

Developing The Sudanese Poetics/Literature Archives Whilst Conflict In Sudan

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Abstract:

Many Sudanese civilians have left Sudan because years of dictatorship oppression and the occurrence of the coup, on October 25, 2021, curtailed their freedom of speech. Nevertheless, the Sudanese community expresses their radical free speech using poetry and other literary forms. These historically significant modes became an important element of the 2019 revolution, 2021 coup, and the recent military conflicts that began on April 15, 2023. Scholars argue that lyric poetry is a form of freedom, an escape for writers, and a form of engagement with social/political issues. The Sudanese community circumvents the issue of lack of freedom of speech with poetry, writing memoirs, and other writing forms. Unfortunately, Sudanese literature is not well represented in American libraries and education systems compared to Eurocentric poetry. At the same time scholars suggest that the merge of humanities and technology into digital humanities help us understand digital culture, while incorporating diverse topics, such as social justice. This research identifies the importance of the expansion of awareness of Sudanese poetry in a digital form and other literary forms, while elevating awareness of freedom of speech needed in Sudan. The extension from the Sudanese Poetics Archive to the Sudanese Literature Archive is an expansion to other Sudanese literary works that uses a web application that is an open-source content management system for online digital collections. This type of archiving and cataloging is crucial to diversify the libraries in America and to bring awareness to Sudanese literature and social issues. The preliminary results of the research survey indicate that 95% of the participants have never known the existence of Sudanese poetry and the historical/current issues in Sudan. The archives and collaborations are developed as an act of library activism to continue to raise awareness about the suppression of freedom of speech in Sudan and to encourage engagement with other Sudanese writers in Sudan and abroad.

About the authors:

Israa Abbas is a Sudanese-American poet, researcher, cataloger, and archivist in Illinois. As a McNair Scholar in 2020, she has developed the digital Sudanese Poetics Archive. Eventually, she developed the Sudanese Literature Archive to preserve the written works of various Sudanese writers from around the world. Also, as an on-going project, to improve access to their writings due to the lack of representation of Sudanese writers. She has obtained her Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Creative Writing from Northeastern Illinois University (December 2020) and her Master's degree in Library & Information Science (MLIS) from University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee (December 2022). Check out Israa's digital Sudanese Poetics Archive and the Sudanese Literature Archive on iapoetry.com and follow on Instagram @ia_poetry_official for updates.