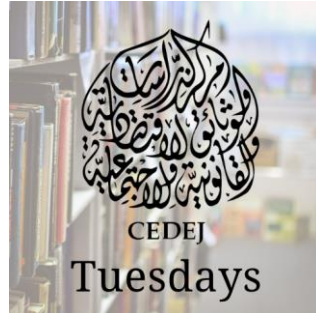


**Centre d'études et de documentation
économiques, juridiques et sociales**



On Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 11am at CEDEJ, **Fayrouz Karawya** will present her research: "The Transmutes of the Egyptian Memesphere: Navigating Cultural Dynamics and Social Changes Post-2013"

Abstract

Internet comedy material infiltrated the political, social and cultural life in Egypt, particularly after 2011's popular uprising, as an actual and prompt commentary medium that takes the topsy turvy politics, daily news and trends, historical symbols and popular culture productions to a whole new level. Defined as the reproduction of an already present material by the "common people", online memes and social media comics pages could be regarded as an extemporaneous re-contextualization of cultural histories, where an intervention of cultural creators and social actors materializes as an engineering process of the public opinion and the sociopolitical stances. Observing the evolution of the memesphere, online videos and vines, language-bending trends and "comics" reveals more than a traditional flow of an online material. Is "internet comedy" a transmediatic reaffirmation and enforcement of values and ideologies expressed by the "old" media (literature, film, television, political discourse), or it is rather the gradual development of a vital tool of contestation, deconstruction and negotiation of the nation's relevant recent and old histories?

As influential as they had been during the upheaval 2011, social media and internet comedy continued to convey the political and ideological dynamics animating the Egyptian society in the years of the aftermath. Starting from the emergence of memes during the successive presidential campaigns and crucial political crossroads, internet comedy kept agitating the social imaginary and disrupting the mainstream media agendas of the successive governing regimes and their supporters. Internet comedy also assisted a growing critical current of social conservatism through deciphering the nature of religious and cultural hypocritical discourses on gender, equality and citizenship. “Comics” represent the genre where the confluence of the local popular culture- (popular films, drama series or theatrical pieces), the visual organization of a caricature, and other elements like written commentary or dialogue occurs. They are granted a “national” context and become a field where social debates are ignited in politics, economy and social life, surpassing the global criteria of a highly diffusible and transformable digital audiovisual content. In the conceptual fields of nationalism, religion, and gender, this presentation scrutinizes the rise of populist strategies of governance, the postrevolutionary societal polarization, and the tactical media mobilizations in Egypt after 2013

Fayrouz Karawya is an Egyptian indie singer/songwriter, independent writer, and researcher whose artistic endeavors span numerous fields. She embarked on her musical career in 2006, releasing six full albums and over 130 tracks while engaging in various collaborations in music, theatre, and film. A graduate of the American University in Cairo, she earned her master’s degree in cultural anthropology in 2009, where her thesis examined Egyptian cinematic productions and their socio-political contexts in the 2000s.

As a research consultant, Fayrouz has supervised diverse projects in gender studies, musicology, and Arab popular culture, working alongside multiple local and international cultural and research institutions. Her articles and studies regularly appear in Egyptian, Arabic, and English publications, covering disciplines such as cultural critique, contemporary Arabic music, digital sociology, gender issues, and popular culture.

In 2010, she published her first book, “Constructions of Chaos,” followed by “Kol Da Kan Leih” in 2022, which explores the cultural history of Egyptian mainstream music and song from the late 19th century to the present. Currently, Fayrouz is pursuing a doctoral degree in Arab studies at Sorbonne Université (Paris), where her research investigates the ultracontemporary Egyptian memesphere. By integrating media studies, digital humanities, and critical cultural analysis, she continues to explore the Egyptian sociocultural landscape after 2013.