

# Manifestations of the Arab Spring in Literature: “Video Clip Poems” on YouTube as a Model

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This article will discuss the manifestation of the Arab Spring in Arab literature and sheds light on what has become known as “Video Clips Poems” or “Flash Poems” on YouTube. We shall attempt to answer a number of questions concerning Arab Spring literature in general and the video clips in particular: What role did this literature plays in the political transformations witnessed by the Arab world in recent years? What are the means it used in order to inflame the masses? What are the features of the Arab Spring video clips as a new genre different from printed genres? Will the Arab Spring continue to be a literary theme after the end of these uprisings? These clips possess rich and dense semantics content and meaning as it will be shown in this article.

*Keywords:* Arab Spring, Video clip poems, YouTube, literature and revolution

## Introduction

The present article deals with the way the Arab Spring has been manifested in literature and sheds light specifically on what has become known as “Video Clips Poems” or “Flash Poems” (as other critics called it) on YouTube. We note that our use of the term “Arab Spring” stems from the fact that this have become the accepted term in Arabic literature, and despite our awareness of its problematic nature in more than one respect.

Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are Internet networks originally used for entertainment and socializing. However, young people quickly discovered how to turn them into political instruments, which they used in order to encourage popular opposition to the government in some Arab countries. Very quickly these websites became the main engine for bringing about revolutions, first in Tunisia, then in Libya and Egypt, and finally in Syria and Yemen. The revolutions were engendered by means of thousands of web pages bearing revolutionary slogans, live video clips and inflammatory photographs, calling for the organization of demonstrations and protest marches demanding democracy and change. In fact, some critics have blamed the social media for having fueled the unrest among the youth in the Arab countries and for having lit the spark that led to revolution.

The role of these websites, especially YouTube, was not limited to kindling the fire of revolution. They played an important part also in following the course of these revolutions, whose events were photographed and disseminated in real time and incited public opinion. It did not take long for writers and poets to exploit these pictures and live video clips and play their part in inflaming the masses. Their works took the form of digital literary clips which may be called “Arab Spring Video Clips Poem”, in which written, visual and audio material is presented together. These clips possess a singularly rich semantics and a great density of content and

meaning, as will be shown below.

In the present paper we shall attempt to answer a number of questions concerning Arab Spring literature in general and especially the video clips, among them the following: What role did this literature play in the totality of political transformations which the Arab world has witnessed in recent years? What were the means it utilized in order to inflame the masses? What are the features which distinguish the Arab Spring video clips as a new genre from printed genres in this context? Will the Arab Spring continue to be a literary theme after the revolutions will have run their course? What future do writings on this subject have?

### **Literature and the Arab Spring**

The relationship between literature and revolution has very reputable roots. Literature has frequently been used to express the sufferings of peoples. Authors have come to realize that words can have a great effect on public opinion; that they are capable of shaping social and political views and values; of sowing the seeds of rebellion and kindling the spirits for revolution. They have also perceived the great responsibility which they bear and the important role they play in political, cultural and social evolution. This has challenged some literary schools, such as Romanticism and Neo-Classicism, while promoting other schools such as Realism, Symbolic Realism (Budarbala & Jadallah, 2005), and contributed to the dissemination of the idea of commitment in literature.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, not long before the Arab Spring broke out, a wave of “revelation and projection” literature appeared which “revealed” facts and “projected” the results derived from them. Writers described the tragic circumstances of the Arab nations by shedding light on the various forms of oppression and suffering imposed on these nations by their despotic and corrupt regimes. Literature in this case played the role of provocateur, by making the people realize the enormity of their calamity; rethink their everyday lives and rebel against the political oppression under which they suffered.

The Algerian poetess Zaynab al-A'waj has stated that dreams of revolution among Arab writers were not born by chance and that the generation of Arab revolutions is descending from generations of fighters and political prisoners who struggled for freedom and integrity in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as from the generation of the 1980s, which carried out unsuccessful uprisings in a number of Arab countries in demand for better life. Al-A'waj added that poems, novels and the songs of *Shaykh Imam* by the poet Ahmed Fouad Negm and the songs of *Marcel Khalifa* prompted the generation which created the current uprisings in the Arab World. In fact, the revolution according to writers and critics did not occur in a vacuum; rather, the generation of the Arab Spring acquired inspiration and ideas from novels, poems and other artistic works (Tahir, 2015).

In fact, there are a considerable number of novels written before the outbreak of the Arab revolutions, which may have prepared the ground for their eruption and forecasted their occurrence. We may mention for example the Egyptian writer Khalid al-Khamisi's novel *Cab* (2006)<sup>2</sup> and Muhammad Salmawi's *Butterfly Wings* (2010),<sup>3</sup> both of which paved the way for the Egyptian revolution of the 25th January and predicted its

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre was a pioneer of the idea of commitment in literature. He maintained that literature must play a role in bringing about change in the society; a change in people's social conditions and in the way they perceive themselves; this can happen if writers take positions on political and social issues. See: Jean-Paul Sartre, “Qu'est-ce que la littérature?” (What Is Literature?), pp. 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> The novel is about a taxi driver who narrate to his passengers stories about the government, which he curses with great freedom, since the taxi is supposedly the only places in Egypt that is not under supervision.

<sup>3</sup> According to critics this novel predicted the revolution of January 25 in detail. It depicts the various forms of corruption inside the official parties and the covert steps taken by the youth in order to organize a coup using the social media and mobile phones in order to avoid censorship.

occurrence as a necessary consequence of the widespread corruption in the Egyptian government and society. Another novel worth mentioning is the Tunisian al-Habib al-Salmi's *Women of the Garden* (2010),<sup>4</sup> which encompassed the features of the jasmine revolution in Tunisia (Milish, 2015), in addition to Basma Hamdi's novel *The Griffon and the Vipers* (2010)<sup>5</sup> and others.

In this context we cannot ignore the role played by social media in motivating youth and inciting them through the slogans calling for demonstrations and protest marches. It is important to note that the slogans which the youth raised in their protests were pragmatic and practical, giving direct expression to their demands, such as "The people want to topple the regime" or "Go!". Subsequently writers used these very same slogans in their revolutionary writings. The protestors also chanted provocative verses of pre-revolutionary poems by poets such as Ahmed Fouad Negm, Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi, Samih al-Qasim, Mahmoud Darwish and others, which the protestors used to stimulate public opinion and incite the masses (Abdul Ghani, 2012).

It may therefore be said that this literature did not refrain from being committed; playing a role in preparing the ground for the revolutions of the Arab Spring; securing their foundations through awareness and incitement; but also it created, a channel of expression fit for the revolution, and provided the activists with the language, expressions and verses that they would need in their political activity.

### **The Emergence of "Video Clip Poems" on the Internet**

As soon as the winds of revolution began to blow in the Arab Spring, authors began to compete with each other in writing about it in both prose and poetry. They described the massacres, depicting the dead, the wounded, the blood that flowed, the martyrs and the repulsive crimes committed against the demonstrators in their struggle for freedom in the city squares. Literature here played the role of cheerleader, instilling the revolutionaries with enthusiasm and urging them not to give up or recede, after it played the role of inciter in the preceding period. Among the works composed at the height of the Arab Spring's revolutionary phase, we may mention Hisham al-Khashn's *Seven Days in Tahrir Square* (2011);<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Zaghlul's novel *One-Hundred Steps of Revolution* (2011);<sup>7</sup> Muhammad al-Ghayti's play *Garden Blossoms* (2011);<sup>8</sup> the Algerian novelist Wasini al-A'raj's *Monarchorepublic Arabia* (2011)<sup>9</sup> and the Sudanese writer Mu'tasim al-Sha'ir's novel *Song of Departure* (2011).<sup>10</sup> In the field of poetry we may mention Abdul Rahman

<sup>4</sup> The novel deals with the internal contradictions of Tunisian society; its fragility and oscillating between onerous religious traditions and a confusing modernism.

<sup>5</sup> The novel sheds light on the corruption of the Arab media and the commercialization of religion and criticizes aspects of everyday behavior in Tunisian society.

<sup>6</sup> This novel deals with the January revolution in Egypt from a new perspective. It presents several figures that participated in the revolution, all of them from the same place: Hussein Hijazi Street in the Qasr al-Eini quarter near Tahrir Square. The characters belong to different political groups: a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, a Copt, a businessman, a member of the influential National Party, a revolutionary youth and a student at the Police Academy.

<sup>7</sup> The author of this novel describes the first of these hundred steps, taken on January 3, 2011, namely, the vigil with black candles by a number of intellectuals who protested the "Two Saints Church" bombing.

<sup>8</sup> The play gives homage to the martyrs of the "January 25th Revolution", whose blood have turned into blossoms that unfolded in Egypt.

<sup>9</sup> In this novel al-A'raj treats the themes of despotism and the ruler's fear. He monitors the mentality of the tyrant as it appears in the popular and traditional Arabic literature. He uses traditional sources in order to understand why dictatorships are so firmly established in our culture, for which purpose he invented an unusual system of government he called a "monarcho-republic" (jumlukiyya). Structurally the novel may be compared to a heroic poem, since it treats the free acts of the struggle, the acts of war, and the human hymns that express a fervent desire for liberty and freedom.

<sup>10</sup> This novel treats the present situation in the Arab world. It is filled with images and symbols that personify and depict the late Libyan Colonel Muammar Qaddafi and predict his end.

al-Abnudi's collection *The Square* (2011); Hilmi Salim's *Raise Your Head High* (2011); Hasan Talab's collection *Gospel and Quran of the Revolution* (2011); and the Syrian writer Tarif Yusuf al-Agha's poetry collection *Journey around the Revolutions of the Arab Spring* (2014); in addition to poems by Ahmed Fouad Negm; Tamim al-Barghuthi; Hisham al-Hajj and others.

It is no wonder that poetry, especially poetry composed in the colloquial language, played a predominant role in describing the events of the Arab Spring, due to its great ability to catch a moment; transform it from an event to a literary creative work; and turn it into a depiction much more quickly than other forms of literature.

Once more the social media on the Internet, especially YouTube, played an important part in observing the scenes of events, documenting them in sound and image, and disseminating them through live video clips, which were then used by poets to create original "video clip poems", using the Small Web Format (SWF) to create short clips in which written text, audio and video materials are combined.

Currently YouTube is the largest website on the Internet and probably the most popular as well, since it enables users to upload and download flash files free of cost. The revolutions of the Arab Spring led to the production of thousands of video poems on the web, in which images are combined with literary texts, which may be presented in written or in audio form.

Examples of Arab Spring poems that turned into YouTube video clips are the Iraqi poet Ahmad Matar's poem "*Fighter and Chatter*";<sup>11</sup> the Palestinian poet Tamim al-Barghuthi's "*Oh People of Egypt*";<sup>12</sup> Abdul Aziz al-Jami'an's "*Damascus and the Caliphate State*";<sup>13</sup> the Palestinian poet Basam al-Ashram's "*Bu Aziz*";<sup>14</sup> and many others. The study shall refer to these as "Arab Spring video clips", in order to distinguish them from other uploaded literary files. Below we will describe their distinctive features and their effectiveness as a new digital literary genre in comparison to printed texts.

### Expressiveness and Persuasiveness

These video clips have great expressive ability because the literary text is transformed into animated living images. The Chinese proverb says: One picture is worth a thousand words. The images transform the poem into a powerful tool able to generate meaning more than millions of words, and therefore it will be retained in the receiver's mind for a very long time. Studies have shown that people remember usually about ten percent of what they hear; thirty percent of what they read; but eighty percent of what they see (Abdul Hamid, 2005, p. 14). According to Dweiri, the huge expressive value of pictures prompted the Christian church to approve the idea of showing Christ in picture form (Debray, 2002, p. 58).

Let us have a look at the clip entitled *Fighter and Chatter* which the poet Ahmad Matar wrote about the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian revolution. We note that the clip's expressive power lies mainly in the live video scenes that pervade the audio text. Assad is shown in a variety of situations in which he gives speeches, in a way that shows his hypocrisy and hollowness of his speeches, which the poet considers as nothing more than pure gossip. In a number of places the poet's voice is lowered so that the voices of eyewitnesses recorded in real time can be heard, as in the scenes showing the dead victims and the massacre which are presented simultaneously with the poet's words: "He dismembered his people and sold their bones

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrSs\\_Dm5NII](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrSs_Dm5NII).

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrmzFzUkXYE>.

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_H6khzKWW4A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_H6khzKWW4A).

<sup>14</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qC9iai7J3k>.

and flesh". At the end of the poem the poet's voice: "Cry out in their faces: Liberty, Liberty" is mixed with the screams of the demonstrators in the streets "Liberty for prisoners... oh Syria, liberty". The words of the poem are intertwined with the live scenes, and the poet's voice is combined with the words of the crowd, giving this clip great expressive power and transforming the passive and neutral listener into a supporter thanks to the video scenes. Seeing is believing, and therefore the scenes make the clip much more convincing than the words by themselves.

### **Transcending the Boundaries of Space and Time**

Viewing pictures creates a special type of thinking, called visual thinking, which goes beyond the limits of the immediately perceived bounds of reality by allowing one to evoke the past and to relive it through images and films associated with it, just as it enables one to think about and evoke the future through the use of one's imagination (Abdul Hamid, 2005, p. 9). Images thus make it possible to move through an extended temporal framework and to free oneself from the restrictions of space, by interacting with people in distant places as if they were actually present. Thus in Tamim al-Barghuthi's poem *Oh People of Egypt* for example, we find that the receiver, wherever he is located in the real world, is taken to *Tahrir Square*, where he can experience the events and slowly follow the words of the poem which are transformed before his eyes into events that are seen and heard.

Katherine Hayles in her paper *From Object to Event* makes the same point. She states that what distinguishes digital literature in general is its ability to transform the "actions" described in the text into "events" which unfold before the viewer's eyes (Hayles, 2006). In other words, the actions are no longer merely depictions but become tangible and visible, as in this video clip. Roberto Simanowski expressed the same idea when he said that digital literary texts have two languages, "the language of words" in which the event is described, and "the language of performance" in which the event is presented using non-linguistic signs such as movement and pictures (Simanowski, 2009). And since a "live event" is more closely linked to a specific time and place than an abstract act, it gives the receiver the feeling that he is present in it, wherein lies the value of "live pictures" in the age of globalization, namely in their ability to break through geographical and material barriers and to turn the entire world into one truly small village.

### **Semiological Richness**

Video poems share a semiotic richness derived from different types of intertextuality and intersecting genres. This turns the text into what Fatima al-Bariki has called an "electronic mosaic" which brings together different types of texts, written, spoken and visual, static and moving. Such an electronic mosaic is capable of creating interrelations between the various texts that it contains. The variety and diversity gives the text a semiotic richness (Al-Bariki, 2006, p. 183). Such richness is clearly evident in Abdul Aziz al-Jami'an's poem *Damascus and the Caliphate State*, which is based on a clear inter-textual relationship with *Mu'allaqat* Amrben Kulthum, but at the same time maintains inter textual and entanglement relations with other written and visual texts. Thus the clip begins with typing out a *hadith* of the Prophet on papyrus sheets. The *hadith* says that the forms of government shall change and the prophetic system of government will be once again adopted in the Arab world. After this the poem itself begins. The poet strives to confirm the certainty of the *hadith* and declares that Bashar al-Assad's rule will end soon, and will be replaced by the equitable Islamic rule.

It is worth noting here, that every recited verse by the poet can also be seen written in the background on different pictures which represent different meanings and symbols. Thus, for example, as the poet says “Damascus is shaken day after day while we are dancing here” we are shown scenes from recreational programs broadcasted on Arab TV channels, such as “Arab Idol”, “The Voice” and “Arabs Got Talent”, in a way that expresses contempt of the current situation. When he recites the line “You are miserable leaders, miserable... miserable and worn out”, we are shown maps and flags of the Arab states which represent these leaders. The poet’s recital of the line “We shall conquer Damascus in an evident victory” is accompanied by scenes from a historical film about Khalid ben al-Walid’s conquest of Damascus. When he recites “Damascus...does not feel sad...if the battle intensifies we shall never stay silent” the background consists of scenes from historical films about the Islamic conquests. Finally, when he recites the line “Arrows that are shot and hit their target are shot by God” the following Quranic verse appears on the screen:

And you did not kill them, but it was Allah who killed them. And you threw not, [O Muhammad], when you threw, but it was Allah who threw that. He might test the believers with a good test. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing. (Quran: Surat Al-Anfal. 8:17)

Thus, the concept of intertextuality has taken on a new form in these clips. The text to be presented invokes other texts, in video and audio, creating an amalgamation of literary, historical, religious and cinematic texts which form together a mosaic that is rich in meanings; and exceeds the bounds of “language”, providing it with great semiological density. This is part of what has become known as “digital rhetoric”, a new term engendered by contemporary digital epistemology (Simanowski, 2010, p. 24).

### **Diversity**

Post-modernist artists often use style and image to create their own world. They use change rather than constancy, irony rather than seriousness, combination of literary genre rather than individual genres, and diversity rather than uniformity (Abdul Hamid, 2005, p. 40; Nasrallah & Younis, 2015, pp. 11-18). In the clip “Bu Azizi” by the Palestinian poet Basam al-Ashram there are several creative forms: poetry, instrumental music, singing. The poet halts the recital in several places in order to listen to the famous song “My Homeland...My Homeland”. This interposition is used to show the difference between the images of the homeland in the song “the dream”, which should be a source of pride, and the “real” defeated, confiscated and oppressed homeland. This difference provokes conflicting emotions which associate his wishful dream and the painful reality. Such combination of feelings could not have been achieved solely by the poem. This is where digital texts provide added value, by enabling the author to use all available technological features in the service of his literary text. This will produce an artistic work of different layers and artistic tools, which are not limited to one single cognitive field, but rather belonging to a larger cognitive field which has become known today as “digital performance art”, consisting of a combination of different arts, such as music, painting, photography, drama, sculpture, cartoons, song, and more (Strehovec, 2010, p. 207; Simanowski, 2010, p. 15; Nasrallah & Younis, 2015).

### **Sensual Integration and Communication**

According to Janez Strehovec, digital texts require more than one reading and the use of more than one sense in order to be fully comprehended (Strehovec, 2010, p. 222). When we deal with a video clip we hear, see, listen, watch and read at the same time, therefore its interpretation requires a great deal of effort.

The five senses are the factors that affect perception or comprehension, since perception gives meaning to the sensory effects that enter the brain through the sensory apparatuses. In the course of perception we hear voices, see forms, smell odors, feel bodies and taste food. One sense may be perceived through another, a process known as synesthesia. Amjad Abdul Hamid Abdullah argues that synesthesia depends for its operation in enriching the poetic form on the conscious and not subconscious associations (Abdullah, 2009, p. 83). Therefore, when we observe the video clips we find that they present synesthetic images at the linguistic level, to which they add other modes of transmission in order to achieve what has become known as “multi-sensory communication”, in which visual perceptions are combined with audio perceptions. The missing senses are then evoked with the help of those that are present. For example, in the clip “Bu Azizi” the sense of touch is evoked by the sense of sight: The image of the fire that takes hold of Bu Azizi’s body evokes the senses of heat and pain.

We may therefore say that the synesthesia in these video clips takes the receiver to a new level of perception: The text is not perceived only with the mind but also with the senses. The receiver of a digital text must be prepared to perceive it by both mind and body, since the sound has meaning, as does the movement, and the color. All the senses must therefore be used and integrated in a non-arbitrary manner in order to acquire the keys to interpreting the text.

### **Modernization**

Digital texts, including YouTube video clips, reflect the enormous technological advances of our modern age. The present century is one of great technological development, the age of information technologies and digital revolution. The world around us is competing on pursuing the latest novelties in this domain. Therefore, writers felt that they had to join the course and take advantage of the technical possibilities offered by the technology in the promotion of their literary texts. The Internet and the computer software’s can give a text what paper cannot.

The critic Salah Ajina argues that the texts in the new millennium must possess the features and characteristics of the age and its realities. Authors must therefore abandon old literary and poetic models and frameworks that no longer serve their purpose and do not express reality. Instead, they have a duty to create new styles and forms, and a language that can go along with the electronic age with all its complexities and developments. Ajina adds that “the 1980s and 1990s were a period of transition for texts, a period of alienation; anticipation; tension; expectation for the birth of something that was coming. This newborn thing is the natural context that complements the digital age. Now that the world has become a small village, individuals in this village can’t maintain a dialogue with others using their national languages that are not spoken by others? That is impossible; it can only be done in the unified language of the village. Therefore poetry cannot achieve its existence in the third millennium except when it is based on the language of this world, the digital language”. He further states that digital poetry helps remove the opacity of human dialogue and that whoever is incapable of joining this moving procession will have difficulty in expressing his emotions, his very humanity, and will as a result be left behind as were the people who were incapable of realizing their humanity (Ajina, 2007).

Muhammad Sanajleh agrees with Ajina on this issue. He argues that the Internet has changed the face of the world and the way we live. People have changed, and so have their conceptions and values. Concepts such as digital life, digital society and virtual person have come into being, and such life and such persons require new literature, expressed in a new style and with new devices, which must be derived from the means that this

age has made available. You cannot express the meaning of an age without using the tools of that age. So just as stone was the means of expression in the Stone Age, trees for expressing the meaning in the agricultural age, and printed books for expressing the meaning of the industrial age; then, digital literature only is capable of expressing the digital age (Sanajleh, 2005, pp. 86-87). The video clips, like any other new digital genre, can be considered to be among the hybrid genres that combine the traditional elements with the elements of modernity and features of the digital age (Younis, 2011, pp. 127-250), like other literary digital genres.

Finally, the manifestation of the Arab Spring in literature exceeded the parameters of the traditional printed text. The Arab nations' reality; the corruption of its regimes; their social and religious conflicts and the uncertainty between grief and hope, cannot be dealt with by means of printed texts, which are incapable of expressing its complexity. This has driven writers to search for new methods for rendering this reality and these revolutions in a more effective style that befits the present crucial moment in the history of the Arabs.

### **The Future of Arab Spring Literature**

The Arab Spring literature may be classified as "circumstantial literature", which is associated with certain specific circumstances. In this sense it is somewhat similar to memoirs or diaries in which the author notes things he or she saw; or heard; or described in the order of the events. However, if we look at the literature written about historical events in general, we will find that great transformations and important events, has always been and still written many years after the events. This is true of every domain, including television and cinema. To this day films and television series are being produced about bygone historical periods; battles and wars that took place hundreds or even thousands of years ago. We may predict that this is indeed what will happen with respect to the Arab Spring as well. Novels, poems and various types of digital texts will be created with the technical means that the future may bring about it, in addition to television series and films. However, all this will only happen after a relatively long time have passed; the revolutions have run their course and Arab societies have had enough time to feel their true long-term effects. In other words, we may expect a wave of Arab Spring literature that has yet to be written, but which will only appear after a long time has passed. Only future generations, will have the pleasure of reading this literature. The Arab Spring may be followed by summer, fall and winter before the promises of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia are fully realized. However, there can be no doubt in our opinion that the Arab nations are in a state in which no return is possible, despite the difficult birth wrenches. We just have to wait for the newborn infant, even if the prospects are distant.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

In our discussion about the relationship between the Arab Spring and literature we found that the latter could be divided into three temporal stages. The first of these is the pre-revolutionary literature, by which we mean the writings which prepared the way towards the revolution and predicted its occurrence by shedding light on the situation of the Arab peoples and their sufferings. These writings prompted the people to reject their existing situation and to rebel against it and helped in the creation of channels of expression for the revolution and its revolutionaries.

The second stage is the one on which we focused in the present paper, namely the literature of the revolution itself; the literature produced in the course of the different revolutions. We saw that a great number of poetic and prosaic texts dealing with the Arab revolutions were produced at this time. We then described at length the works that were uploaded on YouTube, which we called "Arab Spring video clips", whose features



and effect are compared to those of printed texts. We showed how poets attempted to transcend the bounds of paper and lead the text to other levels through the use of all the devices that technology made accessible in order to produce texts that can in fact bring to life the painful reality in which the Arab peoples lived and bring to life also their revolutions, as if the revolution that took place in reality is in need of a parallel revolution in the shape of literary compositions; in the methods used to write them and in the style in which they are expressed, so that they can be presented in the way they deserve to be at a crucial moment in the history of nations.

It may be argued that although the main motivation behind the production of the Arab Spring video clips was political, however, these clips became a literary phenomenon that cannot be overlooked; a genre with its own features and characteristics that set it apart from traditional printed texts. As a result we may claim that we are faced with a new qualitative movement in the domain of poetry, one that had involved new forms and new formulations. Today poems are not merely written, but are produced, directed and played by an entire team, like any other video clip.

The critic Latif al-Barghuthi attributed to language great importance in war novels, because language molds the way we view concepts and objects and every language analyzes the external world differently from every other language (Zaytuni, 2012, p. 151). We must therefore take into account the text as it is presented to the reader, including every expressive device in it, including what may transcend language in usage, connotation and meaning.

The changes which literary texts have undergone have thus led to the creation of new esthetic values that depend both on the text and the receiver. Critics are thus required to make use of every possible scholarly tool in order to understand complex texts presented in the media, because these literary-technical works are represented through a relationship between words, pictures and conceptions used in the text, and also by a relationship between colors, their degrees; dimensions, and levels of visual and audio formation. Judging such works can only be carried out if one combines the tools of literary criticism with those of cinematic and artistic criticism, which is not an easy matter.

Therefore we, as researchers in the field of literature and literary criticism, cannot simply brush off the phenomenon of these literary video clips, because they represent a new stage in the evolution of literature, one that deserves study; inquiry and opens the door to many questions in the domain of literary criticism. To this day no comprehensive critical study of this phenomenon has been made in Arabic.

Finally, we briefly discussed the third and last stage in the literature of the Arab Spring, namely, the post-revolutionary period. This is a literature which, as we noted, has yet to make its appearance, but will certainly appear after some time has passed, because the true effects of a revolution can only be felt in the long term. We fully expect that in the far future our libraries and literary archives will be filled with a large and varied quantity of original literary works related to the Arab Spring.

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