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The language of Memes: Impact on the Individual

and Consequences in Society

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Commentato [ES2]: delete

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Commentato [ES4]: Should be findings instead of conclusion

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Introduction: The origin of memes

A meme is a humorous image, video or text that quickly spreads on the internet.

The term derives from the ancient greek word mimema, meaning 'imitated thing', and it was coined by British evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, who used it to describe the spread of ideas in his 1976 book 'The Selfish Gene'. Dawkins argued that memes were the cultural equivalent of what genes are in biology, meaning that they both constitute units of information to be transmitted.

This broad definition of memes has today shifted to a more specific context: the World Wide Web, where it now has the aforementioned definition. Internet memes are combinations of image-based and linguistic communication that are spread throughout the internet, often via social media, and with a humorous intent. Their fast transmission and successive popularization makes them a common occurrence in everyday conversations, and as such they tend to have a wide influence on the way we process and communicate information in our neo-digital society.

On the subject of language, internet users have a need to write and relate information in a fast paced environment and in a way that is relatable to their peers, therefore a viral image or comment becomes the dialect of choice on the Internet nowadays. So much so, that memes have the same use as the more popularized emojis on some famous platforms such as Twitch, Discord, Telegram or Youtube. The influence of this new language form shows itself in the sense of community present between people that enjoy using this communication style. There is a certain sense of social support, especially amongst the youngest generations, that feel connected to each other within these online groups. Consequently, using memes turns out to

Commentato [ES6]: Good introduction. Be aware that, although your audience will include those who use social media and memes, some aspects may not be clear or understood so it is important to explain and describe platforms, emojis, etc when necessary.

be a more informal approach to talking about serious topics and sometimes even just a way to share our emotions during tough times. Unfortunately, there is a negative side to this type of group mentality that sometimes fuels negative thought patterns. This can be applied to different types of closed off online groups and to various topics. For example, political discourse on the internet can sometimes get controversial; this can happen when a political campaign is held online or when a taboo argument is being raised. Nonetheless, using memes and meme references within the realm of politics can alleviate the tension and make learning and sharing political opinions more accessible and fun. All things considered, these topics of interest are only some of the many instances in which memes can be virtually shared, which speaks volumes on how virally they are spread and the amount of influence that they truly do have.

In this essay we will specifically discuss the language of memes, the relation between memes and mental health, and their impact on politics, all considering positive and negative aspects.

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Commentato [ES8R7]: Very clear on intent. Good job.

1. The language of memes

Memes are considered one of the biggest Internet phenomena of our time, and their socio-linguistic features are frequently analyzed by modern linguists. According to a study conducted at the University of St. Kliment Ohridski: 'Memes use vernacular English, phrases from specific English dialects, puns and punning riddles, jargon, slang, shortenings and neologisms as well as patterned way of incorrect spelling and multiple, intentional or unintentional grammar and syntax mistakes.'

They also contain a vast amount of references and are not easy to decipher if the reader is not in the target audience, adding an extra layer of difficulty in understanding the message they are trying to convey. This nonverbal aspect of communication makes it so that in order to fully understand a meme, one must have individual background knowledge and be able to interpret the body language and expressions of the individuals in the eventual attached picture.

When it comes to format, there are many different types of memes, but the text-based ones are arguably the most popular and relevant when it comes to linguistics. Older memes used to be easily recognizable by the presence of a central image with text centered on top and bottom of said image. These texts, generally referred to as 'Top Text' and a 'Bottom Text', would be written in bolded font impact with white text on black border. However, nowadays so many different forms have sprouted that we find dialogues, references, captions and an infinite variety of text types within the world of memes. That being said, there are some linguistic features that are utilized quite often.

In creating a meme, Internet users take the liberty to come up with different patterns of morphology, use varied syntactic structures and disregard some grammar rules of Standard English in order to create a sort of internet dialect with its own set of rules. For example,

misspelling on purpose is surprisingly frequent, especially in meme formats where the image is that of an animal. Here the words are spelled differently, but when read aloud, sound the same as the original ones (for example 'phrog' instead of frog, 'boi' instead of boy).

> **Commentato [ES9]:** Why do you think this is the norm and what is its purpose?

Another trope that is often utilized is that of abbreviations. They include acronyms, like the famous 'LOL' (Laugh Out Loud), or shortenings, like 'ad' for advertisement. These are included so that longer words do not hinder the meme's visual appeal or simply because they are part of the informal English that is put to use in the meme format.

Grammatical structures are also sometimes overturned. A commonly found example is the usage of the subordinating conjunction 'when' to introduce a sentence that is essentially the caption of the given image. This mode of communication is employed when the image is particularly relatable and the caption illustrates an everyday occurrence.

When looking at memes as a form of English language variation, it is worth noting that both morphology and syntax are slightly subverted. As the University of Colorado article "Doing Me an Educate: an Overview of Meme Linguistics" states, 'interesting morphological patterns commonly found in meme language are verb agreement reduction and the '-o' suffix'. In the first case, the third person singular form of a given verb is simplified by removing the '-s' suffix, with a conjugated verb like 'he protects' translating to 'he protect'. On the other hand, the '-o' suffix is often implemented at the end of a name or adjective as a diminutive, like 'doggo', similarly to how the word 'weirdo' is formed.

> **Commentato [ES10]:** In-text citation needed

Considering syntax, we find a phenomenon known as copula detention, where the conjugated verb 'to be' is omitted, going from 'he is cold' to 'he cold'.

Lastly, we can conclude that memes in natural language may come from three sources: 'education and knowledge impairment, idiomatic usage of words and phrases, and casual

exchanges in communication', as written in the article "Analysis of memes in language. Foreign Language Teaching and Research". Memes in English are created by both English-speaking and non-English-speaking Internet users, both of which utilize language forms that are informal and stray away from Standard English. This translates to a new language format, where speakers can fully express their creativity, popularize their dialect and even overthrow the standard rules. The next subchapter will discuss a particular element that is part of this new language: the emote.

1.1 Emotes

Emoticons have been around since the starting days of the Internet. At first users turned to the keyboard and its alphanumeric characters to create them (an example could be the smiley face) but since then we have seen an evolution of this occurrence. Social media and communication apps, like Facebook or Whatsapp, introduced their own array of emojis, which are the now commonly used yellow pictograms. And nowadays, PNGs, a common image format depicting funny and relatable facial expressions, are quickly replacing emojis, with the biggest case in point being the famous streaming service Twitch.

On Twitch, every streamer is accompanied by a live chat that can express feelings and reactions by using Twitch emotes, custom designed by either single users or the global community. An example could be the Pogchamp emote, intended to express excitement, which is also considered a popular meme. With this new format, memes can become emotes and vice versa, giving the chat a way to be relatable in just a few clicks. As of today, there is not a single application that does not have emotes and in fact, Discord (a voice channel service) has now implemented the emote system, giving users a way to create their own chat, with their own memes/emotes. This phenomenon, mostly positive and used to unify the Twitch community, does not come without controversies.

The aforementioned Pogchamp example has been removed after the claim that Ryan Gutierrez, the face of the emote was, as written in an article on The Verge, 'promoting civil unrest, such as anti-vaccination, and spreading misinformation on COVID-19'. Besides this isolated incident, the fact that memes are becoming emotes makes it so that more expressions are easily available and it is left up to the user's creativity to decide which one would be more appropriate, funny and relatable for the moment in question. When memes are used by individuals it is much easier for them to be appropriate for the context in which they are being used. The suitability of a meme becomes a major concern in case a big company or group of people decides to introduce them into their advertising and marketing strategy. This topic will be explored in the next subchapter.

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1.2 Marketing

Immediacy, levity, virality; these characteristics have made memes perfect for advertising. Nowadays, almost every big name brand has an Instagram or Twitter account on which they can interact with customers, and sometimes even with other brands, in a way that mimics an ordinary social media interchange. This way, promoting one's product seems less invasive and more engaging compared to the tv or radio advertising that older generations are used to, which allows brands to create a deeper and more stable relationship with customers, by continuously engaging with them and letting them familiarize with the products. Users understand and recognize the brand immediately, as the message the company sends is part of their internet slang. A prime example of this is the fact that, as stated in the book "Turning Silicon Into Gold", 'After Wendy's began this unique social media approach in 2017, they experienced a 49.7% growth in profit that year'.

> **Commentato [ES15]:** In text citation

The company seems friendlier and more down to earth, so customers feel more comfortable buying from them. Not only can big corporations benefit from this, but even startups and small businesses can promote their brand in a way that is more relatable and up with the trends.

However, most times this mode of advertising is hard to adopt, as unsuccessful, humourless memes have the polar opposite effect: they make the company seem unfunny and distance it from the public. Brand image suffers heavily from these mistakes, which the internet never forgets. A prime example is the tweet made by Burger King on International Women's Day 2021, stating that 'Women belong in the kitchen' and only clarifying that they were trying to raise awareness on the gender ratio in the restaurant industry in the comment to the tweet. This attempt at a joke was seen as distasteful, and Burger King faced backlash on Twitter, a platform well known for holding people accountable for their words and actions. On the other hand, there are many examples of successful advertising through these means: Elon Musk has gained popularity also due to his expertise in creating a personal brand online. Expanding on the concept of memes as an influence in marketing and economy, the recent rise in cryptocurrency has originated the creation of the Dogecoin, a payment system that features the face of the Shiba Inu dog from the Doge meme as its logo. The relatability of a meme and the effect it has on the individual are central topics when it comes to the most viral memes. This implies a heavy influence of memes on people's emotions, which will be the main theme of the following chapter.

> **Commentato [ES16]:** Is this your opinion or is there evidence?

2. Mental Health and Social Issues: expressing feelings through memes

Meme culture has taken its roots in society to the point that mental health issues are now being talked about more through this new communication style. The relatability of memes makes

> **Commentato [ES17]:** Source?

them an interesting way to find people that share the same feelings, and an easier approach to communicate amongst our peers and talk about mental health. Some of the most popular types of memes include 'wholesome memes' and 'relatable memes'. According to the article "The Next Frontier in Internet Culture Is Wholesome Memes About Loving Your Friends", by Brian Feldman, 'Wholesome memes are post-ironic, meaning that they convey love, affection, and genuine friendship by recontextualizing classic meme formats'. They can be seen, though it is not an official definition, as a direct evolution of emojis that convey love feelings and are mostly shared on social media such as Instagram in the DM (direct message) text chat. The images used to create them are usually depictions of cute animals cuddling alongside text elements such as 'me and you' or 'us'. It could be said that the same factors that characterize this category are also the one that make it less popular. Simply put, there is a lot of positive emotion and cuteness, but no humour.

Commentato [ES18]: In text citation

Meanwhile, according to a study conducted on respondents from major universities in Jakarta and cited in the article "Laughing at one's self: A study of self-reflective internet memes", '60% of the respondents agree that the favourite aspect of internet memes is humor whereas 30% of the respondents enjoy the relatability of internet memes'. Therefore, it can be concluded that a wide percentage of internet users enjoy having something that they can relate to embedded in their meme content. Memes that one can sympathize with are some of the most popular, gathering their strength on connecting with the audience by making them feel close to the meme itself. This is true both when it comes to positive and negative feelings. The relatability of memes makes it so that a meme becomes more popular if it conveys a shared sentiment, starting a discussion or a trend about common social issues. Memes can therefore

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be both social commentary and a mode of introspection. The following subchapter will focus on this last aspect, viewing memes and their relationship with mental health and the individual.

2.1 Self Reflecting - memes and mental issues

One of the most critical, and yet less known, issues linked to self-deprecation through memes is, undoubtedly, Eating Disorders (EDs). A number of factors could be indicated as the leading cause of ED cases amongst young adults, one of the most negatively influential being the unrealistic body standard promoted by the fashion industry. As Groesz, Levine and Murnen state in their study "The effect of experimental presentation of thin media images on body satisfaction: A meta-analytic review": 'From a sociocultural perspective on the formation of body perceptions and satisfaction, viewing of media depictions is an influential route of transmission of cultural ideals of beauty'. Compared to other types of memes, the ones related to this kind of issues differ in terms of virality: as most platforms do not allow users to post about sensitive topics such as the one mentioned before, ED related memes tend to be more widespread among specific isolated communities. However, very often socials' lack of community guidelines and fallacious algorithms, rather than banning the communities that encourage eating disorders, target recovery groups that talk about the same topic. An example of this can be seen in the popular Tumblr, who lives in infamy for mistakenly banning creators of body positivity content that trigger the no-nudity algorithm, while allowing self destroying posts and selfies who idolize anorexia (colloquially called 'ana'), using a skippable popup as the only useless obstacle. As a result, the ED memes tend to use irony and funny meme templates to convey a message of self hate that advertises the disease are the most common, creating a toxic environment that, if not immediately identified and corrected, could lead to a spreading of misinformation about a lot of issues of this kind.

Commentato [ES20]: In-text citation needs the year: example (Smith, 2009)

It has by now been established that there is no topic, amusing or disturbing, that cannot be transformed into meme form; the same thing goes for mental issues such as depression. This kind of meme presents the same characteristic of the wholesome meme, in terms of format, but has instead the opposite tone. While the first one tries to convey a more positive message, the second one relies on painful emotions and experiences, sometimes even joking about drug abuse and suicide. It may seem surprising, even worrying, to hear that these are one of the most viral types of memes, especially among the younger generation. Nevertheless, while people try to avoid experiencing pain and sadness, it could without a doubt be said that every person has experienced those same emotions, to some degree, and thus could easily relate, and even make fun of their problems and negative thoughts. Whether this type of relatability is possibly dangerous, or whether it is possible to joke about any topic, will be analysed later. One example of that is the so-called Doomer meme. The protagonist of this type of memes is a caricature named Wojak, created on the popular website 4chan, whose purpose was to make fun of certain kinds of groups, like Boomers and Zoomers (Gen Z Boomers). The drawing represents the outline of a bald and disheveled man, often depicted with different attributes to specify a certain group or generation that he is the caricature of. The Doomer, in particular, mocks doomerism, based on a theory developed by Jem Bendell. In his self-published 2018 paper, "Deep Adaptation", he claims that 'accelerating climate change has guaranteed social collapse within the next few decades'. The catastrophic tone of his claims have not only been debunked by the scientific community, but have now been ridiculed in such a way that now the joke has become more famous than the theory itself, as it often happens with viral content. Moving on to the next subchapter, the social implications of the dark themes utilized within the world of memes will be at the center of the discussion, accompanied by an analysis of the repercussions of this type of humour.

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2.2 Social Issues: The new Humour

While the introduction of memes in groups, more specifically groups of adolescents, has created more opportunities for social interaction it has also created some negative phenomena that originated as a means to gather attention amongst friends and peers. This branch of memes that are now very popular are called 'self-deprecating memes'. As described in "Self-depreciation, why do we do it?":

> Self-deprecating humor is a learned reflex we use, often to deny ourselves credit. It can be described as a method your brain uses as it continuously monitors the social environment for cues regarding the degree to which [you are] being accepted versus rejected by other people.

This type of humour has been around for a long time and it has been widely researched, especially in stand-up comedy and in the workplace, since a good use of it seems to be effective in creating a pleasant environment for the workers, making them feel more comfortable in easygoing circumstances. Later on, with the popularization of memes this type of jokes has made its way into social media and day to day humour resulting in an over-usage of it. As with self-deprecation, dark humour is another branch of jokes that is deeply connected with memes. It is defined as a form of humour involving a twist or punchline that makes the joke seem offensive and harsh, often found in stand up comedy shows and popular tv cartoons like "Family Guy". The problem of introducing memes to dark humour is that it can be very disrespectful and offensive for some individuals and, whereas in a stand-up comedy show we are prepared and warned that this type of comedy is present, on social media we don't have any type of filter nor warning: you can find it without even searching for it.

Commentato [ES22]: Avoid contractions.

In the long term, the two types of jokes described above have attracted the eye of some communities, resulting in what is commonly known online as 'Cancel Culture'. This literally means that 'a person is culturally blocked from having a prominent public platform or career', as stated in the article "Why we can't stop fighting about cancel culture". A famous example might be the cancellation of J.K. Rowling, the famous 'Harry Potter' writer, regarding her opinion on transgender rights. Her unpopular opinion has infuriated the internet, boycotted her books and furthermore, stopped her publisher from paying royalties. Even though as of this day cancel culture is still a widespread occurrence, many people are fighting against it in order to maintain their freedom of speech and expression. This is particularly relevant when considering the interrelationship between memes and politics. After having analyzed the impact of memes on the individual and on social interactions, in the next chapter the focus will be on meta-politics and the influence of meme language in political debate.

3. Humour and memes in political discourse

Humour has been used over the centuries as an instrument against oppression. Since World War One, anti-Nazi comics made use of satirical images and texts. As already mentioned, the core elements of memes are humour and satire. Nowadays Internet memes are capable of

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Commentato [ES25]: In text citation

reaching a wider audience within a very short time, therefore their usage in political campaigning is becoming increasingly significant. Researcher Kulkarni added that 'Memes are used for propaganda to reinforce ideologies, identities and stereotypes'. Furthermore, political communication through memes contributes to the active involvement of electors since they may readily comment and debate in that regard.

As we can read on "Internet meme and Political Discourse: A study on the impact of internet meme as a tool in communicating political satire" by Kulkarni, a worthwhile research was conducted in India with the aim of studying the impact of political memes on digital natives in the aforementioned country. The search results report that the majority of respondents (56%) believe that internet memes can be used as a tool for political discourse, but only 21% of those who were interviewed admitted that memes influence their political decisions.

Moreover, research led by Viktor Chagas, Fernanda Freire, Daniel Rios, and Dandara Magalhães examines online memes during the 2014 Brazilian election, particularly interesting due to the presence of the ultraconservative Jai Bolsonaro, 'described as an Internet phenomenon, mobilizing millions with right-wing memes'. The paper highlighted the presence of three types of memes: persuasive, grassroots action and public discussion memes. The first one spreads its message using the emotional and ideological appeal of the lectors. The second one is based on connective action, creating trends and slogans broadcasted by spontaneous movement. The remaining one uses situational jokes about political characters, commonplace and cultural allusions. The research results present the evidence of a slight predominance of public discussion memes, with a percentage of 38.4%.

To conclude, because of the effortless diffusion of thoughts, ideas and information through memes, a special attention should be given to the reliability of the sources and to the importance

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and the weight of words, in order to avoid unpleasant and radical extremism, which the next subchapter will expand on.

3.1 Political extremism and tight-knit online communities

Preventively clarifying that whenever discourse gets political, it often turns controversial, meme culture is no stranger to this phenomenon. Anyone can be a political and social commentator online, and express their views freely. The possibility of receiving backlash for a particular controversial opinion becomes nonexistent on websites and forums that do not require authentication.

A prime example of this is 4chan, a popular website where users can anonymously post their discussions, often entwined with meme language and sometimes even pioneering new memes (like the MFW 'my face when' image caption format). As stated in the work of Lee Knuttila, "User Unknown: 4chan, anonymity and contingency", 'we may not find 4chan appealing, but anonymity and contingency prompt political and ethical ramifications': a website where everything can be discussed anonymously is bound to spawn certain controversial communities and politically incorrect discussions at some point, especially in boards like /pol/, destined for political discourse. And when it comes to memes, multiple creative and innovative ones are used in these message boards. According to the "Analysis of evolution of meme trends on 4chan.org's /pol/ board via image clustering", in 2020 some of the most used images on 4chan's /pol/ were the Pepe The Frog meme, the That Feel Bro meme and the Hazmat Suit meme. Not all of 4chan is inherently bad, so it is very likely that these memes were not being used with evil intentions, however they are still often used in online culture wars and controversies: one

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prime example is the struggle between the alt-right extremists and the advocates for PC culture (Political Correctness), derogatively known as SJWs, meaning Social Justice Warriors.

There would be much to talk about regarding this topic, but without straying away from the subject of memes, what is interesting to see is, as noted in "The "Great Meme War": the Alt-Right and its Multifarious Enemies" by Maxime Dafaure,

> The ease with which [these ideas] spread and the number of people reached. This leads to the question of the responsibility of media, the algorithms of which create numerous possibilities for self-radicalization, whether by functioning as echo-chambers or by pushing users to go further "down the rabbit hole," video after video, meme after meme.

Memes are used in online meta-politics all the time, which influences politics in real life and creates a new mode of propaganda, as clarified in the following subchapter.

3.2 How memes affect politics in the real world

As a result of the spread of the internet and the consequential linguistic evolution, political parties all around the world had to develop new communication strategies. There is a limited amount of research into the use of memes during election campaigns, even though they have become an important part of contemporary political expressions.

Memes, using humour and satire as a tool for discourse, are used as a medium for persuading and engaging a large part of the voting population. Also, memes are particularly effective on

younger people, making them more receptive to political messages and more likely to participate in political discourse. For these reasons, the functions of memes in every digital electoral campaign seems to be maintaining the engagement of netizens (habitual users of the internet) and creating narratives regarding an event or a person.

While a number of scholars had shown disbelief regarding the practical use and effectiveness of memes as a form of online political participation, due to the mostly cynical quality of the humor, past electoral events had proven and established the use of memes not only as a successful form of direct communication with voters, but also as a possible danger to the candidate, and therefore an element of direct influence on the vote.

One of the most extensive uses and probably the oldest example of this new technique in campaign strategies is found in the United States, during the last four electoral campaigns (2008, 2012, 2016, 2020).

What distinguished the 2008 US election from the one before, was the extensive use of social media as a tool to create a direct connection with the voting population: Obama's campaign remains famously known for its use of Second Life, a virtual game. The same strategy was later used in 2012, this time by both Democrats and Republicans. These two campaigns may not have used memes in a pervasive way as they are used today, but the rise of the 'image & text' style of meme and the establishment of social media as an environment of political discourse paved the way for a new style of elections.

The 2016 elections saw a dominance of internet memes whose general function was to quickly communicate an opinion on the presidential candidates. At this stage, memes have started being used as a way to market the candidate as more or less appealing, but memes used in political communication were still for the most part created by internet communities, and therefore

Commentato [ES37]: Not so famously – I have no idea what you are talking about.

difficult to control. The effect was visible especially for two representatives of the Republican party: Donald Trump and Ted Cruz. Trump's campaign received support from the alt-right communities of the internet, who used memes to express their agreement. Instead Ted Cruz, a 2016 Republican Presidential candidate, was jokingly accused of being the zodiac killer, a notorious serial killer that was never caught. Due to these memes, a research survey by Public Policy Polling concluded that due to their memes 'about 40% of the voters in Florida thought he was actually a zodiac killer and their voting decisions were influenced'. Therefore, his campaign and image were both damaged.

An intelligent and proactive example of memes usage is from the Bernie Sanders campaign. In March 2016, while the former Democratic candidate was giving a speech, a bird landed in front of him. Sanders acknowledged the bird, and soon the videos and photos became viral, so much that the Sanders campaign capitalized on the moment, making the bird one of their symbols.

In 2020 memes were actively used as part of the digital campaign. In this election the active participation of young voters was what made the difference. The fast creation of new memes by the younger generations created a climate of participation and discussion. In accordance with the United States Census Bureau (2017), '18 to 29 year olds have been the least active age group in the presidential elections for the last decades – in 2016, less than 50% of people under the age of 30 voted'. Based on this statistic, the strategy of attempting to reach a younger audience through memes seems justified.

The US experience with the relationship between power and memes, or internet culture in general, is not the standard procedure everywhere in the world. Another country who has experienced a continuous rise in politically involved memes is China, but the current internet laws produce an internet culture and a memetic style vastly different from the one common in other places, like the USA or Europe.

Commentato [ES38]: Citation

The main difficulty for chinese netizens who want to spread politically charged messages is to hide them from the various systems of censorship that exist in the most used social media, like Weibo and Wechat. Researcher and author An Xiao Mina defined some Chinese memes that tackled political issues as 'social change memes', which 'express a sentiment for changing social or political issues'. What differentiates social change memes from others is that they do not directly target authority or challenge the current regime, instead they are usually an online 'symbolic action', as Mina explained, that 'can be powerful in the context of an authoritarian state like China, which exerts control over all broadcast and internet media'.

An example is the héxiè (河蟹), or river crab. Images of water crabs became a meme based on wordplay: 河蟹 sounds similar to héxié (和谐), or 'harmony'. This refers to Hu Jintao's proposal to develop a 'harmonious socialist society'. The image of river crabs was therefore used in internet discourse as the embodiment of censorship and a harmonious internet. This widespread meme managed to evade censorship just because it would have been impossible for human moderators to justify the cancellation of all crab photos on the web.

Moreover, this type of memes provides a rupture from state-controlled media, and they are important not just from a creative point of view. In a heavily censored state, whose aim is to isolate whoever expresses an adverse opinion to the state's narration, social changing memes are able to create a sense of community and shared experience.

Commentato [ES39]: Sources and citation

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper sought to understand the relationships between internet memes and the society that utilizes them. The language, format and non-verbal communication that are encompassed within a meme make it a simple yet effective mode of discourse among the youngest generations. And not just that, they are also frequently being used in everyday chatting and marketing strategies as a way to relate to the newfound internet crowd. However, many are the implications and consequences of employing an entirely new online communication system. Not only introspection, but also self-reflecting and self-analysis are themes often found in the world of memes, and the social dilemmas that arise when darker and deeper topics are treated seem to be a frequent issue. Still, the sense of community that a common shared language brings makes it so that memes still have a positive impact on online groups. The discussion turns controversial once again when the subject of politics is brought into the picture: memes here have an influence both within online communities and the outside world, impacting political opinions and systems in real life too.

Therefore, having highlighted most positive and negative aspects of meme culture, what can be drawn from this knowledge is the certainty that memes will continue to be a widespread staple of online expression, continuously shifting in their format, message and influence.

Commentato [ES40]: Good topic which is not easy to research and make academic.
Well organized and well written.
Needs more academic language and in-text citation. Otherwise it is just an essay with a few references to articles..

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Commentato [ES41]: Why started so low down on the page?

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