

## ***EDITORIAL***

### **Humanities and Social Sciences in the Digital World**

This issue of *Cairo Studies in English* (Winter 2019) is dedicated to the examination of the ways in which new digital media and technologies have fundamentally challenged our conventional visions of culture, society and even humanity. The articles of this issue cover a broad spectrum of theories, methods and tools that have been recently proposed to explore fundamental notions of humanities, the arts and social sciences in today's world. *CSE* is proud to have been able to bring together a host of academic and independent researchers who contributed their insights to this fertile and challenging field of scholarship. Several academics were also presenters in *Writing Across Borders*, a Symposium held by the English Department, the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, on 13-15 November 2018.

The article by Amany Elnahas examines issues impeding social and institutional justice, particularly corruption and sexism, highlighting how comics, whether Facebook comics or print ones, have come to present a renewed battle for justice and self-determination that is deeply embedded in recreating the image of an Egyptian superhero. Dealing with the same digital platform, Dina Halawa's article investigates the concept of neo-nomadism in the Facebook pages of an Egyptian comic artist, and how cyber-mobility is increasingly enriching the cultural practices produced in today's new world.

The article by Asmaa Ahmed investigates the reasons behind English-Arabic code-switching in instant messaging, with particular reference to WhatsApp conversations. Inquiring into another aspect of the mobile media culture, Marwa Abuel Wafa analyzes an official TV advertisement of Telecom Egypt Mobile Network "We" released in 2018, arguing that this advertisement provides a model of visual grammar through which the forms and meanings of visual communication can be assessed.

Turning to the cinema in the digital age, Nihal Nour studies a recent cinematic adaptation of the life of Van Gogh, *Loving Vincent* (2017). The first fully-painted and animated feature film in cinematic history, this production is examined as a ground-breaking work which employs a primarily digital medium to subvert both film and visual art genre conventions, while at the same time conforming to them on different levels.

In a different vein, Riham Debian's article deals with the simulacra of the New World order warfare and its implications for the machination of the Empire of

the ‘American Century,’ by examining the narration of the Battle of Aleppo (2012-2016) within the ‘holocaust’ frame and its implication in/for the ‘New Middle East’ of the ‘American Century.’

In her article on cin(e)-poetry, Sylvia Fam explores how poetry and the cinema may be wedded together via the electronic medium, through a study of three cin(e)-poems which deal with the theme of war using different techniques such as machinima, kinesis, animation and sound tracks.

Scrutinizing another area of the digital world, the article by Wael Mustafa focuses on the literary phenomenon of the “cyberpunk” which has emerged in the American literary scene during the early 1980s. The article examines this type of writing within the scope of the marginalized literary genre of science fiction. Another phenomenon in the digital world is tackled by Yasmine Sweed's article which focuses on digital archiving, exploring the relationship between technology and knowledge production and dissemination by examining the concept of the archive as a cultural product or a site where issues of racial and ethnic diversity are contested.

*Emerging Voices* featured in this issue of *CSE* include Amira El-Zohiery's article (derived from her Ph.D. thesis not yet defended) which explores how hashtag activism has changed the way people protest and have their voice expressed, with emphasis on hashtag campaigning as a distinctive genre. Meanwhile, Eman El-Said's article (derived from her M.A. thesis already defended) focuses on cyberpunk and virtual reality, shedding light on the implications of the contemporary information age on technology users, especially young adults, with particular reference to the emerging genre of the cyberpunk novel. Rana El Kholy's article (derived from her Ph.D. thesis already defended) provides a Systemic Functional Grammar analysis of English SMS advertisements sent to mobile phones in Egypt, with the aim of identifying the grammatical features of this type of advertisement.

As of this issue, *CSE* is pleased to devote space to synopses of recent dissertations by emerging scholars. Doaa Ghazi's Ph.D. overview explores how democratized, wireless, portable and smart media have inaugurated a new era with new conceptualizations of reality and of culture, and how digital form and content, shrunken spatio-temporal economies of signification and mediated messages have become new delineators of present culture.

*CSE* is also pleased to inaugurate two innovations, first, the *Book Review*, and the “Articles in Press.” This volume features a review, by Hala Kamal, of Teresa Pepe’s *Blogging from Egypt: Digital Literature, 2005-2016*. The book review highlights Pepe’s groundbreaking exploration of digital literature in Arabic, in

the period that immediately followed the introduction of web technologies in Egypt. As for the “Articles in Press,” this new feature offers the possibility of pre-publication of submissions whose authors need early proof of *CSE* acceptance prior to the official date of publication. Such articles can be accessed through the “Articles in Press” link on the *CSE* Homepage.

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Ahmed El-Shamy, Heba El-Abbadi and Reem El-Degwi  
*Cairo Studies in English* 2019(2) Editorial Team