

SONGS AS COUNTER-ARCHIVES: INDEPENDENT POPULAR MUSIC, MEMORY, AND STATE POWER

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ABSTRACT

In this research paper discussed how songs can be used as counter-archives to maintain cultural memory, defying and challenging the state power. The aim of this research paper is to show how independent music enters into the discourses of nationalism, war, and crisis, and to suggest that independent music is a testament to the repression of the official past. This argument relies on three of original works of '1946' which reimagines the Calcutta riots as a meditation on the partition memory, 'Battle Zone' which criticizes the militarization of the nation and instrumentalization of human sacrifice, and 'I Am Virus' which was released during the global pandemic and reflects on the surveillance, vulnerability, and control of the state. These songs shed light on how popular music uses and warrants the discursive power of the state. Contextually, this question is placed in the paper within the wider discussions on music, protest, and postcolonial statehood and considering transnational appeal of these topics in the context of the 250th anniversary of independence of the United States. This research paper is a combination of the lyrical as well as musical analysis and practice-based reflection in a form of direct reflection of audiovisual work and its placement into socio-political contexts. This amalgamation style of independent music-making becomes both scholarly investigation and artistic witnessing. Placing these songs in conversation with protest musical theories, censorship and state authority, the paper identifies the ways popular music opposes erasure, remembering, and dissent-making-as-a-counter-archive, which is an important part of the global democracies.

KEYWORDS: Counter-Archives, '1946,' 'Battle Zone,' 'I Am Virus,' Lyrical, Musical.

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