SCRIPT: Memories from Egyptian Television  
Mahitab Alaa Adly  
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Lead-in: Memories from Egyptian Television is a documentary that takes you on a trip that begins in the 1960s and ends in the 2000s. It includes sound bites from the most famous and prominent figures in the media history. Also, the music used helps move you from one decade to the next.

Some say that over 30 years ago, television in Egypt used to be the spine of the Arab world. Since then, it has maintained a prominent status in influencing the people of Egypt both socially and politically.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Fayruz Music (20 seconds)  
“Song name: Habaytak Bel Seif”

As stated in The Museum of Broadcast Communications, that huge building located at the bank of the Nile River in Cairo and named after the famous Egyptologist, Gaston Maspero, was the first in the Middle East to introduce television transmission in the 1960s.

I remember when my grandmother used to tell me stories about television. She says when the first television came out in the 1960s, Egyptians were not familiar with watching TV series, unlike in the United States, where TV series such as Maverick and Walt Disney were already up and running.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Walt Disney music (10 seconds)  
“play the beginning music of Disney movies.”

However, television started to become popular in Cairo, and extended to Alexandria and other cities when Egypt faced war in 1967 with Israel. And the digital technology of Egyptian television projected not only on the well being of Egyptians, but also on the Palestinians and the Israelis.

MUSIC: FADE IN: War nat sound. (13 seconds)

ABDULLAH SCHLIEFFER: “Everybody in Israel could watch Egyptian television, and they were watching it.”

That’s media expert, Abdullah Schlieffer.
ABDULLAH SCHLIEFFER: “And their reaction, they reacted as emotionally as the Palestinians where I was reacted. The difference is the Palestinians were convinced Nasser was our serious threat to Israel, could destroy Israel and we’re ecstatic cause we mean to return to Palestine. And the Israeli public was petrified. They were digging trenches to bury the dead a week before the war cause they took Egyptian television seriously.” (30 seconds)

During this time, Egyptians were unaware of being dragged into war and suffering.

ABDULLAH SCHLIEFFER: “It was all a voice of the Arabs. On the radio and Egyptian television. The voice of the Arabs above all, which everyone listened to. But you didn’t see or you weren’t aware of that when you were in Egypt. The Egyptian people were not prepared for war, the Arab world was being prepared for accepting Gamal Abdel Nasser as a leader of the Arab world.” (22 seconds)

However, Egypt was able to hear the victory of gaining back its land in 1973. And all along, Egyptians were getting information on the war through television.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Nat sound of the victory song. (6 seconds)

After the ‘73 war, as the Camp David Accord and the Arab- Israeli Peace Treaty was signed and Egyptians were resuming their daily routines, television remained an important aspect in their lives.

They started tuning in for entertainment shows on TV that mirrored their lifestyles.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Nat sound of Ahwa Cairo Streets (15 seconds)
MUSIC: FADE IN: Thousand nights shows beginning music (25 seconds)
“Fade in song with the nat sound of Ahwa Cairo Streets and play song until the end of the next paragraph.”

The magical and enchanting history, the authentic and old buildings, the generosity of the people living there, the ancestral food stalls and many more details that give light to the staggering Egyptian culture were represented on television.

This pure mastery presented through television catches a glimpse of what keeps Egypt alive.

During the 80s, people used to gather around television to watch a particular program.

MUSIC: FADE IN: A dialogue from an Egyptian TV series (6 seconds)
MUSIC: FADE IN: Om Khalthoum song Enta Omri (100 seconds)
“Play until the end of the second Hussein Amin sound bite.”
Hussein Amin, a professor at AUC that holds key positions in the Egyptian media explains the impact of television programs on society during this time period.

_HUSSEIN AMIN_: “Programs provided by the Egyptian television and by the Egyptian government was so influential in creating public opinion, in promoting public mobilization, in doing a lot of socialization between Egyptians.” (22 seconds)

_MUSIC: FADE IN_: A dialogue from TV series, Raafat El Hagan.

In the late 80s and early 90s, people living beyond Egypt’s borders were beginning to tune in to Egyptian programs and TV series as satellite dishes were made available.

_Atef Saleh_: “I remember when I was in Iraq at 89 and 90”

That’s Atef Saleh, an Egyptian cameraman, now working in Maspero.

_ATEF SALEH_: “When people used to hear the music of the TV series Raafat EL Hagan, they used to leave their work and anything they were doing, and would go watch it.” (27 seconds)

Although Egyptian television was proving to be successful in the 1990s and Egyptian programming was popular among citizens in the Arab world, Dr. Amin says that owning a television in Egypt was out of most people’s reach.

_HUSSEIN AMIN_: At the beginning satellite dishes were you know, three meters in diameters and was privileged only to the rich and famous as well as… People used to get permission for satellite dish. (21 seconds)

_MUSIC: FADE OUT_: Om Khalthoum song Enta Omri.

During the 2000s, television quickly became accessible to the majority of Egyptians, but the government kept a particularly close eye on journalistic content. During Former President Hosni Mubarak’s reign, censorship on television was popular.

_MUSIC: FADE IN_: Beginning of el Qahira el Youm (14 seconds)

Journalist, writer, and TV talk show host, Mohamed Mostafa Sherdy describes the danger of hosting a TV talk show during this time period.
MOHAMED MOSTAFA SHERDY: “My show, which was Al Qahira El Youm, was closed down by the previous president order. He ordered it closed down, me and Amr Adeeb, and they closed our show actually for five months, we stayed at home. And I wanna tell you something. One of the most important stories that I always tell is that I am a politician, I used to be the deputy opposition leader in the Egyptian Parliament and I am also the co-host of Al Qahira El Youm at that time in Orbit. Now we were closed down by order of Hosni Mubarak. I actually fled the country after the elections because they really were attacking me and I stayed in Indonesia for a while.” (45 seconds)

MUSIC: FADE IN: E7na El Shaab song by Cairokee (21 seconds)
“Play until the end of the next paragraph. It will fade out as a transition between the next paragraph and the one after.”

In 2011, the media played a role against the corrupt effects of the 30-year dictatorship in Egypt that restrained freedom of speech and expression.

Millions of Egyptians took to the streets on the 25th of January in 2011 and occupied Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo. They were demanding an end to the Mubarak rule.

During this time, the media inside and outside of Cairo were airing footage of protestors and were updating the world with the inhumane acts being committed against Egyptians in Tahrir Square.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Nat sound of chants from Tahrir Square (8 seconds)
As the media covered demonstrators camped in Tahrir Square, it influenced more Egyptians to march and riot against the political and social injustice.

MUSIC: FADE IN: Egyptian voices during the revolution (10 seconds)
After the revolution, talk shows had the freedom to express, making it odd for Egyptians at first to hear honest words and for broadcasters to be able to assist the society during the political transitional period.

The director of the Kamal Adham Center for Television and Digital Journalism at the American University in Cairo, Hafez El Mirazi, explains the impact broadcasters had on the society during this time period.

HAFEZ EL MIRAZI: “Given that we are living in societies that is still the least to say is in the transformation into democracy and they haven't reached yet this kind of a
democratic life, there is a more burden on broadcasters and media people, whether they are talk show hosts or journalists. And what to cover and what not and in interacting with the different political institutions and figures in their society." (37 seconds)

MUSIC: FADE IN: Amal Maher song, Touba Fo2 Touba (67 seconds)
“This song is to be played starting from the narration until after the credits.”

Now in 2015, 97% of Egyptians watch television, while only 26% read the newspaper. This leaves television with the power of diffusing information and knowledge that impact Egyptians both socially and politically.

Those wore the memories from the Egyptian Television.

This audio documentary was produced by Mahitab Alaa Adly for the audio production course at The American University in Cairo taught by Professor Kim Fox in Spring 2015

Music and nat sound for this documentary were gathered from TV shows, Raafat el Hagan, thousand nights, Fayruz song habaytak bel seif wel sheta, Walt Disney song, youtube video Egyptian Revolution 2011, Touba fo2 Touba song by Amal Maher, Om Khalthoum song Enta Omri, Ahwa Cairo street nat sound, and Cairoke song Ehna el Shaab.