Digitizing Literary Text: Aims and Objectives

EMAN YOUNIS

In this study, we aim to compare the original version of "The Dice Player" (2009) by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and the digital version by Egyptian animation director Nissmah Roshdy (2013). This comparison aims to uncover the positive contributions lent by digitization and to pave the way for a discussion about the need for digitizing Arabic literary texts. It further discusses how digitization can be incorporated into literature curricula.

As a result of technology's prominent role in our lives, some researchers have begun to call for the digitization of literary texts, including classics, to make them more relatable to the new generation which has been raised by technology. Some have tried to present suggestions for such digitization (Al-Rowai 161-168). If we suppose that more modern and classical texts will be digitized, how will we study literature in the future? Will we begin to rely on digital texts – which are more up-to-date – as opposed to traditional paper ones? If the answer is "yes", what impact will this have on the original text and what critical practices will we adopt? Will we forego the traditional critical terminologies linked to traditional paper texts, or will we invent new terminologies and theories for the new, digital texts? What instances will require us to consult the original text? This study attempts to answer these questions.

"The Dice Player": The Original Form

The poem "The Dice Player" is one of the last poems written by Palestinian poet, Mahmoud Darwish, before his death. It is mentioned in his last collection, entitled "I Do Not Want This Poem to End" (2009).

Due to the length of the poem, we are unable to analyze all its components. However, we can analyze its prominent characteristics in terms of content, form and style, in order to understand what the poem gained and lost as a result of being digitized and to provide adequate context for the discussion below.

The German critic, Stefan Weidner, commented on "The Dice Player" saying "Darwish's poetry went through very different stages. In the 1960s, his poems were characterized by their easy-to-read style. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, they were characterized by their complexity, rife with legends

and linguistic symbols. The recent edition of 'The Dice Player' (released in Arabic and German) unites the best of these two stages" (Weidner, "Akhar Qacâ¾id").

In fact, the poem seems complex at times and simple at others, calm and tumultuous, long and condensed. It is a poem full of contradictions insofar as it sets forth a philosophy for life and death. Stefan Weidner points out that the poem is inspired by a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, "A Throw of the Dice". Weidner deems this fitting, since "The Dice Player" is a poetic biography reflecting the poet's search for his destiny and identity, saying "Maybe I Would Not Be Who I Am" (Weidner, "Akhar Qasa'id").

Darwish also begins his poem by setting forth the question, "who am I to say to you what I say?" This question seems strange at first glance, as "it is seemingly unimaginable that the most famous Palestinian poet would speak as though he was a member of the general public 'or a bit lower [in status]' in his final poem" (Weidner, "Akhar Qasa'id"). However, if we continue reading, we discover that this question forms an axis and backbone for the poem! After the poet asks "who am I", he delves into the details of "the I", which, despite what appears to indicate "I"'s belonging to the general public, is not the case (Damra, "La'ib al-Nard li-Darwish").

Darwish, through his poem, endeavors to uncover what he is searching for within himself. He reviews his life from his birth to his final goodbye in the context of tragedy united by time and place. The critic, Muhammad Sa'id, divides the poem into four levels (Sa'id, "Qira' a fi Qasidat Mahmud Darwish"):

1. The Level of Dialogue: The poem is based on self-dialogue, with the poet referring to the speaker as "I" at times and "we" at others, as though he is seeing himself through someone else's perspective, and others are seeing him through his perspective.

2. The Formative Level: The poet gives the poem a different flavor than in his previous poems. The poem, with its architectural structure, draws parallels to the poet's psychological state. The poetic passages consistently coincide with the poet's emotions, with the winner's and loser's psychological states changing on account of life experiences.

3. The Level of Events: The events within the poem are volatile. The poet plays the role of the author, lover, and victim, falling in love here and falling out of it there, just as he repeatedly faced and escaped death.

4. The Biographic Level: The poem sets forth Darwish's life story and all its pitfalls. The poet reviews his life based on his own memory (which is based on collective memories), recalling his various experiences in a manner closer to storytelling than poetry.

In addition to these four levels, we can add two more important levels, namely:

The Level of Content: The poem is based on one central theme: "coincidence". The poet likens his life to a game of dice. He becomes the dice player who sometimes wins and sometimes loses, succeeding and failing, ascending and

descending, walking and stumbling, until falling into destiny's grasp, where death is inevitable. He says that his life might have been different had it unfolded differently. He was given his name by coincidence, he was born into a family with hereditary heart disease by coincidence, he was born male by coincidence, he became a poet by coincidence, and so on. Even though life is based entirely on coincidence, coincidence did not aid him in "disappointing nothingness"!

It can be said, then, that the poem is based on a strange view of life, death, poetry, and art. Mahmoud Darwish resided in Cairo for about a year before deciding to move to Beirut, home to the largest Palestinian diaspora community. Everything that happened in Beirut, the wars and Israeli occupations, happened by coincidence, as did his trip to Tunisia. All these coincidences made him discover that life is simply a throw of dice, and that the throw named "Mahmoud" was marked with tragedy. He notes, "it's not just a throw of the dice that lies between the predator and its prey." (Darwish 40)

According to Darwish, the logic of coincidence makes history and adds value to an occurrence, sanctifying it: "The earth became holy by coincidence/its lakes and hills and trees/aren't a copy of heaven/because a prophet walked there/and when he prayed on the rock it wept/and the mountain fell prostrate in piety/then fainted.

The Level of Style: The critic divides Mahmoud Darwish's poetry into different time periods reflecting Darwish's artistic development. The last stage of his poetry is distinguished by its semantic density and linguistic deviance. His poetry in this stage is characterized by a kind of ambiguity, favoring symbolism and suggestion over direct declarations (Abu Hamida 62-63). Since the poem "The Dice Player" is one of the poems in this stage, we must consider its outstanding stylistic properties.

A: The Lexicon: Fans of Darwish's poetry can notice a clear development in his lexicon. In his last collection, we see a decline in specific lexical items that were present in the first stage in favor of new words appropriate for the "What is Behind Rhetoric" stage. In "The Dice Player", we find vocabulary expressing the poet's shift from issues of war and resistance to issues of philosophy, diving into the depths of psychology and trying to understand life and death. Consequently, we find words like "life", "death", "lacking", "love", and "listen to my body", and others.

B: Rhythm: The poet employs rhythm in his poem to serve meaning, manipulating two participle forms, according to his socio-psychological state on the one hand, and the syntactic constraints of poetic sentences on the other. We find him using one in instances of stress, while he opts for the other in instances of narration and the polarization of memory. The critic Al-Bashir Dayf Allah says that the poet selected to these two forms on account of their flexibility and ability to respond to different rhetorical levels in the text (Dayf Allah 252).

C: The Rhyme: What distinguishes the rhyme in "The Dice Player" is its diversity and dependence on letters falling within the rhythm, like the "m",

"n", "d", and "r". The poet depended on rhyming variation to combat monotony, using the element of surprise by moving from one rhyme to another.

D: Repetition: Repetition is considered one of the prominent stylistic characteristics in this poem. Repetition here does not lead to linguistic superfluity as much as it deepens and highlights the text's meaning. Repetition is employed from the poem's onset:

I'm the dice player/ sometimes I win/and sometimes I lose

I feared for my siblings a lot/I feared for my cat/and I feared for the fragility of time

The poet also cleverly employed repetition to make the reader a participant in the text's formation, as his quote states: Maybe I became an olive/or a geography teacher/or an expert in the ant kingdom/or Echo's guard/ or… (he left a blank space after the repetitive "or" to let the reader fill-in-the-blank however he wanted).

Alliteration: The author repeatedly applied alliteration to bring about a type of balance in some instances and the lack thereof in others, for example: defective/shy, predator/prey, dangling/high.

E: The Antithesis: It is no surprise that the poem is teeming with an antithesis based on the dialectic between life and death. We find it rife with opposing binaries (words paired with their antonyms), for instance: coming/going; faster/slower; walking/jogging.

F: Harmony: Harmony is considered one of the prominent characteristics in Darwish's poetry, and in the poem in question, the poet employs different types of harmony, adding an aesthetic dimension to the poem and opening it up to different interpretations, including:

A: Religious Harmony: In the poem, Darwish says: I baptize my feather in the lake/then ended my peace/to the Nazarene who doesn't die/because God's breath is in him/and God is a prophet's luck. Here the poet evokes Jesus and baptism to make an allegory of martyrdom between him and Jesus. Jesus did not die. He is still alive, because the breath of Allah is within him, and this is prophetic luck and what separates life from death. Likewise, we find him calling upon religious harmony to serve the central theme of the poem, "coincidence", where he says "and the land became holy by coincidence". Elsewhere in the poem he says: I have no role in the poem/except if the revelation was interrupted/and the revelation is the luck of skill if it exerts itself. Here the poet becomes like the revelation.

B: The Legendary Harmony: The legend of "Narcissus" plays a prominent role in many poems, including "The Dice Player". Darwish says: "Narcissus is not as handsome as he thinks/but he was obsessed with his mirror/were he a little smarter/he would've smashed his mirror/and seen how he appeared to others". In this excerpt, the poet's view of himself appears, and he draws upon the legend to demonstrate the tragedy of self-love. He strives to deny

himself any credit for what he has achieved, viewing himself just like anyone else (or even less).

C: Popularization: The link to folklore in the poem is evident in several places, including: "I belonged to a family by coincidence/and by coincidence I inherited that family's characteristics/and its illnesses: firstly, malfunction of the arteries and high blood pressure/secondly, shyness when addressing my parents/thirdly, hope that the flu could be cured with a cup of hot chamomile/fourthly, laziness when talking about fauna and flora/fifthly, boredom during the winter nights". The previous passage reveals the poet's interaction with various forms of folklore stemming from some traditions customary when addressing one's parents and elders in the family. It also uncovers some old wives' tales believed to be effective medical remedies. The scene ends with a popular winter picture characterized by its long nights and consequent boringness. This popular intransigence demonstrates the poet's view of himself in its simplicity and answers his question: "Who am I to say to you what I say?"

The Dice Player: The Digital Form

The digital form of "The Dice Player" is one of many works by Egyptian animation director, Nissmah Roshdy, who presented the poem during the "Poetic Film Festival" (ZEBRA) in Berlin in 2013, winning first prize. It seems that the director preferred to abridge the poem by selecting passages more suitable for digital photography. As a result, she omitted approximately 35 passages from the original poem, striving to express them from a new creative perspective. But to what extent did she succeed? Did she present enough to represent the gist of what she deleted from the original text?

The first thing we can notice when comparing the original poem and the digital version is that the former fundamentally relies on language, while the latter relies on several other techniques, for instance: "The techniques of rotoscoping (animation), kinetic typography, Arabic calligraphy, audio (the voice of the poet himself), music".

Certainly, we cannot neglect these techniques when analyzing the digital poem. We must read it and explore its different meanings; this presents an additional quality in the interpretation of the digital poem and opens new horizons for criticism that are not present in the original work. The poem falls under what is known as "animation poetry". The director attempted to present the poem with an Arabic flavor. Thus, she selected a piece by the band "Le Trio Joubran" featuring the oud, using it as background music mixed with Darwish's voice.

The poem begins with black liquid ink twisting as if dancing to the oud. If we follow the flow of ink, we will be surprised that it writes the name "Mahmoud", the poet's name, as if the director wanted to present the poet as part of the poem that recounts his life story. In other words, she wanted to tell

the audience that the poem cannot be read in isolation from the life of Mahmoud Darwish, the poet and the man. The ink then goes on to write the question from the beginning of the poem "Who am I to say to you?" Here, the word "I" is written in a smaller font. This reduction of the font size serves two functions: firstly, it expresses the humility of the poet who considers himself indistinguishable from anyone else. Secondly, it expresses the sentence "or perhaps a little less" that was written elsewhere in the original text. By doing this the director was able to condense two literary passages into one digital scene, indicating the superiority of digital literature in this regard.

After that, we see the *sukoon* (i.e., a circle-shaped diacritic placed above a letter indicating that the consonant to which it is attached is not followed by a vowel) in the word "who", rolling like a rock transforming into black liquid resembling blood. Through this scene, the director was able to convey the entire passage contained in the original text without explicitly mentioning it. The passage in question is: "who is this who is currently writing this poem/letter by letter/on this couch in black blood, it is neither the ink nor the voice of the crow/rather it is the night, squeezed drop by drop, by the hands of luck and talent". (Darwish 49)

In her article about the poem, Hiba Yazbek says: "This seemingly 'bleeding' ink writes the word 'face' from left to right, contradicting Arabic writing conventions, as if there is some attempt to erase this face's identity" (Yazbek, "Mahmud Darwish La' ib al-Nard"). This is truly commensurate with the poet's life story and the life of Palestinians which the *nakba* tried to erase.

The face gradually fades away until disappearing completely. Only the *tanween* (i.e., an Arabic diacritic comprised of two short, slightly-angled strokes), which flies over the top of the page, remains, like a hollow reed, represented by the poet thusly: "no reed punctured by the wind became a flute". It is worth mentioning that although the face was only omitted from the poem's digital form, it is morally linked to the original text as regards the consequences of the *nakba* and its effect on the Palestinian people. It follows from this that the director uploaded semantic additions that are not explicitly present in the original text but that are organically related. This raises the question: can she do this and still maintain the integrity of Darwish's poem?

The dots in the word "flute" transform into dice which enlarge until hitting the surface of the screen, as though to inform the audience that the dice are the main theme of the text. Life, in Darwish's view, is nothing more than a game of dice; sometimes one wins and sometimes one loses. Nissmah Roshdy conveyed this by rolling the dice from the top of the screen (representative of winning) to the bottom of the screen (representative of losing).

The dice continue to roll until they their dots transform into the dots in the word "like you" from the line "I am like you or a little less". Here the poet unites with the audience, the Palestinian people, in the game of destiny. This union expresses another sentence from the original text that the director

omitted, namely "and the picture of myself that changed into the picture of someone else".

The black ink continues to run and dance to the oud music without any text. This blank space represents the white space that separates a passage in paper text. As we know, the distribution of black on white (i.e., "space work") received the attention of poetry critics. Black expresses the flow of emotions, and the line shortens or lengthens depending on the psychological state of the poet, while white spaces express moments of silence. So, from a poetic perspective, the whiteness (the space between the syllables) is not just a material necessity imposed on the poem but a condition. In his book "Shape and Discourse", Al-Makiri defines two types of space in paper poetry, namely:

1) Textual Space: Textual space contains a linear function; what is presented within this framework remains merely a text presented to the reader.

2) Figurative Space: This space is contrary to the first space but also complements it, from the perspective that text is not for the sole purpose of reading, but rather, to grant perspective (Al-Makiri 233-241).

Since textual and visual space are not fixed, we can say that their interaction with the digital text requires a different type of interaction. In other words, the element of movement changes the poem's structure, transforming it from a fixed shape to a dynamic one.

Additionally, there is a third space that needs to be taken into consideration, namely "audio space". The oud playing in the empty space lends a suggestive connotation. The music employed by the director matches the dramatic attitude about which the poet speaks and keeps the audience in the same mental state until the next section.

After this interval, the director moves to the third passage of the poem, selecting the first sentence from said passage, which is recited in the poet's voice: "I don't have a role in what I was". The second sentence, "It's a coincidence that I'm male" is expressed by just a picture, and the ink paints a picture of a small boy standing on a grassy area. Here the director skips to the eighth passage of the original text, where the poet says: "If that agricultural land had not be destroyed". The agricultural land symbolizes life and fertility, while the boy represents the poet's childhood in Palestine, where his family owned land. They worked the land and lived off it, until the war began. The director used a missile hitting the land, which then turned into shrapnel that transformed into Arabic letters, to represent this. By doing this, the director articulated Mahmoud Darwish's life. The *nakba* Darwish witnessed brought out his poetic talent and made him a poet for the Palestinian cause. This interpretation exists among the folds of the original text, although it is not explicitly stated. The director's work here indicates that she incorporated her own understanding of the poem. This conflicts with the reception theory which allows the reader to interpret the text for himself, turning our attention to yet another problem of digitization.

After this, the boy falls onto a background which changes from black to white. This visual scene evokes the passage the director deleted wherein Darwish

says: "The poem is a throw of the dice/on a patch of darkness, it radiates or maybe it doesn't". Here the poet is referencing his life as a poet bearing the sorrows of his people and speaking for them, making him radiate like a light amidst the darkness.

The editorial question returns to the screen again, but this time in a radiant white. Then a thread resembling a strand of DNA with the years 1940-1950-1998-2002 written on it appears. The word "I" bounces on top of it, expressing the life of the poet. At the top of the drawing is the picture of a young man expressing what Darwish went through in 2002. Here we hear Darwish saying "I won more awareness/not to be content in my moonlit night/but to witness the massacre". In this expression of "awareness" we see the young man looking at the moon which clears the clouds away before exploding. It is as if Darwish was the product of his people's and country's misery; this afforded him the awareness that he had surpassed others. The clouds separating from the moon represents uncovering the truth, and the explosion of a nuclear bomb at the word "massacre" represents the poet as an intellectual who is aware of his surroundings.

The director goes on to present the first four lines of the tenth passage in the poet's voice accompanied by a pictorial scene: "We survive by coincidence/ I was smaller than the military target/and bigger than a bee moving between the flowers/I feared for my brothers and father a lot/and I feared for the fragile time." In this excerpt we notice the picture fragmenting, expressing the fragmentation of fragile time, the time of the *nakba*.

The director then skips over lines 5-8 and moves on to lines 9-11: "Fear ran through me, and I ran through it/barefoot, forgetting the little memories about my wishes/starting tomorrow, there is no time for tomorrow". In this passage the *kasra* (an Arabic diacritic shaped like a small, slightly-slanted line) from the word "in it" and transforms into a paper plane circling in the air a little before landing on the ground. This is an expression of a broken childhood wherein there is no hope or memories, because there is no room to think about the future in such a present.

Finally, we move to the last passage of the digital poem which expresses the eleventh passage of the original poem. It contains 52 verbs conjugated in the present tense, of which the director selected 30. This passage expresses the poet's emotional confusion, for instance: (I walk/I jog/I run/I hurry/I lag/ I whisper/I scream/I see/I don't see…).

The director expressed this passage with the picture of a young man standing against a white background with a few shaded letters. The young man moved quickly, expressing the meaning of the verbs the poet chose. Whenever the frequency and speed of the verbs increased, the letters got bigger, corresponding to the poet's statement in the last part of the original text: "I have no role in the poem other than my compliance to its rhythm/ the movements of emotions are an emotion modifying an emotion".

We then see the picture of the young man change from black to white. He is surrounded by white letters, representing the role poetry played in Darwish's life wherein he was the only light amidst the blackness of the Palestinian tragedy. However, the young man turns black again, symbolizing, perhaps, Darwish's failure to make a difference.

Hiba Yazbek comments that" in this passage it was not sufficient for the director to mention the verb 'I hallucinate' in the poet's voice. She wrote it in a large font, because psychological disturbances, overthinking, and dwelling on past trauma leads to hallucinations. The poet loses this line between fact and fiction and between his aspirations and reality. His writing documents his hallucinations, most of which are emotional" (Yazbek "*Mahmud Darwîsh La'ib al-Nard*").

The end of the digital poem in this scene correlates well with the end of the original poem which ends with the rhetorical question: "Who am I to disappoint nothingness?" With that, death transforms into the only inescapable reality. Even coincidence cannot aid him in disappointing nothingness.

Lastly, a picture of Mahmoud Darwish with the dates of his birth and date appear on the screen. Information about the music appears next to the title of the poem, followed by the director's name, and, finally, the name of the production company. It can be said that these details resemble, to some extent, the details published on the cover page of the paper collection.

Continuing from that, we can conclude that digitizing the poem granted it an attractive dimension that stimulates the various senses of the audience who simultaneously reads, listens, and watches the poem. The director succeeded in presenting the poem in a very condensed manner. She paid special attention to the theme of "coincidence" and exposed Darwish's feelings of fear, nostalgia, and conflict, as well as the role poetry played in his life. She also added new meanings that were not included in the original text based on her own personal understanding of the poem.

The director also succeeded in expressing the passages that she decided to keep, as well as some of the ones she deleted, through expressive, non-linguistic means, such as animation, colors, movement, and music. These means expanded the possible interpretations of the poem and added new significance to it. This, in turn, necessitated a different critical view of the text.

It is interesting that, despite it being presented in an entirely different form, the poem is still attributed firstly to Mahmoud Darwish, and then to Nissmah Roshdy. Can the digital form of "The Dice Player" really be treated as a poem by Mahmoud Darwish? Can we teach it as such? This is what we will endeavor to discuss in the following section.

Discussion

Even if we were to suppose that the elements discussed above were all positive contributions to the poem, we would still be unable to ignore the

negative effects of digitization. For example, the digital form does not express all the significance and contents embedded in the original text; the digital form is lacking in comparison to the original poem which reflects Darwish's philosophy and deep thoughts about life based on his own personal experiences.

Additionally, the digital poem did not preserve all the levels, nor does it reflect all the aesthetic characteristics mentioned above. Therefore, if we wanted to teach "The Dice Player", we would not be able to rely on the digital form as being reflective of Darwish's poetry in the final stage of his life. Furthermore, we would still need to consult the original text. If Darwish had wanted the poem to be digitized, he would have digitized it himself, as he was alive during the digital era. So why interfere with the text's or author's authenticity?

It is worth mentioning here that this poem was published posthumously. The task of gathering all the texts that had not yet been published was delegated to Lebanese author, Elias Khoury, who spoke of the difficulty of this experience arising from the fact that he had to gather and compare all the drafts to determine the final form of each poem. Regarding "The Dice Player", he mentioned that "when Mahmoud Darwish read the poem 'The Dice Player' in Ramallah, he substituted the word 'fragile' with 'long live', but I decided to publish the text as it was published in 'Al-Quds Al-Arabi' on July 3, 2008, because the poet had already changed some words in his drafts, without modifying the published text." (Khoury) This quote confirms the importance of preserving the original form of the text, out of respect for the authenticity of the text and the author's wishes.

This leads us to think about the need for digitizing literary texts, especially the classical ones, and incorporating them into the curriculum to make these texts more relatable to students living in the age of technology (Al-Rowai 161-168). Can digitization really prove useful?

When we study literature, we consider the historical and social context. The tools used to write literature are ever-changing. If we went back to classical Arabic poetry, for instance, we would find that it was mostly recited orally, moving across the tribes through narrators. The focus was on hearing, not seeing, making poets interested in using rhetorical audial means, just like they used musical uniformity and rhyming to facilitate memorization. Thus, the poem came to be fixed in a vertical form.

If we suppose, for instance, that we will digitize a poem to present it as an animated poem, can we teach it as we do now? Will students understand the relationship of the form and contents to literary and non-literary factors of that time period? Will they be able to understand its rhetorical power and the effort the poet exerted to give birth to the artistic pictures and transform sound into sight to stir the audience's imagination? The answer is definitively "no", since there is no doubt that the digital form will impose a different

reading and entirely different critique, which may lead to confusion in our methods of teaching literature.

Let us consider another example for clarification's sake. After moving from the oral era to the written one, a new poetic phenomenon was established, and, with it, the focus moved from the audial to the visual, establishing what is known to Arabs as "visual poetry".

The roots of this style of poetry date back to the 12th century CE, when Arab poet Al-Jiliani Al-Andulusi Al-Damashqi wrote *Diwan Al-Tatbeej* in which he created a pioneering model for "the intertwining of creative spaces", creating a unique structure in which color harmonizes with calligraphy and form harmonizes with language, transforming language from a mere audial phenomenon into a visual one; literature was presented as a kind of visual art (Abu-Deeb 77).

After the printing revolution, interest in the study of the "form" of the text increased due to the contributions printing could make, such as the addition of colors, pictures, footnotes, and punctuation. New critical terms consequently emerged, for example "text space", "black and white spaces", "format response to content", and others.

If we travelled back in time to the 18th century, when the romantic era arose, we would be unable to discuss it without addressing the political and socio-intellectual developments that prevailed in Europe during that period, and, above all, the call for freedom. This freedom was reflected in art and literature and was welcomed within the Arab community for social and political reasons. This era imposed new literary forms, toppling the vertical shape of the Arabic poem, and prompting poets to favor light meters and contemporary vocabulary. Additionally, they used more than just rhyme, adding new contents to express the philosophy of romantic thought. New critical schools emerged, such as "Diwan" and "Apollo". It is also worth mentioning here that the poets of "The Diwan" waged a war against neo-classical poets, headed by Ahmed Shawky. They mimicked the old tradition and introduced new contents in an old poetic style (Anabisa 202). If these poets consider it inappropriate to express new values and new themes in an old fashion, then is it not also logical for us to denounce expressing the old in a new style? Or to express the contemporary in a more contemporary manner?

Literature continues developing and new critical schools continue to emerge to accommodate such development, passing through the school of realism and then symbolism, and through modernity and post-modernity, until arriving at our current era, the digital age, which has produced its own literature (digital literature). These developments brought about new literary theories, such as the hypertext theory and others. New tools and levels were added to textual criticism. For instance, it is now possible to integrate the tools of art criticism and literary criticism when analyzing interactive poetry, like Eman Younis and Aida Nasrallah did in their joint book, *Artistic-Literary Interaction in Digital Poetry: The Bugaz Tree as a Sample of Demonstration*

(2015). It is also possible to add a level of technical analysis, so that the literary text can be analyzed technically, for instance with computer programs, like Nadîr did in his analysis of the poem "Digital Benefits of Biography" by the Iraqi poet Mushtaq Abbas Ma'an (Nadir 77-108).

We conclude from all this that when we teach literature, we, undoubtedly, teach it as an evolutionary process. We cannot separate the major cultural, political, and social transformations that humanity has witnessed and which influenced literary discourse and its contents. Therefore, we continue to teach the text in its original form, and any change we dare make to this text would, firstly, rob it of its authenticity, and, secondly, would compel us to criticize it arbitrarily. Let us imagine, for example, applying the hypertext theory to comments. Of course, doing so would seem unnatural and perhaps even bizarre.

Perhaps the project "Eva's Story" is further proof of the validity of our claim. This project is an initiative for memorialization of the Holocaust, launched on Holocaust Memorial Day in 2019 and based on the experiences of a young Jewish woman, Eva Heyman. Heyman was born on 13 February, 1931, in Nagyvàrad, Romania. She wrote a diary that was published in Hungary in 1948, and in Hebrew translation by 'Yad Vashem' in 1964. The diary begins on her thirteenth birthday, around a month before the Germans entered Hungary. Eva wrote in her diary for the last time on 30 May, 1944, three days before she was deported to Auschwitz, where she was murdered. In the diary, Eva describes her day-to-day life.

In the framework of this initiative, Eva Heyman's story is told through by an Instagram user with the name 'eva stories'. The diary is presented in the form of a series of short videos, totaling around 30 minutes altogether, ostensibly filmed by Eva Heyman (played by Mia Quiney) on her mobile phone, as if by a young person in 2019. The videos are in English. The entrepreneur Matti Kochavi said this about the project:

> As an independent project of public memory, the aim of 'Eva's Story' is to offer a relevant an innovative way to teach and preserve the memory of the Holocaust today, especially among young people, and especially during a period in which anti-Semitism is growing, while the number of Holocaust survivors is dwindling. The groundbreaking production was adapted especially for viewing on mobile devices, and the filming was done entirely from a 'selfie' angle and in first person, in a manner characteristic of communication on Instagram and social networks ("Sipurah Shel Na'ara Bat Shalosh").

However, this project met staunch opposition from Jews in Israel on the following grounds:

> The Holocaust is a taboo among all of us, including young people, even if they don't understand completely what happened, the intensity of the pain or the magnitude of the tragedy. We all grew up on the notion that the Holocaust is one of the sacred foundations of the Jewish people. It

is interesting that, even without understanding what happened exactly, it will always remain that way.

In contrast to the way we perceive the Holocaust, the social media networks have become symbolic of a narcissism that tramples on collective values and places the individual at the center. The social networks are a synonym for 'nothing culture,' which encourages superficiality and shallowness, based on pictures of smiling people, entertaining short videos, 'stories' that are continuously updated and, especially, the 'likes' that are, from the users' perspective, the essence of it all.

The juxtaposition of these two values creates a dissonance. The thought of connecting between these two – between Instagram, perceived as symbolic of fast-paced superficiality and the attempt to attract attention, and the symbol of a national tragedy – a genocide – is horrifying. In other words, the new trend of animated Holocaust films and Holocaust clips on Instagram will lead to a situation in which what remains of the memory of the Holocaust will no longer be colored black, but rather sweetened with soft and optimistic colors. The memory will no longer be a painful black hole, but rather a light topic, moving smoothly through our feed, between the Kardashians and the NBA (Liraz "*Ha-Stori Shel Eva*").

We conclude from all this that we must restore the desire to digitize texts, as digitization on the pretext of making texts more relatable to the younger generation is not always positive. Furthermore, incidents, experiences, and text can lose their essence and value if they get completely digitized. We must think carefully about when digitization can be possible without jeopardizing the literary essence and value.

We have seen that digitization does not eliminate the need to reference the original text, especially when teaching it as a literary subject. It seems that teaching literary texts is only possible through linking them to their historical context, social and cultural references, and the critical curricula that facilitated their development.

We oppose the call for digitizing literary texts on the pretext of making them more relatable to the new generation, but that does not mean that we oppose the teaching of digital literature or its inclusion in teaching curricula. On the contrary. It is a necessity the current stage imposes on all its developments. Digital literature should be taught by teaching texts that were "born digital". This would enable us to give each text the attention it deserves without interfering with its authenticity. It would further afford students the opportunity to understand the historical development of literature and the different writing methods across the various historical stages.

Beit Berl College, Israel

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