



University of Pennsylvania
ScholarlyCommons

Departmental Papers (ASC)

Annenberg School for Communication

2017

Music Videos as Digital Media: The View from the Arab World

Marwan Kraidy

University of Pennsylvania, kraidy@asc.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers



Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation (OVERRIDE)

Kraidy, M. (2017). "Music Videos as Digital Media: The View from the Arab World." in P. Messaris and L. Humphreys (eds.), *Digital Media: Transformations in Human Communication*, 2nd Edition (pp. 255-262). New York: Peter Lang.

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. https://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/768
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Music Videos as Digital Media: The View from the Arab World

Disciplines

Communication | Social and Behavioral Sciences

References

- Clancy, M. (2015, September 26). Netflix set to hit 130MN subs by 2020, leading with original content. *Rapid TV News*. Retrieved from <http://www.rapidtvnews.com/2015092640027/netflix-set-to-hit-130mn-sub-by-2020-leading-with-original-content.html#ixzz3o5uIqmnQ>
- Davis, G., Kickinson, K., Patti, L., & Villarejo, A. (2015). *Film studies: A global introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Facebook. (2015). *2014 Annual Report*. Retrieved from <http://files.shareholder.com/downloads/AMDA-NJ5DZ/1049246737x0x852173/F61276C5-0AE9-49DE-BFD9-087398F85EC8/FB2014AR.pdf>
- Gutierrez Lanza, C. (2002). Spanish film translations and cultural patronage: The filtering and manipulation of imported materials during Franco's dictatorship. In M. Tymoczko & E. Gentzler (Eds.), *Translation and power* (pp. 141–159). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Havens, T. (2006). *Global television marketplace*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Internet World Stats. (2015). *Internet usage statistics: The internet big picture, world internet users and 2015 population stats*. Retrieved from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Jewell, R. B. (2007). *The golden era of cinema: Hollywood 1929–1945*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Madrigal, A. C. (2014, January 2). How Netflix reverse engineered Hollywood. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/01/how-netflix-reverse-engineered-hollywood/282679/>
- Mjøs, O. J. (2012). *Music, social media and global mobility*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Negroponte, N. P. (1995). *Being digital*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Netflix. (2015). *Netflix is the world's leading internet subscription service for enjoying movies and TV shows*. Retrieved from <https://pr.netflix.com/WebClient/loginPageSalesNetWorksAction.do?contentGroupId=10476&contentGroup=Company+Facts>
- Ronen, S., Gonçalves, B., Hu, K. Z., Vespignani, A., Pinker, S., & Hidalgo, C. A. (2014). Links that speak: The global language network and its association with global fame. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, 111(52), E5616–E5622. doi:10.1073/pnas.1410931111
- Rosoff, M. (2015, July 16). Netflix owes its recent success to international growth. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <http://www.businessinsider.com/netflix-international-growth-outpaces-domestic-2015-7>
- Sigismondi, P. (2012). *The digital globalization of entertainment: New paradigms in the 21st century global mediascape*. New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media.
- Spangler, T. (2015, August 26). Amazon to launch Prime Instant Video in Japan, taking on Netflix. *Variety*. Retrieved from <http://variety.com/2015/digital/asia/amazon-prime-instant-video-japan-netflix-1201579340/>
- Terry, N., Cooley, J. W., & Zachary, M. (2010). The determinants of foreign box office revenue for English language movies. *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies*, 2, 1–12. Retrieved from <http://www.aabri.com/manuscripts/09274.pdf>
- Thussu, D. K. (Ed.). (2007). *Media on the move: Global flow and contra-flow*. London: Routledge.
- Thussu, D. K. (2013). De-Americanizing media studies and the rise of 'Chindia'. *Javnost/The Public*, 20(4), 31–44.
- United Nations (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division). (2013). *World population prospects: The 2012 revision, Volume I: Comprehensive tables ST/ESA/SER.A/33*. New York, NY: United Nations.
- Williams, R. (1975). *Television: Technology and cultural form*. London: Routledge.
- YouTube. (2015). *YouTube goes (even more) global!* Retrieved from <http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2015/10/youtube-goes-even-more-global.html>

CHAPTER 25

Music Video and Relations Between Nations in the Digital Sphere

Marwan M. Kraidy

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the Arab media “revolution” of the last 25 years is the music video “clip.” Since the mid-1990s, Arab music videos have circulated trans-nationally on broadcast, online and increasingly, mobile platforms. Though the industry saw its heyday right before the financial recession of 2008, from which it has not fully recovered, music videos remain a lucrative staple for a 700-channel strong pan-Arab commercial television industry, including many music channels (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009). Music videos, alongside reality television, have been at the vanguard of integrating Arab television in the digital media landscape (Kraidy, 2010). Music videos have caused controversy (Al-Mahadin, 2008; Armbrust, 2005; Frishkopf, 2009; Kraidy, 2012). As captivating audiovisual blurbs, they are interesting not only because of their provocative aesthetics, but because they spotlight controversial issues.

This chapter explores the cross-cultural politics and poetics of Arab music videos in the digital age by way of a detailed analysis of *Wād' Arqoub* (WA), a music video by Iraqi singer Shadha Hassoun, which features a romantic relationship against the backdrop of Iraq under US occupation, and elicited a heated polemic that played out mostly in cyberspace. After reviewing the music video literature, the chapter focuses on notions of visibility, circulation, and contention as they emerge around this music video, opening two avenues of analysis: as a cultural production (*text*) music video brings to the forefront the human body as medium and sexuality as central trope; as a *medium* it highlights new patterns of dissemination and circulation introduced by hypermedia space, a field created by the incorporation of television, cyberspace, and mobile telephony (Kraidy, 2006). A combination of (1) a multiplicity of meanings and (2) high visibility makes music video a catalyst of debate in the digital era.

Key Insights from the Music Video Literature

Music video first became an object of preoccupation in the 1980s. For a time, a polemic unfolded between musicologists who bemoaned what they saw as the rising primacy of the image over music in the music video age, and film and media critics who were more interested in the visual semiotics and

sexual politics of music video (see Goodwin, 1995; Lewis, 1990). Three insights from that canon inform my focus on music videos as tools of visibility. The first insight concerns music video as a promotional form: “always ... wall-to-wall commercials for something” (Aufderheide, 1986, p. 62). Stylistically, both commercials and music videos pack a wealth of signs and symbols designed to attract attention in an environment of semiotic saturation. Structurally, commercials tend to be shorter than music videos, which can be up to five minutes each, but both genres feature similar editing and sound-image relations. Nonetheless, music videos carry a softer message than advertisements, delivering affective states like nostalgia, longing, etc., that animate a condition of affective instability, especially among youth, that “fuels the search to buy and belong” (Aufderheide, 1986, p. 62). Second, music videos articulate a variety of identities. Grossberg wrote that music videos are “billboards” of identity in ideological struggles that enable the “re-articulation of youth as a central struggle” (1988, p. 317). But in an image-saturated world where cultural consumption, rather than production, is the primary identity-making process, music videos also constitute a reservoir of images that people draw upon to consolidate or shift their identities.

A third and crucial insight is the notion that music videos brim with semiotic excess, opening them to multiple and antagonistic interpretations. This came out of interest in the breaking relationship between signified and signifier—which underpins postmodernism’s iconic concept, the floating signifier. Some saw music videos as a particularly telling example of modern art (Aufderheide, 1986). Others noted that music videos feature a peculiar relationship between text and context (Straw, 1988): whereas in modernist cultural forms, the text is seen as closed while its context remains open in order to be represented in the text, in postmodern forms the text itself remains open while foreclosing the surrounding context, which becomes a source of signs to be re-signified in the text. Music video’s propinquity to elicit multiple meanings is central to the genre’s saliency in the Arab public sphere.

Making Love *and* War: Iraq and “America” in the *Wa’d ‘Arqoub* Music Video

Hundreds of music videos circulating in the pan-Arab media sphere reflect myriad sociocultural, sexual, political, and religious actors struggling for visibility. Bringing the ideologically complex Arab world into a comparative discussion of music videos enables an understanding of broader political dynamics: this chapter aims to explore the ways in which music videos attract viewers to join various publics mobilized by pressing social or political issues. With Arab societies in the throes of intense ideological clashes, rival camps strive to recruit publics to their causes. If, as Michael Warner wrote, the “differential deployment of style is essential” (2002, p. 78) to the making of publics, music videos are potent tools of mobilization: teeming with stylistic devices, some music videos cut through the larger chatter in a public sphere fragmented socially, politically (and technologically). In this context, *WA* demonstrates the emergence of the female body as a magnet for attention, commentary, and critique, increasing circulation of discourse in the public sphere, a trend that would intensify during the Arab uprisings (Kraidy, 2016).

Women’s bodies are hypervisible in an Arab public sphere awash with sex-themed television, magazines, and literature. Liberals trumpet sexuality’s importance to emancipation, conservatives brandish it as a cause of moral decline, and capitalists exploit it commercially, but in recent contemporary Arab culture nowhere have women’s bodies and desires been a source of polemics more than in music videos. Whereas the relative power of images and lyrics dominated early studies of music video, Arab music videos underscore the primacy of the body: echoing journalists and cartoonists who pejoratively dismiss “video artists” who sing with their “legs and chests,” Al-Mahadin wrote that “the emphasis on the female body is evident from the often incongruent dissected close-ups of various body parts” (2008, p. 149). Though the claim that Arab music videos *tout-court* objectify women is sweeping, the argument that *some* music videos do is uncontroversial. What is problematic is the frequent assertion that

music videos are fantasies “completely divorced from the political exigencies of the Arab world, unifying audiences within the confines of mindless escapism and apathy” (2008, p. 149). In contrast, this chapter shows that music videos may enable different kinds of political engagement.

“America” is a recurring trope in Arab music videos, some criticizing its policies, others celebrating its way of life. Bits of Americana—military dog tags, Route 66 signs, etc.—pepper Arab videos. Many videos reflect tensions in a particularly fraught context of US involvement in several Middle East wars. Shadha Hassoun grew up in Morocco (Iraqi father, Moroccan mother) and had never visited Iraq when she represented it in the fourth season of the pan-Arab reality program *Star Academy*. On the show, Hassoun eagerly took the mantle of Iraqiness in emotional renditions of classic songs about Iraq. Hassoun won *Star Academy*, receiving 7 million votes, and Sunnis and Shi’a claimed her as one of them (Kraidy, 2010). A headline summarized the political connotations: “Shadha Hassoun Unites Iraqis: She succeeded where politicians failed” (“Shadha Hassoun unified” 2007, April 1). Hassoun’s rushing on stage, falling on her knees in tears, arms extended, holding a body-sized Iraqi flag, became an iconic image that consecrated her as a symbol of Iraq. But after her victory, insurgents posted online diatribes against *Star Academy* for showcasing a corrupt model for Iraqi women (“First young,” 2007). The Voice of Iraq Web site said that Hassoun “lacks the most basic criteria of honorable Iraqi women” and al-Najaf News reported that several citizens demanded that Hassoun and her father be stripped of their Iraqi citizenship for taking part in a dubious program that “aims to destroy Islamic morals and spread indecency” (Kasim, 2007). Nonetheless, Hassoun awakened national consciousness at a time of heightened sectarian identification. When the Iraqi soccer team defied the odds to win the Asia Cup in July 2007, Hassoun sang a song that became a sort of second national anthem. Shortly thereafter, on the state-owned channel al-Iraqiyya, Hassoun starred in public service announcements promoting peace and national unity in Iraq. As Hassoun’s symbolic resonance with Iraq peaked, she moved to Beirut where she met the director Yehya Saadé.

The *WA* video epitomizes the features—sensory exuberance, erotic tension, symbolic richness, affective potency, social or political resonance, openness to interpretation, and heavy circulation—that make music videos consequential in Arab public life. Invoking ‘Arqoub, a legendary character infamous for his unfulfilled promises, Hassoun bemoans both her love affair with a US soldier and the US invasion of her war-torn country. Double-entendre lyrics about love and betrayal combine with images of the singer crossing wind and sand-swept streets, dressed in a US military fatigue jacket over a dress and a yellow scarf around her neck, walking toward the camera, while numerous people, holding children or belongings, walk away in the opposite direction, one colliding with her shoulder as he walks away. She is clearly walking against the current. As Shadha regains momentum from the shoulder-to-shoulder collision, she crosses paths with the US soldier. In the next shot, she closes a white gate and starts dancing, Bollywood style. Though she is throughout the scene portrayed as in charge of locking the gate, we get a glimpse of her wrist entangled in a chain, as if she is also a prisoner.

The video then shows what we soon find out to be the back of a US military truck, where Shadha, her face seductively made up, kneels on a bed wearing what seems to be a night gown, showing cleavage, repeatedly adjusting a large shawl on her shoulders. The putative US soldier faces her, sitting underneath a large television hanging on one side of the truck, as the singer admonishes her lover for his empty promises. In this poignant postcoital confrontation with her lover in the back of a US military truck, images of military hardware, explosions, and torn bodies persist on the screen in the truck bed, no matter how many times the US soldiers uses the remote control to try and change the channel. Finally, as the soldier walks away, the video concludes in black and white, the camera zooming out onto a street strewn with shoes. As the song and the video end, we see a haunting close-up of a fright-stricken baby face encircled with barbed wire.

The video set the Iraqi and Arab press ablaze: “Shadha Hassoun glorifies the occupation of Iraq!” (al-Skaf, 2010a) accused one journalist; “A political or romantic message?” (Elias, 2009) wondered

another; "WA is Shadha Hassoun's weapon against the American occupation of Iraq" ("WA is" 2009), wrote a third, reflecting multiple and contrary readings of the video. In the ensuing polemic, fans and critics fought in mosque sermons, political speeches, op-ed pages, and social media, fueled by rival campaigns in the March 2010 Iraqi elections and the ongoing Iraq tragedy. Eight weeks after the video's release, an Arabic Google search yielded more than 4000 hits, ranging from adulation on fan blogs to invective by Iraqi insurgents, showing that various publics—young and old, secular and religious—coalesced around a video that compelled into public discourse rival visions of Iraqi identity.

Many praised WA, including Saudi media: MBC.net called it "a weapon against the US occupation of Iraq" ("WA is" 2009, December 27). Readers of the online Saudi publication *Elaph* chimed in: "Make no mistake, the clip is magnificent, its objectives clear, its ideas thoughtful," one said. "I thank Shadha Hassoun for her beautiful, humanistic, patriotic work." Another described the video as "a cry on behalf of the powerless with the hope that someone [in power] will feel their pain" (Elias, 2009; see also Al-Shamry 2010, January 6 and January 26). Opponents also chimed in; one said: "very stupid video ... shame on Iraq to have such a person representing its suffering and pain very low quality video clip ..." (Elias, 2009). The Web site of the Jihadi Iraqi satellite television channel al-Fayha' raised doubts about Hassoun: "... this ugly image ... pushed us to wonder about the deal that Shadha Hassoun concluded, this girl who got to the art scene through the voices of 7 million Iraqis, to turn around and insult them" (quoted in al-Skaf, 2010b). Others discerned in the WA video a pernicious message, in which the video:

... raises several questions, most prominently the relationship between the song and the country of Iraq? Why does the video depict the story of an Iraqi woman under occupation, who falls in love with a US soldier, and refuses to resume the relationship after he breaks up with her? Does this scenario, which is foreign to the topic of the song, have implications that go beyond the artistic scope? (al-Skaf, 2010b)

The author claimed that Hassoun capitulated to Saudi political interests, themselves complicit with the US occupation of Iraq. A song resulting from a political *quid pro quo*, the article concludes, cannot claim patriotism.

WA is stylistically rich. The video was shot in Lebanon, on the Dahr al-Baydar bridge, Lebanon's biggest, that Israel destroyed in the aerial bombing of 2006, a politically symbolic setting emphasized in WA's prerelease promotion. Another striking image comes at WA's conclusion: an infant surrounded by barbed wires, symbolizing enclavism rampant in Baghdad at that time, torture at Guantanamo and Abu Ghayb, while conjuring up Jesus Christ and his crown of thorns. Shoes and boots strewn on the street evoke Muntazher al-Zhaydi, the Iraqi journalist who threw his shoes at George W. Bush, while also connoting Nazi death camps.

The polemic that raged around WA reflects how polysemy (multiplicity of meanings) fuels public contention. A broad section of comments about the video reflect ambivalence. One *Elaph* reader accused the Lebanese press of pushing "to bring Shadha to stardom in the fastest way possible and by any means ... because she ... serves a political agenda ... the picture of the crying child at the end of the clip ... not only is an attention-getting device ... has a story we do not know ... it really was uncalled for to exploit him in this way" (Elias, 2009). Other readers commented on the discordance between lyrics and images, another source of polysemy; a reader from Kuwait wrote:

Hearing is different from Seeing ... I heard the song on the radio and downloaded off of the net and have listened to it maybe 10000 times but I was shocked when I watched the video ... after that I hated the song ... the lyrics of the songs are critical [of the occupation] but [in the video] the Iraqi woman falls in love ... and has suspicious dates with occupying soldiers. ... (Elias, 2009)

Several journalists and commentators attributed the ambiguity of the video to the authorial intention of its director, Yehya Saadé, whose ambiguous stylistic devices compel active, critical viewership. One wrote:

Saadé, who does not believe in sacred cows and who rebels against traditions, rejects intellectual, social and political embargos, was able to distance himself from naïve directness that dominates video clips today and compel the receiver to think and question the most sensitive details to attempt to decode its symbols that come unveiled progressively with repeated viewings. (Awad, 2010)

In another interview, Hassoun is explicit about WA's intentional polysemy: "the clip reflects my and the director's desire to send a message with multiple meanings, but we did not clarify the message in the clip, leaving it to the viewer to interpret" (Zeidan, 2010). Hassoun's statements clearly reflect a strategic use of polysemy by the singer and her director for aesthetic *and* political reasons.

Gender and National Identity in Music Video

Hassoun and Saadé actively managed WA's post-release controversy. The polemic revolved on the nationalism–sexuality nexus, an articulation examined by scholars in the context of Colombia (Cepeda, 2010), Egypt (Elmessiri 2004), and India (Kumar & Curtin, 2002), with an identity-otherness dynamic at play as well (see Antti-Ville, 2007, for a discussion of this dynamic in Finland). The main ingredients of the controversy included Iraq's national identity and Hassoun's body intricately woven in the fabric of a text rich with signs and symbols open to multiple and antagonistic interpretations, authored by a director known for his iconoclastic creativity. Statements by Hassoun and Saadé in the months leading to the video's release set the ground for controversy by leading the public to expect a "political epic" involving "a pile of shoes, political messages, and the expulsion of the occupier" (Elias, 2009). Known for breaking social taboos with sexually provocative imagery, Saadé's artistic trajectory moved from one polemic to another. While some of his critics accused him of "naïve directness," others said that he "was provocative to the point of slapping the viewer in the face." But the heart of the controversy lay in his video's depiction of "an explosive femininity ... bold ... rebellious" (Elias, 2009).

Initial coyness about explaining the video shifted, under pressure, into a reluctant yet explicit dissection of WA's semiotics. Some of Hassoun's explanations were contradictory. Even as she ostensibly emphasized the political message, Hassoun insisted that the romantic relationship was the video's main plot. A tendency to distance herself from the video also crept into the interview when she said that Yehya Saadé proposed the scene with the shoes and that she accepted—shifting creative agency *and* blame to the director. This interview also exposed Hassoun's vulnerability to accusations that she was not really Iraqi, after she was repeatedly questioned about her commitment to Iraq. In another interview Hassoun said: "I am not the first artist to present a clip whose axes is a love affair with a soldier. ... I am 100% patriotic ... I ... am against the occupation of any country, and I reject violence, war and destruction" ("Shadha Hassoun: I did not," 2010). But when the reporter asked her to explain what was new in WA, Hassoun shifted from Iraq and patriotism to focus on WA's intimate aspects: "... for the first time I focused on my body's and my eyes' expressions in order to emphasize my rebellious ... personality that rejects injustice ... I sack the soldier who I loved and I shut the door behind him and I danced the freedom dance" ("Shadha Hassoun: I did not," 2010). Hassoun's public tiptoeing between the music video's two themes—geopolitical and intimate—combined with the video's semiotic richness to fuel a debate. Commentators picked this theme up as well, approvingly or disapprovingly:

Nations that are rich but militarily weak, i.e. some third world countries (and woman symbolizes them, she is beautiful, seductive but at the same time she is weak) and becomes the aspiration of great powers and all their representatives on the ground, like in the scene when the woman pushes the soldier away, and she closes the heavy iron gate bolstered with heavy chains and barbed wire, liberating herself from the idea of occupation. (Elias, 2009)

One writer picked up on the geopolitical/intimate nexus to accuse the singer's performance in WA of being "inappropriate to the nature of patriotic songs, because she wears a short dress with an uncovered

chest on top of which is a US military occupation jacket on which is pinned a large rose ...” (Al-Dsouqi, 2011). After describing *WA* in detail, this author found no patriotic content, emphasized Shadha’s “performance through her body of titillating gestures” as she sits on the bed “nearly naked,” thus defining patriotism as “martial” and “hard,” i.e., as “masculine”; the London-based Arabist newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* criticized Shadha for misrepresenting “Iraqi women and their dignity, pride and modesty,” and exploiting the suffering of Iraqis (misrepresentation of Iraqi women and exploitation of Iraqi suffering are recurring themes in public discourse about *WA*; see for example, Al-Saleh, 2010). The article argued that the US soldier broke up with Shadha first, therefore shifting agency away from the Iraqi woman and toward the American soldier.

Conclusion

In Michael Warner’s influential conceptualization, a public comes into existence, “by virtue of being addressed ...” (2002, p. 50). In this process, texts play an important role, and “publics are increasingly organized around visual and audio texts,” like the *WA* video. Warner continues: “Without the idea of texts that can be picked up at different times and in different places by otherwise unrelated people, we would not imagine a public as an entity that embraces all the users of that text, whoever they might be” (p. 51). *WA* mobilized a variety of people to grapple with its meanings, creating at least two publics, out of previous controversies about the occupation of Iraq, including for example, the Abu Ghayb scandal. As Warner notes, “[I]t is not texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time” (p. 62).

The *WA* controversy integrated legacy and digital media in one hypermedia space, with newspaper stories posted online eliciting lively comments and counter-comments by readers, and links by bloggers, all of which linked up to the video on YouTube and other video sites. Two items were most heavily circulated: first, the *Elaph* story and ensuing comments (Elias, 2009). That article, initially posted on *Elaph*’s Web site at 11.29 GMT on December 26, 2009, including a link to the music video on YouTube and a still photograph from the video, had within less than 24 hours attracted more than 100 comments. Second, the *al-Akhbar* article (al-Skaf, 2010a) circulated heavily, setting the tone for the debate. It was cited, quoted, and “remediated” in many forms and sites, embodying a model of social communication more akin to Warner’s notion of circulation than with Habermasian views of the public sphere.¹ Unlike rational deliberation, circulation of discourse encompasses onlookers as well as active interlocutors. Warner (2002), again, is instructive in that regard, when he writes:

The interactive relation postulated in public discourse, in other worlds, goes far beyond the scale of conversations or discussions, to encompass a multigeneric lifeworld organized not just by relational axis of utterance and response, but by potentially infinite axes of citation and characterization. (p. 63)

These two satellite commentaries, revolving around the video itself, underscore the importance of a model of the public sphere based on circulation. They reflect the ways that discourse circulates on the Internet, multiplied by hundreds of other articles, blog entries, video postings, YouTube links, fed by Shadha’s interviews on television talk shows, newspaper articles about the video and its star. This abundance and multi-directionality of public utterances, made possible by the digital media sphere, invite Arab media scholars to revisit prevailing assumptions about the pan-Arab public sphere.

The preceding analysis also has an important methodological implication, which deserves to be made explicit even if it is largely taken for granted in recent research into digital media. The abundance and architecture of commentary around *WA* contradicts Michael Warner’s statement that the Internet was not an archive. Warner wrote that

Web discourse has very little of the citational field that would allow us to speak of it as discourse unfolding through time ... [T]he reflexive apparatus of Web discourse consists mostly of hypertext

links and search engines, and these are not punctual ... the extent to which developments in technology will be assimilable to the temporal framework of public discourse remains unclear. (p. 69)

The marking of video and textual utterances by date, time, and sometimes place as they invoke and evoke each other across media platforms, affirms Arab digital public discourse as an active citational field.

Finally, a performative-contentious approach has the advantage of taking into account stylistic and poetic dimensions of public discourse, which, because it addresses strangers, “puts a premium on accessibility” (Warner, 2002, p. 77), in other words, on making itself accessible to as many strangers as possible. It is here that the full import of music video in public discourse comes into full view. Music video’s polysemy clearly compels multiple publics, at least two, to form around it, as supporters and critics of *WA* make clear. Its semiotic richness is clearly a matter of style, which is deployed to attract attention in an Arab public sphere saturated by media of multiple genres and through multiple platforms. If, as Warner wrote, “The differential deployment of style is essential to the way public discourse creates the consciousness of stranger-sociability” (77), then *WA*—its combination of Yehya Saade’s creativity, Shadha Hassoun’s performance, and a participatory digital sphere—demonstrates the salience of music video in circulatory theories of the public sphere.

Note

1. The *al-Akhbar* article (al-Skaf, 2010a), for example, is systematically paraphrased in its entirety on the arts and variety Web site AbuSora, framed by an introduction and a conclusion, and surrounded by a picture of Shadha in the US truck and ads for iPhone apps. And though the Web site is no longer operating at the same URL, the article can be traced using Arabic search engines such as Google Arabic.

References

- Al-Dsouqi, H. (2011). A “very” patriotic music video by Shadha Hassoun ... she sings on the bed, nudity, deviance, and love for the enemy. *Watan*. Retrieved from <http://www.watan.com> [Arabic].
- Al-Mahadin, S. (2008). From religious fundamentalism to pornography? The female body as text in Arabic song videos. In K. Sarikakis and L. R. Shade (Eds.), *Feminist Interventions in International Communication: Minding the Gap* (146–160). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Al-Saleh, N. (2010). Shadha Hassoun exploits Iraq and distorts the image of Iraqi women. *Shams al-Iraq*. Retrieved from <http://www.iraqsunnews.com> [Arabic].
- Al-Shamry, I. (2010). Shadha Hassoun mocks the enemy and says “thank you very much.” *Al-Ray*. Retrieved from <http://www.alray.cc/news> [Arabic].
- Al-Skaf, H. (2010a). Shadha Hassoun glorifies the occupation of Iraq. *Al-Akhbar*. Retrieved from <http://www.al-akhbar.com> [Arabic].
- Al-Skaf, H. (2010b). Wa’d ‘Arqoub ... one-zero. Retrieved from <http://www.alfayhaa.tv> [Arabic].
- Antti-Ville, K. (2007). Vision of a sound station: Finnish music videos and secured otherness. In R. Beebe & J. Middleton (Eds.), *Medium cool: Music videos from soundies to cellphones* (pp. 174–199). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Armbrust, W. (2005). What would Sayyid Qutb say? Some reflections on video clips. *Transnational Broadcasting Studies*, 14. Retrieved from <http://www.tbsjournal.com>
- Aufderheide, P. (1986). Music videos: The look of the sound. *Journal of Communication*, 36(1), 57–78.
- Awad, R. (2010). Wa’d ‘Arqoub by Shadha Hassoun provokes a storm in a teacup: The rebellious Iraqi shuts door to her heart to occupier. *Al-Jarida*. Retrieved from <http://www.aljarida.com> [Arabic].
- Cepeda, M. E. (2010). *Musical ImagiNation: U.S.-Colombian identity and the Latin music boom*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Elias, M. (2009). Wa’d ‘Arqoub: A romantic or political message? *Elaph.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.elaph.com> [Arabic].
- Elmessiri, A. M. (2005). Ruby and the Chequered Heart. *Al-Abram Weekly*, 734, 13–23 Retrieved from <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/734/feature.htm>
- First young woman to win the title ... Shadha Hassoun Triumphs for Iraq in Star Academy 4. (2007). *Al-Hayat*. [Arabic].
- Frishkopf, M. (Ed.). (2009). *Music and media in the Arab world*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Goodwin, A. (1995). *Dancing in the distraction factory: Music television and popular culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Grossberg, L. (1988). “You [still] have to fight for your right to party”: Music television as billboards of post-modern difference. *Popular Music*, 7(3), 315–332.
- Kasim, Z. (2007). IraqSide: Developments: Iraqis unite behind “Daughter of Mesopotamia.” Retrieved from <http://www.iraqlogger.com>
- Kraidy, M. M. (2006). Hypermedia and governance in Saudi Arabia. *First Monday*, 11(Si-7). <http://www.firstmonday.org>

- Kraidy, M. M. (2010). *Reality television and Arab politics: Contention in public life*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kraidy, M. M. (2012). Contention and circulation in the digital middle east: Music video as catalyst. *Television and New Media*, 14(4), 271–285.
- Kraidy, M. M. (2016). *The naked blogger of Cairo: Creative insurgency in the Arab world*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kraidy, M. M., & Khalil, J. (2009). *Arab television industries*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kumar, S., & Curtin, M. (2002). Made in India: In between music television and patriarchy. *Television and New Media*, 3(4), 345–366.
- Lewis, L. (1990). *Gender politics and MTV: Voicing the difference*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 49–90.
- Straw, W. (1988). Music video in its contexts: Popular music and post-modernism in the 1980s. *Popular Music*, 7(3), 247–266.
- Wād 'Arqoub is Shadha Hassoun's weapon against the American occupation in Iraq. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.mbc.net> [Arabic].
- Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public Culture*, 14(1), 49–90.
- Zeidan, M. (2010). Shadha Hassoun to Al-Ra'i News: WA video is a humanitarian message with different contents. Retrieved from <http://www.alraynews.com> [Arabic].

CHAPTER 26

Exploring YouTube's Impact on International Trade and Tourism

A Case of Korean Pop Music on YouTube

Sehwan Oh, Hyunmi Baek and JoongHo Ahn

YouTube is a video-sharing Web site established in February 2005. The Web site enables individuals to watch and share user-generated videos. Furthermore, the Web site also serves as an online content distribution channel for creators and advertisers. Although individual users generate most of the content on YouTube, media corporations such as news agencies, TV channels, film studios, and other entertainment companies have realized YouTube's potential in attracting customers and boosting the sales of their products and services.

Similar to other countries, South Korea's entertainment industry has also realized YouTube's potential. In particular, Korean pop (K-pop) record labels such as SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment have created dedicated channels on YouTube to promote their artists and music by uploading music videos on the Web site. YouTube users can watch music videos and share them with their families and friends. Thus, YouTube has emerged as the most effective and successful marketing tool for K-pop entertainment agencies.

Previously, K-pop was popular only in Asian countries. However, owing to the rapid spread of social media (like YouTube and Twitter), K-pop has gained global recognition and its fandom has spread beyond Asia to the United States and Europe (Oliver, 2012; Yoon, 2010). In December 2011, to meet the growing demand of worldwide consumers, YouTube added the K-pop genre to its music page alongside R&B, Rock, Pop, and Rap. This was the first time that a specific country's music was introduced as a separate genre (Lee, 2011).

According to VidStatsX, the third-party YouTube analytics Web site, among the top 10 most viewed YouTube channels run by South Korea producers, 8 channels are related with K-pop as of 2016 (VidStatsX, 2016). Based on data acquired from YouTube, JoongAng Daily reported that as of 2012, K-pop music videos on YouTube had attracted 2.9 billion views from Asia, followed by 1.1 billion views from the United States and 0.7 billion views from Europe (Song, 2012). The worldwide success of K-pop has not only enabled Korea to improve its overall image as a country but also positively affected the Korean economy in terms of international trade and tourism. The Korea Customs Service reported