

Aja Lim

Instructor: Raz

Sociology 101

Meme Culture

Meme culture is a common subculture that is especially popular with youths in America, as well as many other first world countries. This subculture, like any other is multifaceted, with many distinguishing features. Every aspect is very unique, creating a subculture unlike any other. The material aspects for meme culture are quite obvious. Technology is a key factor and, as the name implies, memes are crucial, as are social media apps that produce them, like twitter and tumblr. The text posts of these websites are also important for this subculture. There are some other apps that are important for meme culture, even though they don't necessarily produce memes, such as vine and Snapchat. Clearly, the internet and electronic devices are key components to this subculture's material makeup. Without these material aspects, meme culture wouldn't exist in the same way that it does. The symbolic aspects of this subculture are just as important in defining it as its material aspects are. Symbolic culture is largely made up of gestures, beliefs, norms, values, and language. There are some gestures that are popular among those who are part of meme culture. The majority of these originate with a specific meme or vine, such as "whipping," which originated with the Sweatshirt Ear Kid vine, and was later referenced in a number of vines and memes. Other gestures might have originated outside of memes, but are often used by those within this meme culture, like finger guns. Language is another key distinguishing factor. There are many common expressions that make no sense, or have a completely different meaning to

those outside of the culture. Examples of these include “yeet,” “tea,” and “flex.” Language and gestures are both very important in making up a unique culture. Language and gestures make up some identifiers of meme culture, but beliefs, norms, and values are what really tie any culture or subculture together. The beliefs and values of this subculture are heavily based on acceptance and equality, as well as the lack of judgement. Viewpoints and attitudes are typically very liberal and democratic, nihilistic and self-deprecating, and more or less pessimistic. Generally speaking, meme culture holds similar norms to culture of the country it belongs to, but there are some differences. For example, the folkways are much looser. Due to the fact that this culture prides itself on being open and accepting, its members don’t tend to shame others for anything besides condescending behavior. Its mores are all dependent on the society that it’s a part of, because the laws of that society apply. Taboos are a bit different. In meme culture, there are few things that are not discussed. Things, such as incest and cannibalism, are still viewed as unacceptable if one is actually practicing it, but in most societies, even discussing the subject is frowned upon. However, meme culture openly jokes about common taboos, with no negative consequences. Centered around tolerance, meme culture’s beliefs, values, and opinions are an important part of its foundation. Meme culture is a subculture whose members are made up of youths in first world countries. It’s founded on technology and an accepting belief system. Though the members of this subculture make up a small amount of the population, many of the next generation in charge of many countries belong to it, making it a very important one indeed.