# The ‘Grotesque’ in Instagram Memes İdil Galip

The *grotto* is damp. It is cavernous and dark, existing between life outside and the molten core of the underground. The serpentine foliage on the walls represents an abject reality, animals, plants, bodies, symbols melding together *crypt*ically. The images are so comedic and inescapably wretched that it makes you want to weep with anguish, and at the same time produces frenzied laughter from deep within your belly that echoes incessantly in the crypt. The *grotto* is bizarre, and so is your laughter—it is an uncanny feeling that can only be described as *grotto-esque*.

Afbeelding met persoon, masker, dragen, speelgoed

Automatisch gegenereerde beschrijvingIf the Emperor Nero knew that *Domus Aurea*, the golden palace he built in Rome, was initially thought to be a mere grotto, a mysterious devotional cave, he would have probably set fire to Rome a second time. This once extravagant palace had been built over by Nero’s successors and was only accidently rediscovered in the 15th century when a young man fell through a crevice in one of the seven hills of Rome, upon the *Oppius* spur. It was a bizarre, cavernous world, stripped of its jewels and luxury, left only with a perplexing array of murals depicting flora, fauna, and viscera. The story is that following the rediscovery of the palace during the Renaissance, these images prompted the coining of the term *grotesque*, meaning ‘grotto-like’, to describe ‘frivolously’ pagan and uncanny aesthetics. This, of course, does not imply that the grotesque did not exist prior to and outside of the Renaissance, the *Domus Aurea*, the Roman Empire or ‘the West’. In fact, the grotesque appears throughout human culture, from *Topeng* dance in Indonesia, the *Haka* in Maori culture, to the mania of *Hacivat* and *Karagöz* in Turkish shadow play, as well as in modes of expression and experience in contemporary digital culture

Figure 1: Photograph captioned ‘a tari topeng mask, on its dancer’ (Creative Commons: Chris Woodrich (Crisco 1492), 2014). Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0.

[[1]](#footnote-1). While the term might have been inspired by this accidental discovery and the vestiges of a Roman past, the aesthetic form itself is monstrously human.

## A Digital Carnival

Beyond the story of the golden palace and its curious murals, the grotesque and in particular the literary trope of *grotesque realism* is also closely associated with the carnival and *carnivalesque* folk humor. Mikhail Bakhtin’s 1965 book *Rabelais and His World* details the subtext of grotesque realism not only through literature but within the ‘structure of life’ that encompasses culture, art, everyday politics, economic relations and mundane sociality. These carnivals Bakhtin refers to are those that are firmly rooted in medieval Europe. They are part of a season of feverish festivities that precede the solemn suffering of Lent, and give ordinary people a final chance to revel in debauchery and parody before they are engulfed by the ordeal of penance. The rituals, performances, jokes and laughter of the carnival stand in active opposition to ecclesiastical piety and aristocratic etiquette, and they belong to a world that firmly rejects conventional civility. During the carnival, social hierarchies are toppled and replaced by a mode of expression that favors marginalized and traditionally silenced voices.[[2]](#footnote-2) In this upside-down domain, those with the least economic, political and social power enjoy attention and prominence. Holquist (2009) exclaims that carnival has revolutionary potential.[[3]](#footnote-3) As it seems to offer a glimpse into a mutinous reality where norms are debased with the utmost fervor, and where civilians get to first wear and then desecrate the costume of the rich and powerful.

As with the grotesque, it is important to underline that even though Bakhtin puts the carnival in a mainly medieval European context, where the season of the carnival is sanctioned by the Church, the spirit of the carnivalesque derives ‘from a force that preexists priests and kings and to whose superior power they are actually deferring when they appear to be licensing carnival’[[4]](#footnote-4). The carnival is, then, a set of festivities created and enjoyed by ordinary folk. It is a set of festivities that take place within the larger economic and political structures set forth by the ruling class. It is, in its core, a response to these structures, a reaction bursting with merriment, anger, fear, anticipation, hope, satire and irony. Within these parameters, civilians are allowed to parody their misery and to make money off it. The economic element of the carnival, coupled with performance, sociality and the all-consuming affective atmosphere, makes it so that the carnival becomes more than a mere spectacle and a complete experience, as it is not only ‘seen by the people’ but ‘they live in it’[[5]](#footnote-5). If the carnival is more than a holiday, a period in the calendar dictated by the Church, then it is a mood, a reaction, and a liminal space between reality and its reproduction. The concept of the carnival can be taken out of its Bakhtinian context, abstracted and applied elsewhere.

On the internet, for instance, an incessant carnival rages on, unstoppable and full to the brim with vulgar marketplace language, grotesque performances, bodily debasement, political parody, and laughter for laughter’s sake. The forms of folk culture that emerge from the carnival, ‘ritual spectacles, comic verbal compositions, and various genres of billingsgate’[[6]](#footnote-6) are all represented to their full extremes online. Within the constraints of digital infrastructures controlled by powerful tech corporations and maintained by low-paid casualized workers[[7]](#footnote-7), ordinary folk are allowed to feel a simulacrum of symbolic power. Through various carnivalesque performances, such as public pranks and outrageous ‘story-time’ videos on YouTube, elaborate choreographies on TikTok, Twitter ‘dunks’, and grotesque memes on Instagram, civilians can engage and entertain other ordinary folk.

The carnivalesque is inextricably tied to the concept of ambivalent, all-encompassing *festive laughter* and the crude language of the marketplace, or *billingsgate*.[[8]](#footnote-8) Festive laughter, Bakhtin muses, ‘is not an individual reaction to a single “comic” event’, but is ‘universal in its scope’ and ‘ambivalent’.[[9]](#footnote-9) Online, internet memes evoke festive laughter because they build on not only one comic event or themselves in solitude, but on a myriad of texts, references and online ‘discourse’. The more intertextually layered the meme becomes, the more it asks of its viewer. The viewer must be embedded and fluent in deep internet lore to find enjoyment in the meme, and to be able to set some ironic distance between herself and her position on the internet. The proximity between herself and digital culture is funny, spending time on the internet is funny, and being so fluent in the internet that she can understand even the most nonfigurative meme is funny. The meme-maker is also hyperaware of the relationship between her audience and her meme, and creates a communion of laughter that involves those who understand and excludes those who cannot. As with festive laughter, meme-laughter is also ambivalent, laughing with and at itself: after all, she ‘who is laughing also belongs to it’.[[10]](#footnote-10) Digital festive laughter multiplies ceaselessly instead of being limited to the temporal confines of the physical carnival. While digital markets, where virality, engagement and online visibility is both the currency and the object of transaction, generate a boundless and rhizomatic digital marketplace talk. Grotesque memes are borne of this digital billingsgate and never-ending festive laughter.

## Grotesque Memes

In *The Female Grotesque,* Mary Russo makes a distinction between two forms of the grotesque, the comic grotesque which she associates with the work of Bakhtin and the grotesque as uncanny which she mainly links to Freud’s discussion of feelings of unease and fear in his essay The Uncanny’and Wolfgang Kayser’s book *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*.[[11]](#footnote-11) She posits that while Bakhtin is interested in the social body in his discussion of the comic grotesque, the grotesque as uncanny is ‘is related most strongly to the psychic register and to the bodily as a cultural projection of the inner state’.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Afbeelding met tekst, pop, speelgoed, cosmetisch

Automatisch gegenereerde beschrijving

Figure 2: Meme captioned ‘you were merely sent to horny jail, I was born in it - molded by it’ (Instagram: @todaywasmybirthday, 2020a). Reproduced by permission of @todaywasmybirthday.

Within my digital ethnography of a community of meme artists on Instagram, I encountered expressions of both comic and uncanny grotesque. This *grotesque as a meme response* could be connected to many meme makers’ experience of precarity. For instance, almost all of the 11 meme makers I interviewed during my fieldwork could be described as precarious workers in some sense. At the time of our interviews, many were working multiple jobs, often as freelancers, creative consultants, service, hospitality and manual workers, in order to survive. The job precarity they experienced was two-fold, firstly due to an inconsistent revenue stream from their creative work and secondly because of the possibility of physical risk, as a result of physically laborious work. During an interview, one participant—a meme artist with a large following—relayed to me that he had sustained a workplace injury during his work as a package loader for a major delivery and logistics company. In addition to his injury, which came as a result of having to lift up to 30 to 60 kilograms at a time, he was also being harassed and intimidated by management. He later filed a grievance with his union and kept his work doing ‘light duty’, as he had no other alternative, especially during a pandemic. His experiences as a working artist, meme creator and a blue-collar worker is not an exception, as many I talked to in this community were employed in multiple sectors with a varying but ever-present degree of precarity.

Beyond this sense of *platform-captivity* made worse by precarity, a theme of in-betweenness is found in these meme makers’ relationship to platform capital. The meme makers who I interviewed, as creators of subversive and grotesque memes, occupy an in-between state of platform productivity and platform resistance. They are *productive* users on Instagram, as they perpetuate the creation of capital for the platform. They actively create and post memes, and use platform functions that amplify, circulate and monetize content. At the same time, they push back against the platform by ‘deliberately seeing what [they] can get away with’ as one of my participants puts it. This *resistance*, the pushing of platform norms towards an insular ‘carnivalesque collectivity’[[13]](#footnote-13) through grotesque language[[14]](#footnote-14) and aesthetics comes at the risk of complete page bans and ‘algorithmic punishment’ like the much-speculated *shadowban*. The policing of this performance of the grotesque is ultimately at odds with the Bakhtinian conception of the carnival, which is theorized as a period of time where the subversion of the political and economic status-quo is tolerated by those in power. While there is a discernible element of the grotesque within this meme community, their carnivalesque collectivity and grotesque media is subject to institutional, or platform, punishment. This, alongside the exploitation of play as ‘serious business’, complicates the conceptualization of these spaces as digital carnivals. However, the connection between digital marketplace-talk and the appearance of the grotesque as a meme response is still pertinent as to how festive and grotesque laughter as well as vulgar language can be understood within memes.

Afbeelding met tekst

Automatisch gegenereerde beschrijving Marketplaces—especially those which are casual, non-compliant and informal such as this one, as well as others in the wider meme economy, are by their nature vulgar spaces. To that end, they produce their own vulgar and crude mode of communication which also feeds into and from the festive laughter of the continuous carnival, constantly bubbling away on the internet. This community’s memes exhibit a self-confessed and intentional garishness which stands in opposition to the aspirational aesthetics of mainstream social media influencers, but they coexist on the same platform and utilize a similar entrepreneurial logic. They laugh at this aspirational spirit, but also laugh at themselves for contributing to it too, in true carnivalesque fashion (Figure 3). In its core, meme-laughter engendered by the grotesque body and the vulgar text is ‘not simply parod[y]; it is no more comic than tragic; it is both at once, one might say that it is serious’.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Figure 3: Meme captioned ‘this meme brought to you by THIS FUCKIN GUY AAA??! 😂😂😂GET A LOaD 💦 of HIM 😂😂😂😂😂😂’ (Instagram: @lilperc666, 2020). Reproduced by permission of @lilperc666.

The comedy, tragedy and seriousness of the grotesque which Kristeva presents can be seen in Figure 3 created by artist @lilperc666. There are many meme creators who are minoritized, and many have developed a sense of left-leaning, radical politics as a result, which they try to practice in both their digital and offline lives. However, their radical politics clash unambiguously with Instagram’s aspirational and idealized aesthetics. While being hyper-aware of the incompatibility of their politics and their ‘digital workplace’, they are still too precarious to completely withdraw their content, and therefore labor, from said platform. This sense of platform-captivity is implied in Figure 3, alongside Trump’s famously grotesque visage[[16]](#footnote-16).

Figure 2, on the other hand, is a meme created by artist @todaywasmybirthday on Instagram. It shows a crying baby doll with a clown-like upturned smile, prominent bottom teeth and lips painted bright red. The tears streaming down the doll’s beady blue eyes have a gelatinous, plastic quality. The bib and its clothes are an innocuous pastel shade, overshadowed by the bizarre detail of a sloth-like creature with watery eyes gnawing on the doll’s earlobe. The doll has an unmistakable quality of uncanniness, and of abjection. It is recognizable as an object but foreign within this composition. In its most basic form, a doll is a toy for a child and the associations we have with baby dolls are therefore of childhood and innocence. This is why a broken doll, a doll with missing limbs, or an abandoned doll strike a sense of despair in us. We imagine dolls coming alive with malicious intent and revel in the horror at the idea when watching *Annabelle,* Chucky in *Child’s Play,* andthe evil clown in *The Poltergeist.* The doll is also a ‘double’, an inanimate and foreign reflection of the self, and ultimately a representation of uncanny grotesque.[[17]](#footnote-17)

The doll, with its abject smile and its symbolism of innocence as well as horror, is juxtaposed against a text-based joke about an artifact of internet vernacular (de Seta 2019, Phillips and Milner 2017). The ‘go to horny jail’ meme[[18]](#footnote-18) originally shows *Doge[[19]](#footnote-19)* hitting a slightly deformed double of itself with a baseball bat while telling it to ‘go to horny jail’, and is used online as a response to someone posting or replying to sexual content. The set up in Figure 2 builds on this meme culture reference but imposes more than its basic premise on the viewer. Doge is absent and so is the physical violence of the baseball bat. Instead, the doll-jester stares at the viewer bleary eyed, with a sloth dangling from its ear like an earring, whispering ‘you cannot send me to horny jail, I already live in a prison of my desires’. This *prison of desires* metaphor should be a familiar one to anyone who has engaged with popular interpretations of Buddhist philosophy[[20]](#footnote-20), the Dutch symphonic metal band After Forever’s debut album *Prison of Desire* (2001), or Plato’s *Phaedo*, in which Plato provides a ‘vivid description of what it means for reason to be enslaved by the lower parts of the soul’.[[21]](#footnote-21)

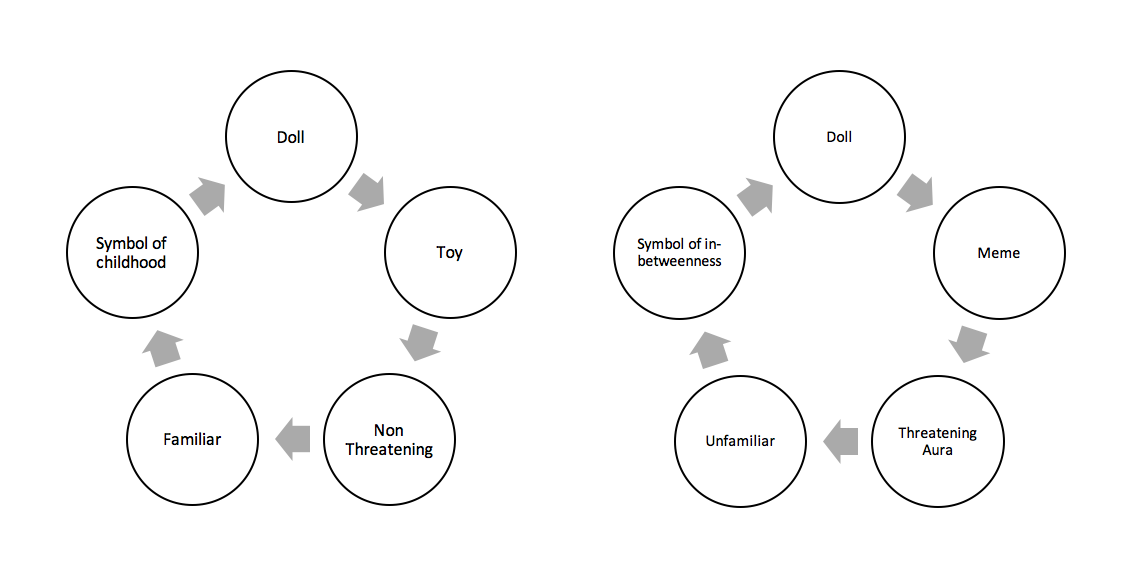


Figure 4: The cycles of meaning of the doll as a toy and the doll as a meme.

Within grotesque memes, the use of *strange langu*age, a combination of metaphors, rhymes, references, fuses with the *strange image*—absurd, scary, foreign, abject—to *defamiliarize* mundane and inescapable parts of human existence, but also viral meme formats. *Defamiliarization* works by disrupting the ordinary and interrupts our habitual perception of familiar forms. For instance, the doll in Figure 2 is visually manipulated into a something outside of a child’s toy into a memetic jester. It is then paired with a seemingly familiar meme format where the viewer recognizes the ‘horny jail’ reference. The meme delivers on the main sentiment of the original format, of the inability to control sexual desires. However, the expression of the sentiment in Figure 2 is external to the physical comedy of Doge. ‘The prison of one’s desires’ refers to the psychic torment of having sexual desires in the first place, not of being unable to control them. In its totality, the doll as part of the grotesque meme symbolizes *in-betweenness*: between childhood and adulthood, innocence and guilt, and action and inertia (Figure 4).

The logic of the grotesque meme works not by adding a clearly different meaning to the original reference. Memes cannot be ‘permanent referent[s] for those mutable complexities of life which are revealed through [them]’, therefore the purpose of the grotesque meme ‘is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object - it creates a “vision” of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it’.[[22]](#footnote-22) The disruption of the viewer’s expectations in grotesque memes defamiliarizes the viral meme format, introducing a different vision of the meme. Through abjection, a rejection of social reason, the grotesque meme interrupts understandable, palatable, viral meme logic and creates an affective communion between its viewer, its creator and the incessant digital carnival.

## Digital Life and Grotesque Realism

Digital life is life lived in-between, and therefore also partly in a grotesque manner. Our various taps, scrolls, swishes and sounds make it bodily[[23]](#footnote-23), but it is by no means an unconditionally embodied experience. It can be physically lonely and virtually communal. This in-betweenness is defined by its immediate proximity to and distance from the physical. Beyond its gargantuan, pollutant infrastructure,[[24]](#footnote-24) everyday interaction within digital life is maintained mainly by the digits of the dominant hand, the eyes, the mind. Digital life is undoubtedly *real*, but it exists in a liminal space between virtuality and physicality. The trope of the *user-generator*, the *prosumer*, the *content creator* also builds on this inherent in-betweenness. Just like the carnival participant, users become ‘both actor and spectator […] [passing] through a zero point of carnivalesque activity and [splitting] into a subject of the spectacle and an object of the game’.[[25]](#footnote-25) In line with customary festive laughter, the meme maker makes fun of herself, her viewer and the meme itself. The grotesque meme is thus the object, the subject and the spectacle in one.

Afbeelding met tekst

Automatisch gegenereerde beschrijving

Figure 5: Meme captioned ‘Dam you felt proud to start w?? Sounds like a personal problem’ (Instagram: @todaywasmybirthday, 2020b). Reproduced by permission of @todaywasmybirthday.

Grotesque memes are concerned with the cyclical biological processes, such as sex, birth, death, eating, drinking, defecating, like grotesque ritual in the context of carnival and grotesque realism and body in literature. Even if the textual or the visual composition does not refer to such processes outright, their affect is of an existential kind that confronts the in-betweenness inherent to both the carnival and digital life. The jester in Figure 4 has a far-away look in its eyes and a droopy mouth. It is dissociated from reality either because of an overstimulated mind, a stark realization of the human condition, or simply because it is just not ‘alive’ anymore. The jester cannot feel shame as it occupies a role of unashamed performance and debauchery by its nature, but also because it is duly aware that the truth of the human body allows no space for ‘dignity’. Figure 5 speaks of ‘herniating’ the brain and ‘squeezing out’ thoughts through an image of a dog dressed up in a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle* costume, wearing a *Leonardo* mask frozen in a grimace. The grotesque body and the oft-parodied act of defecation is now used to express something beyond the pure biological act[[26]](#footnote-26). The meme works with the principle element of grotesque realism, degradation, which is ‘the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract […] a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity’.[[27]](#footnote-27) By likening thoughts to excrement, the abstract and idealized undertaking of introspection is brought down to a visceral level. The fact that the meme creator does this by using the medium of the meme, a maligned mode of communication sometimes seen as trivial, mundane, base or unimportant by ‘serious thinkers’, adds a further layer of grotesqueness. It also reminds us that carnivalesque laughter is serious as much as it is comedic and tragic.[[28]](#footnote-28)

The mask donned by the image of the dog in Figure 6 is yet another reflection of the grotesque folk culture which emerges from the digital carnival. Bakhtin has a reverence for the mask, as to him it symbolizes the ‘most complex theme in folk culture’.[[29]](#footnote-29) He notes that ‘the mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames […] it is based on a peculiar interrelation of reality and image […] it reveals the essence of the grotesque’.[[30]](#footnote-30) The *Leonardo* mask is a replica of the face of a giant anthropomorphic turtle, and is worn by another non-human actor, the obscured dog in the meme. Beady, bloodshot eyes are added to the mask in the final collage and the image of the costumed and masked animal is placed against a glitchy, static background. The resulting visual composite is of a grotesque body, and emblematic of grotesque realism in memes.

Afbeelding met tekst

Automatisch gegenereerde beschrijving

Figure 6: Meme captioned ‘I have brain ibs: either the thoughts won’t come out at all or they wanna come out TOO OFTEN but both ways it feels bad’ (Instagram: @todaywasmybirthday, 2020c). Reproduced by permission of @todaywasmybirthday.

## Conclusion

In contrast to the medieval carnival, digital life is continuous and its existence is uninterrupted by religious calendars and seasons. On the internet, performance and spectacle multiply endlessly, as they are available for consumption, spectatorship and participation around-the-clock. Digital marketplaces are open 24/7, where marketplace vulgarity and its associated mode of language swells and billows, tirelessly feeding into and from digital carnivals. In these corners of the internet, digital carnivals rattle and grow, in forums, online communities, chatrooms, as well as in social media, e-commerce, digital patronage and video-sharing platforms, creating their own grotesque artefacts and affects. The resulting forms, modes, moods and objects of these carnivals, past and present, are linked together by an experience of in-betweenness. Digital life exists between embodiment and virtuality, and the medieval carnival between penance and festivity, and they therefore share an *affective* nucleus of liminality. True to their in-betweenness, both create ambivalent laughter which encompasses the object, subject and spectacle.

Grotesque memes are a part of digital folklore and emerge out of carnivalesque alcoves online where the grotesque meme is an element of a wider communion of ambivalent laughter.[[31]](#footnote-31) In this communion, the meme as the object is not the only ‘joke’: instead it implicates subjects such as the creator, the solitary viewer, and the larger audience, as well as the subjects’ proximity to and position within digital culture. The way it achieves this is through the *strange image* of the grotesque body and the *strange language* of the digital marketplace. The uncanny grotesque[[32]](#footnote-32) is expressed via the horror and discomfort of the grotesque body, whereas the digital billingsgate textually conveys the comic grotesque.[[33]](#footnote-33) Ultimately, grotesque memes defamiliarize viral meme formats and offer us an opportunity to think about memes beyond virality, image-macros, trends and as digital oddities.

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2. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Michael Holquist, “Prologue,” in *Rabelais and His World*, by Mikhail Bakhtin (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), xviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Holquist, “Prologue,” xviii. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Julian Posada, “The Future of Work Is Here: Toward a Comprehensive Approach to Artificial Intelligence and Labour,” *Ethics in Context*, no. 56 (15 July 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Billingsgate* is now a synonym for ‘foul language’ but took its name from the famous London fish market known for its foul-mouthed vendors (Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess, and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Russo, *The Female Grotesque,* 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Daniël de Zeeuw, “The Profane Media Logic of Anonymous Imageboard Culture” (PhD Diss., University of Amsterdam, 2019), 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A meme @djinnkazama posted on Instagram reads ‘kill the cop in your head, the capitalist in your heart and the homophobe in your butthole’ (2021). @djinnkazama’s memes and posts are sporadically taken down and ‘hidden’ by Instagram for violating ‘community guidelines’. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Daniël de Zeeuw, “The Gaping Mouth: Trump and The Carnival in Power,” *A\*Desk*, 18 May 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (MIT, 1919), 8-9. https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See: https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/go-to-horny-jail [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. A much meme-d Shiba Inu breed dog. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See Ananda Baltrunas. “A Prison of Desire,” *Tricycle*, Spring 2004, https://tricycle.org/magazine/prison-desire/. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Charles Kahn, “Plato’s Theory of Desire,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 41, no. 1 (1987): 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. David Lodge, trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (London: Longmans, 1998), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Tim Markham, *Digital Life* (Cambridge, UK ; Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Nicola Jones, “How to Stop Data Centres from Gobbling up the World’s Electricity,” *Nature*, 13 September 2018, https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06610-y#correction-0. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. De Zeeuw, “The Profane Media Logic,” 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World,* 19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Kristeva, *Desire in Language,* 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Gabriele de Seta, “Digital Folklore,” in *Second International Handbook of Internet Research*, ed. Jeremy Hunsinger, Lisbeth Klastrup, and Matthew M. Allen (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Freud, *The Uncanny.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*; Russo, *The Female Grotesque*. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)