maintained throughout by using end rhymes like "Jennings...Hemings" multi syllable rhymes like "of a nation...assassination...incarceration" along with internal rhymes like "How could this be, the land of the free...". Literary devices are present in abundance in this song such as similes like "Trapped in a ghetto region like a Palestinian kid", metaphors like "Condoleeza Rice is just a new age Sally Hemings", irony like "You really think this country never sponsored terrorism", enjambment like "...tryna murder Saddam/When you gave him those chemical weapons...", imagery like "...stole his religion and painted him White", alliteration like "...manufactured missiles and M-16's..." assonance like "the free, home of the brave", consonance like "contracts and corrupted American dreams", allusion like "The voice of racism preachin' the gospel is devilish..." which greatly help in getting the intended message across (Immortal Technique).

### 4.6.2 Corporate Mass Media and Neocolonial Exertions

The song opens up with an intro by Immortal Technique, who uses figurative language to refer to the colonialism of the past. He says that despite this being the "new age" and even after the turn of the new century, the past still haunts us. This past refers to the legacies of colonialism still manifesting themselves in the form of neocolonialism. He warns those who are supporting and aiding the system of oppression devised by the neocolonial powers. One day they will have to pay for the crimes against humanity that they are complicit in. The intro

concludes with a reference to the war on terror which was in its initial years, where Immortal Technique says that, this will be the end of humanity. The first verse starts with an allusion to Rev. Jerry Falwell of Thomas Road Baptist Church who said extremely xenophobic things about Islam, calling it “satanic” and used inappropriate words for the Holy Prophet in an interview (Abdulla 1066) (1,2). Immortal Technique is calling the reverend’s church fake, as they do not represent the true teachings of Christianity and calls his preaching of devilish. He continues the subject of religion by saying that the true essence of a religion is a spiritual connection with God. The next line is in connection with the first two lines where he says that Jesus is the most quoted prophet in Quran (3,4). He wants to let the fundamentalist Christians like Jerry Falwell and those conservatives in the US, who started viewing war on terror as a war with Islam know that Jesus is the most quoted prophet in the Holy Book of Muslims ("List of Characters and Names Mentioned in the Quran"). The subject switches in the next line as he addresses the American invasion on Iraq, mainly aimed at overthrowing Saddam Hussain (5). The US military indiscriminately bombed neighborhoods across Iraq, resulting in thousands of civilian deaths ("Casualties of the Iraq War"). The next line points at the hypocritical US neocolonial practice of using a dictator to do it’s bidding when it was useful, like providing him with banned chemical weapons during the Iraq-Iran war (Harris and Aid) (6). When he stopped being useful, he was disposed off like a pawn. He continues by saying that this type of information is not provided by the mainstream media and news outlets. He mentions the name of Peter Jennings, who was a famous news correspondent for ABC News show *World News Tonight* ("Peter Jennings Search") (7). He continues by paralleling former Secretary of State for the Bush administration Condoleezza Rice with the houses slave Sally Hemings, who worked for Thomas Jefferson ("Jefferson–Hemings Controversy") (8). Not only is he implying that Rice has an affair with Bush like Hemings and Jefferson but also that she is just another house slave, despite holding a position of power in the US government. The next few lines again touch the subject of religion, with Immortal Technique saying that he is trying to explain these things in a language that can be critically evaluated, with words that are laced with pain and suffering of the marginalized circles that he represents. The next line is an analogy to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas ("Judas Iscariot"). It could be a reference to living in a predominantly White society whose lineage that can be traced back to Europe. In connection with the next line, it means that he feels guilty by being associated with the offspring of the people who betrayed Christ, and then White-washed it to give the image of a European religion (9-11).

He continues by saying that the teachings of Bible were then “tainted” (12). This could be a reference to the use of Christianity as an excuse for colonization and the notion of “White Man’s Burden”. The symbolic word here is “tainted” as it denotes that the conservative rightwing Christian fundamentalism does not represent the true form of Christianity, that in his opinion is blasphemous in nature (13-15). He continues by saying that due to him raising his voice against the system of oppression, he is facing the prospect of getting assassinated, or locked up in a federal prison or even the notorious Guantanamo Bay (16). This means that anyone who tries to challenge the neocolonial hegemony will face these consequences. His critique intensifies in the next lines as he targets one of lines from the US national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, and questions the validity of the claim that America is the land of the freedom and brave people (“Star-Spangled Banner”) (17,18). He argues that America is none of those things as it was built on the genocide of one race and slavery of another, the evil twins of imperialism and the real legacy of the United States. He continues by saying that the corporate America is also going against these supposed American “values” as they are constantly involved in neocolonial practices around the world (19).

The next line poses a question, asking the miseducated Americans about the involvement of their country in acts of terrorism around the world (20). He argues that the US has been continuously committing crimes against humanity in the name of world peace and fighting for freedom (21). He mentions couple of such instances like Salvadoran Civil War and CIA training and arming Contra rebels in Nicaragua (“Salvadoran Civil War”) (22). The US aided the dictators in El Salvador against the pro-communism left-wing groups while arming and sponsoring the anti-communism right-wing rebel groups against the socialist Government in Nicaragua (“Contras”). The first verse concludes with Immortal Technique saying that due to the content of his music and his political views, he is being called a traitor. The government wants to charge him with treason because he refuses to turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses committed in the name of patriotism by the US (23,24).

The first verse is followed by a refrain, where Immortal Technique analogizes the mass media with a secret government program which was designed for mind control techniques called Project MKUltra (“MKUltra”). He continues by saying that the media is used to deliver subliminal messages that alter the thinking of the viewers, which he dubs as suggestive thinking (Vokey and Read 1232). This mind morphing practice changes the perspective of the general public to align it with the government’s agendas. He says that the media is trying to influence

the perceptions of the marginalized communities of the ghetto in the US, so that they do not speak up about the discriminations faced by them. He says that mass media only offers a generalized view and never focuses on the actual problems faced by the people. He continues by questioning the reality behind the US slogan of “war on terror” after the 9/11 attacks which was dubbed as the fight against terrorism to protect American freedom. He implies that the reality is neither of these two things as the US is simply furthering its neocolonial enterprises. The refrain concludes with him asking the miseducated Americans to read about the history of their country, which is drenched in the blood of native Americans and the African slaves. He also stresses that people need to stop buying into the lies told by the corporate news and press.

The second verse opens with Immortal Technique going back to highlighting the similarities between religions by using splendid symbolic imagery and allegory. He alludes to the fact that Islam, Christianity and Judaism are all Abrahamic religion and have the same origins ("Abrahamic Religions") (1). He continues by saying that the followers of these religions have been divided and now the neocolonial powers have brought them to the brink of a “holy war” by their equation of Islam with terrorism (2). Said in the connection to the war on terror, which was still fresh at the time of this album’s release, Immortal Technique is trying to nullify the clash of religions ideology behind the war on terror (3). He addresses the irresponsible role by the media reporters, who do not report the real situations of the warzones (4). He says that the correspondents are not fulfilling their journalistic responsibilities as they do not address the source of the conflict. The mass media does not report the interventions of the NATO countries in the Middle East labelled as “humanitarian interference”, something that is going on till this day (LIU 3) (5).

He continues to criticize mass media for turning a blind eye to the atrocities committed by neocolonial powers by alluding to the lack of coverage and condemnation of Israel’s human rights abuses in the Battle of Jenin (Pappe) (6). He continues by mentioning the role played by the US in enabling the Israelis with their military aid (7). He is saying that the weapons provided by the US are used against the Palestinians and the US is complicit in the Palestinian genocide ("Israel–United States Military Relations"). He argues that this is the representation of a corrupted American dream, as the US is actively involved in stripping liberty away from people in the Third World (8). The next line targets the lack of media coverage and the West’s corporate disinformation media’s censorship of the reports that highlight the atrocities committed by their troops in Iraq and Afghanistan (9). Corporate news media is thus truly the

4<sup>th</sup> branch of the government. He continues by highlighting the neocolonial exploit of Iraq for its vast reservoirs of oil. A perspective shared by several analysts that the war on Iraq was just a cover to establish US foothold in the region and allow the corporations to control and monopolize the oil production (Jamail) (10).

He continues by highlighting the poverty and the standard of life in most of the Third World countries and says that democracy is of no use if the living conditions are this miserable (11). The part played by media, connecting to the earlier suggestive thinking reference, he says that the media has brainwashed the masses who are blind to logic and reasoning since they cannot think for themselves (12). The next line addresses the loss of lives that occurred since the initiation of the War on Terror, as millions have lost their lives as a result of the chain of disruption in the Middle East caused by it (13). Immortal Technique then confronts the US for using war on terror as a front for furthering neoimperial agendas and labeling it as the “Fight for Freedom” (14). He says that the situation in the Middle East is spiraling out of control. As history would have it, the Iraq invasion did not bring any peace to the region but the flames of unrest spread across the Middle East (15). He continues by alluding to the Patriot Act, which allowed the US intelligence agencies to conduct surveillance operations without any restrictions domestically against anyone suspected of “terrorism” (“Patriot Act”) (16). Immortal Technique is on the watchlist of the CIA for expressing his views against the American neoimperialism. He continues by saying that the conditions in the American hoods is similar to the occupied Palestine, where nobody cares about the living conditions of the residents and human lives have no value (17).

The final lines of the song reflect his ambitions and the price he is willing to pay (18). He says that his struggle to bring the truth to the people may cost him his life. As historically, people who stand up against the discriminating and exploitative polices of the neocolonial powers, faced dire consequences (19). He says that when I meet a similar end, people will remember me as someone whose struggle for truth helped in bringing down the elites and their puppets (20). He concludes the second verse by saying that I do not shy away from harsh truth, and directly addresses the people in power that I see you for what you truly are, neocolonial parasites. The verse is followed by a refrain and an outro, where Immortal Technique addresses the media directly by calling it the 4<sup>th</sup> branch of the government. He says that the news channels have hired dozens of former military officials who are flooding the airwaves with their biased



opinions. He calls them “machines” who should not be allowed to give their opinions on the matters concerning human lives (21-24).

He also points out the efforts of these West’s corporate disinformation media firms on face saving PR campaigns to assure their viewers that their reporting is unbiased, despite being home to extremely racist and ignorant individuals. These individuals then utilize the airtime to further pollute the minds of the already miseducated viewers. He then addresses the minorities living in America, the marginalized groups as well as the average American citizens. He says that the working class does not benefit from the wars or the subsequent corporate ventures for “rebuilding” those regions. The private security firms and contractors make money off of wars, average Americans do not. The common people are the pawns, who die in the wars and who are the cheap labor for the companies run by these corporations. He concludes the song by asking the average working-class citizens to stop watching the news and read about all the things that he just mentioned. The repetition of the word “read” highlights the importance of not buying the propaganda fed by the media and looking for the truth yourself.

#### **4.6.3 Critique of Corporate Disinformation Media as Neocolonial Determinant**

*The 4<sup>th</sup> Branch* by Immortal Technique is an excellent critique of the role of corporate mass media as a servant of the neocolonial narratives and its role as a powerful propaganda machine. The corporate capitalist elites have mercilessly exploited the vulnerability of Western public, who consider themselves progressive through deceitful manipulation of their genuine humanitarian leanings and viewpoint of justice. He addresses various subjects to illustrate the sway of misinformation propagated through the mass media, and the resultant indoctrination of American minds with miseducated notions about the values and conduct of their country. As Nye put it, media can serve as a type of indoctrination, which can influence and shape behaviors and opinions of others, stemming from the appeal of the culture, political values and policies of a nation (Nye 2004). Immortal Technique expounds the role of media as a major determinant of neocolonialism in the present age, and how it shapes the perspectives of the common people to be oblivious to the menace of neocolonialism. He mentions other determinants of neocolonialism, such as political meddling like “El Savador and the contras in Nicaragua”.

He also highlights the military intervention such as the supplying of chemical weapons to Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War and U.S. military aid to Israel. The role played by the intelligence agencies is also expounded like “CIA buggin' my crib”. The most important

however, is the control over media by the corporate elite, which has been fundamental to their success in the never-ending global exploitation campaign against the already impoverished nations. Immortal Technique touches on the subject with lines like “This is the information that they hold back from Peter Jennings” “Suggestive thinking causing your perspective to change”, “Embedded correspondents don't tell the source of the tension”, “stop letting corporate news tell lies to your children” and “Media censorship blocking out the video screens.” The content of his lyrics is highly relevant because the information aired by the news outlets has also been labeled as essential in not only ‘altering’ the people and decision-makers to different crises but also influencing the response by the authorities (Soderlund 2008). Immortal Technique is thus, highlighting the mechanisms of indoctrination by the mass media and their biased selective humanism approach while actively disseminating misinformation which ultimately assists the neocolonial powers further their global hegemony.

#### **4.6.4 Disrupting Neocolonial Pretexes and Contesting Media Narratives**

From the very title of this song, Immortal Technique started to call the corporate media what it really is, the fourth branch of the government. The neocolonial elite use the power and influence of mass media to contrive pretexes to justify their exploitative practices. The lyrics of this song, thus offer a strong contention to disrupt those pretexes and bring the truth to light. It is important to challenge these notions because the mass media plays a vital role in constructing narratives and justifications to explain and rationalize American actions. As it is an intermediary between the populace and politics, through mass media censorship and disinformation, the average citizen can be made blind to the reason. Immortal Technique takes a two-fold approach in this song; he foregrounds the biasness of the corporate media while imparting counter narratives to the ones projected by them. He addresses the moral turpitude of right-wing religious fundamentalists in the country and how American foreign policy is persistently constructed under false pretenses and propaganda, executed by the pawns of the neocolonial elites. Immortal Technique’s denunciation of the racist Church and the xenophobic Reverend, while simultaneously accentuating the similarities between Islam, Christianity and Judaism is a powerful example of educating the masses.

His exposure of the harsh realities about the involvement of the US in human rights abuses abroad which is never mentioned by the corporate media also invites people to look for the truth themselves. His illustration of position of the working class and marginalized circles in the system while linking it with the unremitting media propaganda that pushes the perception

of “we,” like they have something in common with the neocolonial capitalist elite running the country and their pawns in the corporate mass media. The biggest takeaway from this song is his stress on the idea of educating yourself so you could see through the façade erected by the forces that want to control you.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Both of the artists used their penmanship to accentuate, provide arguments, dispute, and counter the neocolonial discourse. Detailed scrutiny of the verses under the lens of the theoretical framework revealed neocolonialism’s divergent modes of operation and exploitation. The various facets of neocolonialism, identified in Chapter Three, were highlighted in all of the rap-verses to denote consequent sociocultural malaise. From the role of financial institutions to the MNCs, from political meddling to full-scale military interventions, each song targeted a different aspect of neocolonialism. The identification of these issues in Lowkey and Immortal Technique’s songs clearly contest concepts of Neocolonialism and offer a counter narrative to the Neocolonial discourse.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The aim of this closing chapter is to briefly recount the conclusions and results of this study. The determination of the features of neocolonialism and neoimperialism using the scholarship, the expounding and the contention to those mechanisms in the rap-verses through Textual analysis was done in the preceding chapters. This section will describe the findings and draw the conclusion by evaluating the resolution of the research questions stated at the start, in the light of the textual analysis of the selected rap-verses. While introducing the study, the researcher stated two questions whose answers were sought through this research. Textual analysis of the selected rap-verses by Lowkey and Immortal Technique provided the answers that were posed earlier. Lyrics of five songs in total were analyzed in total, three of them were by Lowkey while two of them were by Immortal Technique.

#### **Resolution of the Research Questions**

The first question sought the answer to the highlighting of neocolonialism in the selected rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique to represent sociocultural malaise caused by it in the Third World countries. Based on the scholarship the features neocolonialism and neoimperialism were determined as Loans and Foreign Aid, Political Meddling, Multinational Corporations, INGOS and NGOS, International Economic Institutions, Media/Social Media, Arms and Weapons Deals, Inciting, Arming and Financing Revolts and Regional Conflicts, Intelligence Agencies' Operations and Full-Scale Military Intervention.

In the song *Soundtrack to The Struggle 2* by Lowkey, which also featured commentary from Noam Chomsky, he addressed one of the biggest threats to the future of humanity, capitalism and the MNCs. The song expounded several neocolonial determinants like MNCs, Banks, Political Meddling, Media and Military, the indifference and lack of awareness of the neocolonial elites about the sociocultural malaise caused due to their capitalist ambitions. *Terrorist?* by Lowkey also offer an excellent exposure to the mechanisms of neocolonialism. Lowkey goes on offensive in this song by identifying and contesting several elements of neocolonialism and neoimperialism like corporate disinformation media, MNCs, use of militarist force, practice of inciting revolts and political meddling. These practices were responsible for spread of sociocultural malaise across the impoverished circles while the

neocolonial powers enjoyed their control. *Obama Nation (Part 2)* by Lowkey, which features verses from Black the Ripper & M-1 expounded various determinants of neocolonialism like right-wing and corporate mass media propaganda, the use of banned weapons, Obama's association with secret agencies and the continuation of war on terror, economic exploitation and political meddling. All three of the verses along with the chorus brilliantly accentuated the US neoimperialism and its oppressive schemes that enable it.

In *The 3rd World*, Immortal Technique translated his experience as a "Third World born" and described the horrors of the neocolonial exploitations and oppression in the Third World countries. The role of MNCs and corporations, inciting, arming, financing of revolts and regional conflicts, intelligence agencies' operations, political meddling, and cultural imperialism. First it was the colonizers and now it is the neocolonial forces, trying to maximize their profits at the cost of human lives, leaving them under-developed and in disarray. In *The 4th Branch*, Immortal Technique eloquently weaved myriad theses into the principal idea of media as an apparatus and a servant of the neocolonial narratives and its role as a powerful propaganda machine. He also mentions other determinants of neocolonialism, such as political meddling, military intervention and role played by the intelligence agencies. The most important however, is the control over media by the corporate elite, which has been fundamental to their success in the never-ending global exploitation campaign against the already impoverished nations.

The second research question sought the identification of the courses of disputation in the selected rap-verses to contest the concepts of neocolonialism. In every song mentioned above, both of the artists offered excellent counter narratives, as well as gave factual evidence and references to illuminate and contest neocolonial ideologies.

In the song *Soundtrack to The Struggle 2*, Lowkey contested the ideologies of neocolonialism by bringing them to the attention of the listeners and calling for them to rise against the capitalist corporations. Fundamentally, he endeavored to raise awareness about the oppressive neocolonial practices that exploits and victimize the people. The song *Terrorist?* by Lowkey is an excellent example of counter narrative by stating factual evidence to deconstruct the notion of terrorism associated with Islam, especially following the 9/11 attacks. He started with the basic definition and then continued to list the US neocolonial ventures that fit the definition. Ultimately, the song endeavors to stir a debate and make the listeners question the stigmatization of Muslims as "terrorists". *Obama Nation (Part 2)* by Lowkey showed that the

relevance of the counter narratives and contention to the narratives and ideologies of neocolonialism in this song are much deeper than just the criticism of a political figure. It also exposed the sinister methods of control used by the neocolonial forces to keep the masses distracted and sell them illusion of change.

In *The 3rd World*, Immortal Technique's description of the grim circumstances of the Third World states in the present age while simultaneously tracing the root causes responsible for their condition is a great way to educate the listeners. The song not only serves as a great reminder and an eye opener for the listeners but also aims to motivate the subjugated to rise against the systems of oppression. This song is not just an act of writing back, it's an act of standing up to the neocolonial powers. In *The 4th Branch* by Immortal Technique, he highlighted the use of power and influence of mass media to contrive pretexts to justify their exploitative stratagems by the neocolonial elite. The lyrics of this song, thus offered a strong contention to disrupt those pretexts and bring the truth to light. He took a two-fold approach in this song; he accentuated the biasness of the corporate media while imparting counter narratives to the ones projected by them.

### **The Corroboration of the Hypothetical Assumption**

The hypothetical assumption, presumed in statement of the problem, that the rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique, classified as political rap, seem to be expounding the determinants of neocolonialism and offer an anti-colonial critique has been verified. Each song addressed specific elements of neocolonialism and neoimperialism while refuting the discourse propagated by these powers. The forces bent on marginalizing the so-called Third World, while draining it of its resources. They have an assortment of tools at their disposal, which are employed and mobilized to assert and maintain their dominance. Voices of dissidence against their ideologies have come in different forms, and these verses make a significant and worthy contribution. The horrors of neocolonialism were clearly expounded, addressed and contested in the selected rap-verses of Lowkey and Immortal Technique. The textual analysis of the works has authenticated the research statement and validated the stance taken about the foregrounding and contention of neocolonial mechanism in their verses. Their lyrics also serve as a warning against the future of the world under neocolonialism.

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## APPENDIX

### 1: Soundtrack to the Struggle 2 – Lowkey Featuring Noam Chomsky

[Intro: Noam Chomsky, *Lowkey*]

You're listening to *Soundtrack to the Struggle 2* by Lowkey

Thank you for joining us, Noam.

In "Optimism Over Despair", you say, "It seems to me unlikely that civilization can survive really existing capitalism".

Would you be able to explain that statement for us?

Really existing capitalism is what we can see described in the press day after day  
We read that the major banks like, JPMorgan Chase, are increasing their investment in fossil fuels - including the most dangerous, like Canadian tar sands

And all of this is quite understandable on the assumption that the structure of our institutions is geared to maximising short-term profit and power, without regard to what might happen to the world in another twenty or thirty years

But that's spoke capitally, well we can't survive that...

[Verse 1: Lowkey]

Is it the economic system v the ecosystem?

How we gonna define deep when the seas have risen?

How can we define 'woke' when our sleep's commissioned?

Drowned out by Koch brother bots, how can the people listen?

Can't detoxify as we watch the sky fade to grey

The source devoured corporate power killed the nation's state

Sophisticated murder defined as innovation

Corporations wine and dine just to mine the information

Eight men versus humanity, terrorist who

His search engine knows your thought pattern better than you

In an environment resentful uprising is essential

The horizon is torrential, thinking silence will protect you

Subject to propaganda that terrifies the slumbered

We can jeopardise their cover if we energise the numbers

Collectivise or die, protect your mind or suffer

Life is paradise to some and a pair of dice to others

[Verse 2: Lowkey]

I saw horror in the eyes of a tired retired fireman  
 Knowing he couldn't help a child survive the frying pan  
 When we riot we disquiet the leviathan  
 Forget Iron Man I've got an iron lion's diaphragm  
 My salutations to those with imagination  
 Doom anticipated and that's no exaggeration  
 Your flag doesn't exist, let me back up that statement  
 What happens to the nation if the Queen has a tax haven?  
 Pushing these buttons you don't need a brave heart  
 Frontex turned the Mediterranean to a graveyard  
 Paperwall will drive you crazy if you let it  
 Had a mother burying her newborn baby in the desert  
 What's commonsensical is sensible to question  
 What seems to be a lesson is intellectual repression  
 Rebel against the system that deprived you of a voice  
 Rebel against this hell while our survival's still a choice

[Verse 3: Lowkey]

The state committed suicide cannibalised itself  
 While the banks treatin' fictitious capitol like it's wealth  
 Your lurid lobby system means corruption is legalised  
 Privatised healthcare, elsewhere people die  
 Rebellion lives in all those that dream of a better way  
 Refused to be brainwashed with false visions of yesterday  
 Choose to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted  
 So many choose the opposite, their spirit contradicted  
 Bring a child to the world where the future seems impossible  
 Five trillion dollars a year subsidising fossil fuels  
 The truth was in their eyes but you shrugged and just turned your back  
 I watched a family beg for help while their flat turned to ash  
 Apocalypse now, we saw our future in that damn building

CEOs loving profit more than they love their grandchildren

We saw our future in that damn building

CEOs loving profit more than they love their grandchildren

[Outro: Noam Chomsky]

Not to be concerned about the future, preferentially, you have to put yourself in the position of, say, Jamie Dimon - the CEO of the biggest bank, JPMorgan Chase. As CEO he has, essentially, two choices. One choice is to do exactly what he's doing - invest direct investments into the most profitable outcome, which happens to be the most dangerous fossil fuels. You can do that but the other alternative he has is to resign and be replaced by somebody else who'll do the same thing. But this is an institutional problem; not an individual one...

[Album version outro: Lowkey]

Frontex turned the Mediterranean to a graveyard (x4)

## 2: Terrorist – Lowkey

[Intro]

So, we must ask ourselves, what is the dictionary definition of *terrorism*? The systematic use of terror especially as a means of coercion, but what is terror? According to the dictionary I hold in my hand, *terror* is violent or destructive acts, such as bombing committed by groups in order to intimidate a population, or government into granting their demands. So what's a terrorist?

[Hook]

They're calling me a terrorist

Like they don't know who the terror is

When they put it on me, I tell them this

I'm all about peace and love

They calling me a terrorist

Like they don't know who the terror is

Insulting my intelligence

Oh how these people judge

[Verse 1]

It seems like the Rag-heads and Pakis are worrying your dad  
But your dad's favourite food is curry and kebab  
It's funny, but it's sad  
How they make your mummy hurry with her bags  
Rather read the Sun than study all the facts  
Tell me, what's the bigger threat to human society  
BAE Systems or home-made IED's?  
Remote-controlled drones killing off human lives  
Or man with home-made bomb committing suicide?  
I know you were terrified when you saw the towers fall  
It's all terror, but some forms are more powerful  
It seems nuts, how could there be such agony?  
When more Israelis die from peanut allergies  
It's like the definition didn't ever exist  
I guess it's all just dependent who your nemesis is  
Irrelevant how eloquent the rhetoric peddler is  
They're telling fibs, now tell us who the real terrorist is

[Hook]

They're calling me a terrorist  
Like they don't know who the terror is  
When they put it on me, I tell them this  
I'm all about peace and love  
They calling me a terrorist  
Like they don't know who the terror is  
Insulting my intelligence  
Oh how these people judge

[Verse 2]

Lumumba was democracy, Mosadegh was democracy  
Allende was democracy; hypocrisy, it bothers me  
Call you terrorists if you don't wanna be a colony  
Refuse to bow down to a policy of robberies

Is terrorism my lyrics?  
When more Vietnam vets kill themselves  
After the war than die in it  
This is very basic; one nation in the world  
Has over a thousand military bases  
They say it's religion, when clearly it isn't  
It's not just Muslims that oppose your imperialism  
Is Hugo Chavez a Muslim? Nah... I didn't think so  
Is Castro a Muslim? Nah... I didn't think so  
It's like the definition didn't ever exist  
I guess it's all just dependent who your nemesis is  
Irrelevant how eloquent the rhetoric peddler is  
They're telling fibs, now tell us who the terrorist is

[Hook]

They're calling me a terrorist  
Like they don't know who the terror is  
When they put it on me, I tell them this  
I'm all about peace and love  
They calling me a terrorist  
Like they don't know who the terror is  
Insulting my intelligence  
Oh how these people judge

[Bridge]

You think that I don't know  
But I know, I know, I know  
You think that we don't know, but we know  
You think that I don't know  
But I know, I know, I know  
You think that we don't know, but we do

[Outro]

Was Building 7 terrorism?



Was nano-thermite terrorism?  
 Diego Garcia was terrorism  
 I am conscious the Contras was terrorism  
 Phosphorous that burns hands – that is terrorism  
 Irgun and Stern Gang, that was terrorism  
 What they did in Hiroshima was terrorism  
 What they did in Fallujah was terrorism  
 Mandela ANC – they called terrorism  
 Gerry Adams IRA – they called terrorism  
 Erik Prince Blackwater – it was terrorism  
 Oklahoma, McVeigh – that was terrorism  
 Everyday USA – that is terrorism  
 Everyday UK – that is terrorism, every day  
 Every day, every day, every day, every day, every day, every day  
 You think that we don't know know but we do...

### **3: Obama Nation (Part 2) – Lowkey**

[Hook]

I don't, I don't want no, Obama, Obama Nation  
 I'm not gonna, vote for your inauguration  
 Cause I don't need your, Obama, Obama Nation  
 I'm not gonna

Limbaugh is a racist, Glenn Beck is a racist  
 Gaza strip was getting bombed, Obama didn't say shit

[Verse 1 - M-1]

After you divorce yourself from the right wing  
 Propaganda campaign, it's all simple and plain  
 America stands to gain  
 Your President got an African name, now who you gonna blame?  
 When they drop them bombs out of them planes  
 Using depleted uranium, babies looking like two-headed aliens  
 Follow the money trail it leads to the criminal

Ain't nothing subliminal to it, that's how they do it  
 See they game they run, give a fuck if he's cunning  
 Articulate and handsome, Afghanistan held for ransom  
 By the hand of this black man, neo-colonial puppet  
 White power with a black face, he said "Fuck it I'll do it"  
 A master of disguise, expert at telling lies  
 Then they gave him a Nobel Peace Prize  
 Should of known he was trained in Chicago  
 Word to Chairmen Freddy, Mark Clark  
 What they do in the dark will  
 Come out in the light, like a WikiLeaks site  
 So I guess Nkrumah was right, who's ready to fight?  
 Last stage of imperialism, I ain't kiddin'  
 In the immortal words of Marvin Gaye "This ain't livin'"

[Hook]

Limbaugh is a racist, Glenn Beck is a racist  
 Gaza strip was getting bombed, Obama didn't say shit

[Verse 2 - Black The Ripper]

O-B-A-M-A

You ain't fooling everyone, I see the games you play  
 You was V.I.P. at the B.I.C  
 And we know that's code name for C.I.A  
 The same way your cameras are watching us, we're watching you  
 Think we're easy to control? You ain't got a clue  
 Revolutions on the way, let's see what you're gonna do  
 You gonna send the troops? You gonna drop the nukes?  
 See it's not where you're from, it's where you're at  
 He's sitting in the White House, so who cares if he's black?  
 And why's there still soldiers out there in Iraq?  
 Natural resources ain't yours, it's theirs, give it back!  
 You're just another puppet but I'm not surprised

Look at Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice  
 They didn't change shit, house nigga's fresh off the slave ship  
 You'll all burn in hell even Michelle, Obama Nation

[Hook]

[Verse 3 - Lowkey]

Was the bigger threat from Osama or from Obama?  
 Military bases from Chagos to Okinawa  
 I say things that other rappers won't say  
 'Cause my mind never closed like Guantanamo Bay  
 Hope you didn't build a statue or tattoo your arm  
 'Cause the drones are still flying over Pashtunistan  
 Did he defend the war? No, he extended more  
 He even had the time to attempt a coup in Ecuador  
 Morales and Chavez, the states are on a hunt for ya  
 Military now stationed on bases in Columbia  
 Take a trip to the past and tell em I was right  
 Ask Ali Abunimah or Jeremiah Wright  
 Drones over Pakistan, Yemen and Libya  
 Is Obama the bomber getting ready for Syria?  
 First black president, the masses were hungry  
 But the same president just bombed an African country

[Hook]

[Obama]

The Jonas Brothers are here  
 They're out there somewhere  
 Sasha and Malia are huge fans  
 But, boys don't get any ideas  
 I have two words for you: PREDATOR DRONES  
 You will never see it coming  
 (Audience Laughter)  
 You think I'm joking?

#### 4. The 3rd World- Immortal Technique

[Verse 1]

I'm from where the gold and diamonds are ripped from the earth  
 Right next to the slave castles where the water is cursed  
 From where police brutality is not half as nice  
 It makes the hood in America look like paradise  
 Compared to the AIDS-infested Caribbean slum  
 African streets where the passport's an American gun  
 From where they massacre people and try to keep it quiet  
 And spend the next 25 years tryin' to deny it  
 I'm from where they cut the hands off if you make a fist  
 And niggas grow coca, 'cause the job market doesn't exist  
 Except slave labor, modern-day company store  
 And peacekeepers don't ever ever ever come here no more  
 From where the bombs that they used to drop on Vietnam  
 Still has children born deformed, eight months before they gone  
 I'm from where they lost the true meaning of the Quran  
 'Cause heroin is not compatible with Islam  
 And niggas know that but grow that poppy seed anyway  
 'Cause that food-drop parachute does not come every day  
 I'm from where people pray to the gods of their conquerors  
 And practically every president's a money launderer  
 From where the only place democracy's acceptable  
 Is if America's candidate is electable  
 And they might even have a black president, but he's useless  
 'Cause he does not control the economy, stupid!

[Hook]

Lock and load your gun where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 Been to many places, but I'm Third World born  
 Guerrillas hit and run where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 You polluted everything and now the Third World's gone  
 The water is poison where I'm from, the Third World, son

700 children died by the end of this song  
 Revolution'll come where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 Constant occupation leaves the Third World torn

[Verse 2]

I'm from where the Catholic Church is some racist shit  
 They helped Europe and America rape this bitch  
 They pray to white Spanish Jesus, who's face is this?  
 But never talk about the black pope Gelasius  
 I'm from where Soviet weapons still decide elections  
 Military's like the Mafia: you pay for protection  
 Catamite sex tours is what the country sells  
 And rich white businessmen make the best clientèle  
 I'm from where they too pussy to come film *Survivor*  
 And they murder Coca-Cola union organisers  
 I'm from where the justice system está podrido  
 Fuck government, niggas politic over perico  
 Rebelde conocido, enterado vivo  
 Como otro Argentino desaparecido  
 'Cause RICO laws don't apply to the CIA  
 And motherfuckers make sneakers for a quarter a day  
 I'm from where they overthrow democratic leaders  
 Not for the people but for the Wall Street Journal readers  
 From where blacks, indigenous peoples, and Asians  
 Were once slaves of the Caucasians  
 And it's amazin' how they trained them  
 To be racist against themselves in the place they was raised in  
 You kept us caged in  
 Destroyed our culture and said that you civilised us  
 Raped our women, and when we were born you despised us  
 Gentrified us, agent provocateur divide us  
 And crucified every revolutionary messiah  
 So I'm a start a global riot  
 That not even your fake anti-Communist dictators can keep quiet

Fuck your charity medicine tryin' to murder me!  
 The immunisations you gave us were full of mercury  
 So now I see the Third World like the rap game, soldier  
 Nationalize the industry and take it over!

[Hook]

Lock and load your gun where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 Been to many places, but I'm Third World born  
 Guerrillas hit and run where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 You polluted everything and now the Third World's gone  
 The water is poison where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 700 children died by the end of this song  
 Revolution'll come where I'm from, the Third World, son  
 Constant occupation leaves the Third World torn

## **5. The 4<sup>th</sup> Branch- Immortal Technique**

[Intro: Immortal Technique]

The new age is upon us  
 And yet the past refuses to rest in its shallow grave  
 For those who hide behind the false image of the son of man  
 Shall stand before God  
 It has begun, the beginning of the end  
 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah

[Verse 1: Immortal Technique]

The voice of racism preachin' the gospel is devilish  
 A fake church called the prophet Muhammad a terrorist  
 Forgetting God is not a religion, but a spiritual bond  
 And Jesus is the most quoted prophet in the Qu'ran  
 They bombed innocent people, tryna murder Saddam  
 When you gave him those chemical weapons to go to war with Iran  
 This is the information that they hold back from Peter Jennings  
 'Cause Condoleeza Rice is just a new age Sally Hemings

I break it down with critical language and spiritual anguish  
 The Judas I hang with, the guilt of betraying Christ  
 You murdered and stole his religion and painted him white  
 Translated in psychologically tainted philosophy  
 Conservative political right wing ideology  
 Glued together sloppily, the blasphemy of a nation  
 Got my back to the wall 'cause I'm facin' assassination  
 Guantanamo Bay, federal incarceration  
 How could this be, the land of the free, home of the brave  
 Indigenous holocaust and the home of the slaves  
 Corporate America dancin' offbeat to the rhythm  
 You really think this country never sponsored terrorism  
 Human rights violations, we continue the saga  
 El Savador and the contras in Nicaragua  
 And on top of that, you still wanna take me to prison  
 Just 'cause I won't trade humanity for patriotism

[Refrain: Immortal Technique]

It's like MKUltra, controllin' your brain  
 Suggestive thinking causing your perspective to change  
 They wanna rearrange the whole point of view of the ghetto  
 The fourth branch of the government want us to settle  
 A bandanna full of glittering generality  
 Fightin' for freedom and fightin' terror, but what's reality  
 Read about the history of the place that we live in  
 And stop letting corporate news tell lies to your children

[Verse 2: Immortal Technique]

Flow like the blood of Abraham through the Jews and the Arabs  
 Broken apart like a woman's heart, abused in a marriage  
 The brink of holy war, bottled up like a miscarriage  
 Embedded correspondents don't tell the source of the tension  
 And they refuse to even mention European intervention  
 Or the massacres in Jenin, the innocent screams

U.S. manufactured missiles and M-16's  
 Weapon contracts and corrupted American dreams  
 Media censorship blocking out the video screens  
 A continent of oil kingdoms bought for a bargain  
 Democracy is just a word when the people are starvin'  
 The average citizen made to be blind to the reason  
 A desert full of genocide where the bodies are freezin'  
 And the world doesn't believe that you fightin' for freedom  
 'Cause you fucked the Middle East and gave birth to a demon  
 It's open season with the CIA buggin' my crib  
 Trapped in a ghetto region like a Palestinian kid  
 Where nobody gives a fuck whether you die or you live  
 I'm tryna give the truth and I know the price is my life  
 But when I'm gone they'll sing a song about Immortal Technique  
 Who beheaded the President and the princes and sheiks  
 You don't give a fuck about us, I can see through your facade  
 Like a fallen angel standing in the presence of God  
 Bitch niggas scared of the truth when it looks at you hard

[Refrain: Immortal Technique]

It's like MKUltra, controllin' your brain  
 Suggestive thinking causing your perspective to change  
 They wanna rearrange the whole point of view of the ghetto  
 The fourth branch of the government want us to settle  
 A bandanna full of glittering generality  
 Fightin' for freedom and fightin' terror, but what's reality  
 Martial law is coming soon to the hood, to kill you  
 While you hanging your flag out your project window"

[Outro: Immortal Technique]

The fourth branch of the government AKA the media  
 Seems to now have a retirement plan for ex-military officials  
 As if their opinion was at all unbiased  
 A machine shouldn't speak for men



So shut the fuck up you mindless drone  
And you know it's serious  
When these same media outfits are spending millions of dollars on a PR campaign  
To try to convince you they're fair and balanced  
When they're some of the most ignorant, and racist people  
Giving that type of mentality a safe haven  
We act like we share in the spoils of war that they do  
We die in wars, we don't get the contracts to make money off 'em afterwards  
We don't get weapons contracts, nigga  
We don't get cheap labor for our companies, nigga  
We are cheap labor, nigga  
Turn off the news and read, nigga  
Read... read... read