

MEMES AS MEANS: USING POPULAR CULTURE IN LITERATURE CLASSROOM

Akshaya N¹, Sivakami B²

**¹ Research Scholar, School of Social Sciences and Languages,
Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai**

**² Assistant Professor, School of Social Sciences and Languages,
Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai**

Email: akshayaachoonk11@gmail.com¹, sivakami.b@vit.ac.in²

ABSTRACT

Internet memes serve as markers of a lively digital culture. Memes, in Dawkins' view, are small aspects of our culture that spread from one person to another through imitation or copying. Due to the expansion of digital culture over the past few decades, memes have thus been the focus of many research. Memes are one of the major reasons behind the widespread usage of social media among youngsters. Therefore it can be introduced in education field to enhance the engagement level among students and their motivation to actively participate in classroom activities. Memes and Shakespeare can be linked by their universal quality. More than any other writer, he possessed the ability to imagine what it would be like to be another person and to design the wide variety of human emotions into a few, incredibly expressive, simple sentences. Being called an "Universal Genius of the Highest Order" by Harold Bloom, Shakespeare has the ability and capacity for understanding human desires, passion, motives, and deep inner conflict. With the twentieth century's massive reinvention in many aspects, teaching has shifted to digital culture. Every attribute of Shakespeare's play can be well showcased using memes. Be it character analysis of Richard 3, the Oedipus Complex criticism of Hamlet, comparisons of adaptations, plot of As you like it etc., everything can be displayed in a comical way as a meme and thereby teaching is made simply digital. This paper attempts to study Shakespeare's genius as a playwright in plot construction, character development etc., through memes. The memes are originally created by one of the authors of this paper.

KEYWORDS: *memes, popular culture, humor, criticism, classroom environment*