Abstract

‘Giving a Face to the Silenced Victims: recent documentaries on Gaza’

Often described as an open-air prison, the citizens of the Gaza Strip have long resisted a subaltern existence. Conditions in Gaza, and specifically since the Second Intifada of 2000, have increasingly worsened. With the advent of Hamas in 2006-2007, a complete blockade was imposed on the Strip. A deafening silence by the world has resulted in a marked increase in documentaries from within and has also attracted international filmmakers who want to tell the Gazan story. In these productions, Gazans convey their stories to the outside world and demand that their humanity is acknowledged. My analysis of a number of recent documentaries demonstrates how Gazans emphatically reject the role of victim but rather want to tell their stories and to be heard directly. They want to be tellers of their stories. Despite their misfortunes, Gazans remain resilient, aspiring for life. This need has become more urgent since the 2014 war. The documentaries, I discuss, include Gaza (2019) by Garry Keane and Andrew McConnell, Killing Gaza (2018) by Dan Cohen and Max Blumenthal, Ambulance (2016) by Mohamed Jabaly, Born in Gaza (2014) by Argentinian director Hernán Zin, Nitin Sawhney’s Flying Paper (2014), and Fida Qishta’s Where Should the Birds Fly (2013).

Keywords
Gaza, wars, humiliation, resilience, survival, documentary