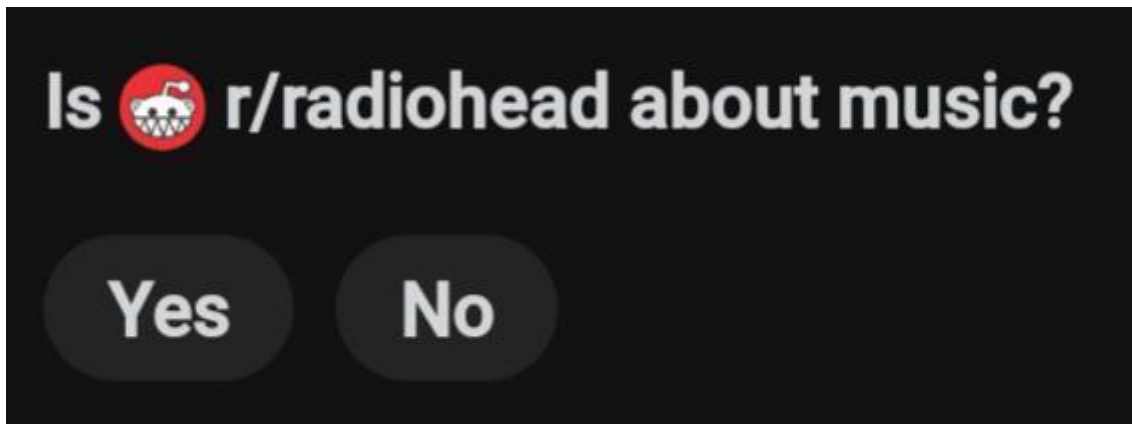


*“It’s not a phase mom, it’s who I am”*

*Assessing the impact of meme culture on engagement  
with online music fandoms*



## **Masters Thesis**

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**14<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

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## **Abstract**

As the way we use the internet changes, the interactions within online communities also change. Focusing on music fandoms, a new phenomenon has emerged of the use of memetic imagery, or ‘memes’, as a communication device within the group, with the ability to understand these memes being critical to feeling part of the community.

When producing these memes, members of the communities can use their expertise about the music artist to create a meme which requires a deeper knowledge of the artist for it to be understood. The platform used for this research is Reddit, which hosts many forums dedicated to specific music artists. The platform economics of Reddit is discussed to understand how the site and other sides benefit from the engagement and functions of it. Research was conducted on memes in four music artist subreddits, to discover the levels of engagement as well as the themes of the most popular memes on these forums. There were high levels of engagement with memes, especially passive forms of interaction, confirming meme production and consumption both drive engagement in the communities and are the most positively received posts in terms of upvotes. It was discovered that the evolution of humour has manifested itself in the way users use memes as a medium of communication, with relevant messages requiring the necessary cultural capital to decipher the meanings of these memes. Further to this, there are multiple themes which make up the most successful memes in the community. This has implications for music industry actors, who may look to implement the learnings into their strategy to improve processes and drive engagement.

**Keywords:** *memes, online music fandoms, cultural capital, collective intelligence, music industry actors*

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have supported me on my latest academic journey:

My supervisor, Sophia Gaenssle, for the patience when I presented new ideas, the palpable curiosity which drove my motivation, the detailed feedback, suggestions, and recommendation which shaped my research direction. I am very grateful for all of this, and for these reasons I forgive you for making me walk up seven flights of stairs for a meeting.

The friends who I have made in the last year, without whom I would not have had an experience which I will always treasure.

My parents, who have supported me through everything I've done, always fuelling my drive, being the first point of contact for emotional turbulence – I am and will always be grateful. My sister, whose kindness and empathy are influential - even if it extends to entrusting Uber drivers to transport my laptop with the thesis files on it.

I hope whoever reads this thesis will find it insightful, interesting, and entertaining. Perhaps it will lead you to consider that next time you walk past someone who's scrolling through memes, maybe ... just maybe, they're conducting detailed research to assist our understanding of the modern cultural landscape.

## 1. Introduction

In March of this year, musicians JPEGMAFIA and Danny Brown dropped their collaborative album, “SCARING THE HOES, VOL. 1”. To most, this album title is a proliferation of the chauvinistic male rapper archetype. However, those well-versed in the meme culture of online music fandoms will recognize the etymological roots of the title as paying homage to a common internet meme of “scaring the hoes”, referencing a recurrent sanctimonious phrase used by fans of artists who find their favourite artists music to be too abrasive or unwelcoming for the common listener. The layers behind the meaning of this album title are representative of the growth of digital communication technologies and their effect on modern culture.

The evolution of digital communication technologies has reshaped our social world, with social media in particular radically altering not only how we consume information, but also how we interact with one another online. The flowing of online interactions into the real world has led to the emergence of what can be described as ‘The Social Network Society’ (Prattichizzo, 2015). Digital networks have become a prominent entity in the cultural industry, heavily impacting how cultural media is produced, shared and consumed.

Platforms have adapted to the age of Web 2.0, which O'Reilly (2005) describes as ‘delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation," and going ... on to deliver rich user experiences’ (p.1). This form allows for greater possibilities, which fandoms have utilized to their advantage to reshape the environments they operate in.

Arguments can be made about the origins of memes, although the phrase was coined by Richard Dawkins, who identified the distinction between culture and genetics in influencing the behaviours of humans, proposing any non-genetic behaviours being described as a meme (Dawkins, 1976, as cited in Davison, 2012). With the evolution of the web, particularly Web 2.0, visual material in a range of forms have been integrated and denigrated within online communities. Their form remains broad, as they need only take the shape of a cultural digital product through image, video or piece of text – with this form of visual content being a key aspect of presenting and fashioning online identities (Highfield & Leaver, 2016).

Shifman (2013) defines the 'Internet meme' as the intentional production and dissemination of 'a group of digital objects' by a person or group of persons, and that these digital objects are transformed by the transmission of many users through the Internet (p. 448). Meme culture existed prior to Web 2.0, however, the new era of the internet has provided a more fertile ground for remixing and development of memes to allow it to flourish as a new form of digitized cultural communication. Online music fandoms have taken advantage of this, using the development and posting of memes within communities as an exchange of cultural/subcultural capital within online communities. Taking this into consideration, the formulated research question is "What makes a meme successful in terms of fostering word of mouth and consumer engagement within online music fandoms?"

Memes have evolved from their early origins of humorous captions placed on pictures of cats to a state of absurdity, irony, and self-depreciation (Ask & Abidin, 2018; Lestari, 2018). This evolution has resulted in the current state of meme culture acting as a sort of gatekeeper, as the stylization of modern memes makes it difficult for anyone on the outside of these communities to understand. This facilitates an alternative source for the generation of a collective identity within these communities, which already exists from the shared fandom (Baym, 2007; Merrett, 2011).

Iloh (2021) states that memes have become a part of everyday communication and expression, and are valuable cultural units and a form of rapport building. The social relevance of the research is derived from how the internet has acted as a catalyst for these music fandoms, as it not only reduces the barriers of entry to gathering information about these particular music artists, but also acts as an intermediary for fans to discuss this with other people who share the same level of knowledge as them. This development has allowed for the further facilitation of collective identities within digital social spaces. In recent years, it has become apparent to music industry actors (artists, management, labels, distributors etc.) that there is an economic opportunity that can be taken from this development. We have seen mainstream musical artists use meme culture to aid in their careers. Popstar Lil Nas X utilized meme culture as an engagement tool, allowing him to launch a commercialized music career which years ago may not have been possible. This success at "gaming" or "playing" these social media platforms "illustrates the importance of creatives understanding how platform culture works" (Collie & Wilson-Barnao, 2020, p. 173). This method presents the opportunity to be mimicked by up-and-coming artists, and a better understanding of the use of meme culture within fandoms can play a big part in the effectiveness of the implementation of this

strategy. Additionally, by understanding the discourse within fandoms and what current attitudes are, music industry actors can incorporate this into their marketing or PR strategy to drive positively valanced engagement.

This research aims to assess the contributions of the use of memes to generate engagement within online music fandoms, with a deeper investigation into what themes makes a meme especially popular. These findings will contribute to the growing understanding of internet memes as cultural artefacts, being utilized as a medium of communication and forming collective identity. For this, a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative research will be used. The main platform used will be reddit.com, as it contains subsidiary platforms dedicated to certain music artists. The subreddits selected for the analysis were *r/frankocean*, *r/tylerthecreator*, *r/lanadelrey*, and *r/radiohead*. This selection allowed for a diverse genre range, as well as the ability to filter by the flair “Meme”, which allowed identification of the relevant posts for this research.

At the conclusion of reading this paper, readers can anticipate a comprehensive understanding of previous literature that has given a theoretical basis to the relevance of this paper. The appropriateness of the selected methodology is explained in order to conduct an in-depth analysis of the levels of engagement with memes in the selected online music fandoms, as well as what the recurring themes are of the most successful memes posted in the communities.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.1 Reddit and platform economics***

#### ***2.1.1 Reddit as a platform***

Reddit is a social news and content aggregation website, considered one of the largest in the world. Reddit describes itself as the “front page of the internet”, where community members can contribute and submit content in the forms of links, pictures, videos, and text posts. The community is comprised of forums entitled “subreddits” (identified by r/ before the name of the subreddit), dedicated to a multitude of hobbies or topics, including various cultural interests. The site is unique compared to other online forum-style platforms as rather than linear discussions, Reddit uses its “upvote” and “downvote” engagement system where engagement displays discussions hierarchically, thus more popular posts essentially rise to the

top of the page. Although this differs when a user clicks in to view a singular subreddit, as a mixture of popular and new posts will show – unaffected by algorithmic interventions.

Further to this, users can gift a symbolic “Reddit gold” to comments or posts they particularly enjoy, which is purchased by the giver in actual money, therefore adding to the revenue of the organization. This system is utilized as Reddit’s mission and design revolve around its distinct voting system, which plays a pivotal role in regulating not just the content submissions, but also the comments (Caplan & Purser, 2019). This fosters an incentive for community users to submit higher-quality content, which in turn will allow them to gain cultural capital within the space.

Discussions that are posted on Reddit are mostly public in that anyone, with or without registering for a Reddit account, can view content (with the exception of certain subreddits that are private and require moderator approval for users with accounts to join). To become a Reddit user, users just need to select a unique username and a password – email verification is not required. The history of the user’s participation is also public on the site, meaning anyone can see a user’s public comments and post history by clicking on their username and viewing their profile (Proferes et. al, 2021). The low barrier of entries incentivises users to join, and the ability to keep a record of the number of posts and comments, as well as the amount of engagement they received, renders the ability for users to display how well received their contributions are, and in turn the social capital they gain in these communities.

Subreddits are simultaneously user-created and user-moderated. There are a few overall rules about content on the Reddit site, although the most relevant ones for the subreddits are decided by the moderators of the subreddit themselves. These rules vary considerably in what they allow, and in the specific cultures and norms within the communities (Chandrasekharan, et al., 2018). Particularly in music artists’ subreddits, rules are enforced to prevent “Low effort submissions”. However, what constitutes as “low effort” is dependent on the discretion of the moderators, who act as a gatekeeper in these instances, as they possess pre-selection power through the ability to remove posts they deem not appropriately aligned with the rules of the community. From this, there is inconsistency amongst the different communities about the levels of quality of posting, which further contributes to the differentiation of communal norms and communications within the subreddits.



Reddit's revenue model is designed to make money primarily through advertisements and Reddit Premium subscriptions. Advertisers can make their ad appear on the front page, or target specific subreddits as a sponsored link, with third-party advertisements also appearing in the sidebar on the website. Furthermore, the website has a profit-yielding premium membership option which is presented as improving the "Reddit experience" of the user by providing some additional features such as no ads or customizable themes (Dissanayake, 2022). This membership option highlights the importance of maintaining and growing a user base, as it will commercially benefit the platform. Reddit contains plentiful data on its communities which can be used for analysis to improve business processes such as social, marketing, business, educational etc., which could be used at a fraction of the cost of manual classification (Fiallos & Jimenes, 2019). Despite the availability of rich and relevant data, Reddit appears not to employ this promising opportunity, as there is no evidence of the platform operating directly in B2B commerce with organizations that could utilize it. From this, it can be identified that there is a gap in Reddit's business model for what is known as "Data Trading". This concept involves platforms identifying a new side interested in the data and therefore extracting the value embedded in said data – letting the platform find a market opportunity for selling the gathered data in order to create a new revenue inflow (Trabucchi & Buganza, 2020). This creates an opportunity for Reddit to target companies who may find their data beneficial to operations to better understand the interactions amongst fans, particularly as these interactions can be deemed as organic and not interpreted as shilling products. In the case of this paper, the targeted companies would be music industry actors – which will be expanded on in a later section.

### *2.1.2 Sides of markets and platform economics*

To enable our understanding of the inner workings of these communities, it is important to look at how they are structured. Reddit can be viewed as a multi-sided platform, that coordinates the demand of certain groups of customers who need each other to operate, which the business need to get and keep on board in order to succeed (Evans, 2003). Reddit as a platform can be categorized as a "demand-coordinator", as they create a service that generates indirect network effects across groups (Rochet & Tirole, 2003). Reddit facilitates members joining communities which they are interested in, allowing them to interact with others who share similar interests. The platform benefits from its ease of access and layout, with moderation within subreddits done by members of the communities themselves. Therefore, in the case of this research, Reddit acts as an intermediary between the 'demand

groups' of the platform. These can be understood to be the two sides of users who are members of the online music fandoms, those who create and supply the content, as well as those who consume the content – with both sides acting in a mutualistic relationship keeping the communities active by participating and engaging in them. Furthermore, this extends to the volunteer moderators who regulate the flow of content within the community, the relevant music industry actors who can observe the discourse and engagement that prevails in the community, as well as the advertisers of Reddit who leverage the platform's user base to promote their products.

Platforms mainly focus on this engagement, regardless of what drives it. Any engagement with a platform is beneficial to the platform itself, this power is necessary to keep these platforms alive. This has given rise to such concepts as the economics of rage; where media companies profit off the engagement of online controversy (Harrison, 2020), or the economics of absurdity; wherein satire is used of authority and hegemonic discourses to criticize authority, creating a diffusion of generalized cynicism acting as a catalyst for further engagement within online communities (Boland, 2012). This driving of engagement regardless of the topic may concern users as it conflicts with their desire to maintain discussions to involve the relevant topic at hand, thus demonstrating the importance of users preserving behaviours to influence a natural discourse.

These properties facilitate an online space where fandoms can flourish. In popular culture studies, fandoms have been marred with stigmas which have prevented them from being studied as in-depth as other consumers of popular media (Lopes, 2006) with other authors going so far as to draw parallels to religious zealots (Jindra, 1994). Establishing an agreed-upon definition can be difficult, although most would agree that fandom encompasses a group of individuals who are socially connected due to their mutual admiration for a particular element or elements of pop culture (Baym N. K., 2007). These social connections are initiated through their affinity for these elements and are further developed through their interactions and engagement with individual members and the community as a whole.

Fandom has had a significant development in the digital era, as the internet age has fostered the ease of connection and formation of communities, to engage in discussions about their favourite media (Pearson, 2010). Fans are no longer isolated but easily connected with a global community. This has given rise to what are known as “open online communities”, which are free websites that the public can access and register to post commentary on the site

(Waldron J. L., 2018). This digitalization has resulted in lower barriers to entry, as ease of accessibility has significantly increased, therefore presenting an opportunity to effortlessly create and dedicate communities for their interests. More specifically, fandoms can exist for individual music artists. These communities manifest themselves through the fan's passionate support and reverence of an artist, creating online spaces dedicated to the discussion of all aspects of these artists. The ecology of these fandoms and interactions within them display a form of mutualism as previously mentioned, with fans benefitting from the fact that others replicate/display the same levels of emotional investment in the artist (TeBlunthuis & Hill, 2022). The barrier to entry for fandoms in the digital age is very low, as groups can easily be found and joined simply using the search tool to find the community of an artist they would be interested in joining (Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter, 2014). The simplicity of access to the communities allows new members to instantly be able to immerse themselves in the fandom, contributing to discussions, sharing their own posts, or commenting on other members posts. Ridings and Gefen (2004) argue that "information exchange" is the primary reason individuals join; this exchange usually manifests as member's asking questions, offering suggestions, and stating their opinions. Members seek to interact with peers who have a similar level of cultural capital in the given fandoms, as interactions will be more purposeful when conducted with others who share their knowledge and expertise.

Building upon the arguments of the previous section of the opportunities of utilizing data from user engagement on online platforms, this phenomenon has been investigated using fandoms in particular as the subject. Yin (2020) discusses the normalization of the relationship between fandom and digitalization. Platforms encourage fannish practice and behaviour to increase the efficiency of data contribution, assisting the effectiveness of platforms gathering data on diverse topics. There are restrictions on how fully this can be applied to this study, as the platform used by Yin (2020) is Weibo, which uses a completely different platform structure than Reddit.

One of the defining variances of previous findings on this topic compared to this research is that the platform in question, Reddit, uses members of the community who volunteer to moderate the posts in the community. Moderators in these communities control the "quotidian rhythm", differing from the hidden controls of different social media algorithms in the way that the human factor shapes the way connections and communications happen in these spaces (Théberge, 2005). In this sense, moderators can be seen to act as a sort of gatekeeper, being the deciding force on what posts remain in the spaces and which are

deleted. These moderators are able to determine what is appropriate discourse for the community by using their ability to create and enforce rules. In this way, they can be seen to have unlimited social capital within their community (Lynch, 2022). Moderators utilize the hierarchical structure of Reddit and the flow of information that comes with it. By controlling the discourse this way, it creates a more organic sense of community, as opposed to traditional social media where the content is controlled mostly by algorithms. Concerns can exist regarding the power these moderators have at their disposal, and if they exploit this authority it may result in the alienation of users within the community, causing them to leave (Squirrell, 2019). This creates a dilemma for Reddit as a platform, as they are required to weigh up the opportunity costs of losing users (and potentially advertisers) due to volunteer moderators exploiting their power and becoming autocratic in nature. With the influence that moderators have on the quantity and quality of the output of the community, they are in a position of bargaining power. Conversely, investing in centralized control of subreddits may result in these communities becoming less organic and the platform assuming the form of its competitors, therefore losing its USP. Despite the possibility of moderators exploiting their power which may lead to censorship and potentially biased content, there are also opportunities for community-based moderators to be very beneficial to the community and platform. They are equipped to deal with the nuanced context of the community, and the sensitivity in pre-selection and balanced freedom of speech can lead to a higher quality of posts and relevance to the community (Seering, 2019).

Within these fandoms, there are a plethora of behaviours and roles that those involved play. Edlom & Karlsson (2021) adapted a framework from earlier studies, to develop a hierarchy of fans in music fandoms. Fans categorization ranges from ambient, to engaged, to superfan, and finally to executive. Superfans and executive fans project similarities to the superstar effect (Rosen, 1981) where the most talented members benefit disproportionately, dominating the community they're in. In this case, fans who have the most cultural capital in terms of knowledge and expertise on not only the artist, but also what will drive engagement in their posts. These fans are seen as experts who influence and drive new offerings in the fan community, that contribute to engagement and building the culture of the community. They are seen as the opinion leaders who have the power to ultimately influence discourse, arguably on par with the impact of moderators in these communities.

This framework was developed to illustrate the potential of high-level fans functioning as a connecting point between brand management and the fans, showing the

tangible economic possibilities that can occur from these fandoms. Complementary to this, is Dolan et. al's (2016) theory on social media engagement behaviour (SMEB). This theory proposes different forms of engagement behaviours that users on social media demonstrate. For this research, we focus on the first three distinct types – which are positively valenced SMEB involving particularly favourable behavioural brand-related consumer dynamics. *Co-creation* involves members of the community who initiate positive, active contributions and therefore foster subsequent interaction with the brand from other members of the community. Content is used to disseminate resources, knowledge and experience about the artist to other members of the community (Brod et.al, 2013). Next is *positive contribution* where users indicate they 'like' the content, which in the case of Reddit would be to 'upvote' the post. This indication of preference contributes to the popularity and engagement in the community, and enables users to become endorsers of the content/music artist, increasing the likelihood of others in the community engaging with it. Finally, the lowest level of positively valenced SMEB is *consumption*. Their behaviour is passive, participating without actively contributing to or creating content. This is performed through the consumption of content and reading of discussions posted in the community to gain a source of information without actually contributing through upvotes or comments (Gummerus et. al, 2012). For platforms, this is the hardest form of behaviour to measure as there are no indicators of this type of engagement.

## **2.2 Content Consumers & Providers**

### *2.2.1 Cultural/consumption capital in fandoms*

Initial arguments on taste formation are that individuals' preferences are not only determined by their inherent tastes but also by the society they live in. It is believed that cultural and social factors can influence individuals' tastes and preferences, and these factors change over time (Stigler & Becker, 1977). Applying this to fandoms, the community becomes their version of society where they can build taste together. Although every individual has 'outside' experience, social capital earned by fans will not be transferable to other fandoms or communities, where they do not exhibit nor reward the same types of behaviours and posts (Chin, 2018). A study by Bergstrom & Poor (2021) found that members of Reddit gaming communities did not transition to communities for new games, but rather remained in the established community for the older game. This communal resilience can be attributed to the lock-in effect caused by the invested time and cost of acquiring knowledge, with this path dependency discouraging members from passage to other communities (Wilson, 2014). This phenomenon occurs as the members of a years-old game had strong ties

to the community, with nostalgia for the game in the initial community also playing a role in this. Relating this discovery to online music fandoms, it can be understood that members will not flock to different communities in times of stagnation or controversy in the music artist's career, but rather will apply the cultural capital they have gained into posts allowing discussions to further continue in music communities where the artist is not as active as they initially were.

Cultural capital ties in with social capital, which is the aggregate of resources connected to memberships within a group, these resources have been affected by digitalization which fosters proliferation on the internet through the connections and group memberships that individuals have there (Bourdieu, 1986). These descriptions of culture are viewed by Fiske (1992) as a metaphor for an economy where members make investments, be it in education, knowledge and networks, in institutions like art galleries and museums in order to accumulate capital. The same can be said for online music fandoms, where fans make investments through time (and some cases money) to build knowledge of the artist and the community itself to build capital within. In addition to Bourdieu's understanding of the individual benefit from social capital, this has been applied to how utility can be derived for wider communities as well, with online music fandoms being a key study for this as it reiterates the understanding of the benefits increased engagement has for the fandom. The continuous investment of users' time in these communities grows cultural capital through not only improved understanding of the music artist, but the development of behaviours that are distinctive to an individual community.

Research which gives a theoretical basis of collective knowledge being derived from cultural capital in an online community is Spitzberg's (1983) theory of 'communication competence' – with users adapting the way they interact with each other to suit the fandom, which usually involves a form of fandom-only way of interacting and idiosyncratic communications (Greenland, 1999). This theory recognizes that for fans to maintain authentic levels of cultural capital, they will likely engage in behaviour that can be considered aberrant to normal competency in discussions, and therefore confusing to outsiders, which in the case of our studies can be considered to be the relevant music industry actors. Thornton (1995) further developed this theory with the idea of 'subcultural capital' which "confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder ... (it) can be objectified or embodied" (p.11). This is a form of capital that is extended and slightly removed from the artist, yet still infers the ability to be transferable to economic capital through the notion of 'hipness'. Thornton (1995)

uses the examples of DJs, club organizers, clothes designers, music journalists and music industry professionals making a living from the existence of subcultural capital. Pertaining to the case of online music fandoms, subcultural capital can be gained from users posting about topics such as purchasing records, artist merchandise, and other affiliated actions which benefit the users for gaining capital, and in turn benefits music industry actors economically. This further reinforces the importance of continued engagement in the communities, as long as users gain capital from receiving engagement on posts, those involved in the music industry will gain financially.

Overall, taste formation within these fandoms betrays the distinctive behaviours of individual communities. Cultural capital will be built from time spent in these communities learning how to competently interact with other members, in order to maximize utility from these interactions. Thereafter, this heightened (sub)cultural capital can result in communal resilience which maintains the brand community of the artist and preserves the positive economic effects of this, such as consumers continuing to invest their money into the artist.

### *2.2.2 Development of network effects*

Maintaining regular returning users requires online platforms to benefit these users in some way. A feature these platforms provide to online communities which enables positive outcomes for the beneficiaries is network effects, which Liebowitz & Margolis (1998) define as “a change in the benefit, or surplus, that an agent derives from a good when the number of other agents consuming the same kind of good changes” (p.671). The example used to illustrate the phenomenon is that of telephones. Their utility is defined by the number of consumers who possess one, as the more popular it is the greater use you will have for this. Applying this theoretical concept to the proposed research, we can see that the platform used for this study, Reddit, clearly displays network effects in its model. As a platform for connecting users in discussions, the more users that join, the more discussions are posted and engagements occur (Staff, 2015). The marginal utility of the community increases with every member who joins, as it opens up the possibilities of an enhanced number of posts and discussions within. With the ability of users to post and create discussions, these online communities facilitate an environment where large network sizes and effects can occur, owing to spontaneous exchange interactions among community members, unrestricted by geographic distances (McAfee, 2006), and it has also been found that network effects have a positive and significant effect on collective identity (Fiedler & Sarstedt, 2014).

Conversely, network effects exacerbate the lack of individual differences in these communities. The adoption decision of beneficial practices within the community can be attributed to the desire to maintain a sense of belongingness (DiMaggio & Garip, 2012). In the case of online music fandoms, we can relate this to the development of fannish practices such as the specific forms of communication amongst each other. There is a pressure to adopt this behaviour as not doing so can result in diminished social capital within the community, and alienating the user from their peers. Cultural capital and network effects are entwined in this case, where network effects occur of members of the community being able to understand quasi-cryptic messages that may be confusing to outsiders, with subsequent social capital gained from this ability.

For consumers in this scenario, the costs of consumption can be divided into the actual time of consumption and communication, and the time for searching for suitable conversation partners (Adler, 1985). Therefore, to minimize costs, consumers will migrate to online communities for more renowned artists as there are more active members, and consequently more information and possible conversation partners available. Media presence supports the artist's popularity by enhancing the information flows, essentially this can be expressed as 'the more you know, the more you enjoy' as "when the artist is popular, it is easier to find discussants who are familiar with her or to find media coverage about her. This is why consumers prefer to consume what others also consume" (Adler, 2006, p. 898). This demonstrates the importance of a sense of belonging and collective identity, and results in artists who have a slight majority of fans steadily increasing their market share over time, as the utility provided for the individual is more enticing, resulting in a snowball effect (Adler, 1985). This sensation precedes the development of positive network effects, with individuals maximizing their marginal utility by joining the majority in following the same artist. As the number of members of the network (in this case, the Reddit communities) increases, as do the opportunities to find suitable conversation partners (Budzinski & Gaenssle, 2018), allowing the individual utility gained from sharing social capital within these communities to develop into collective utility for the music fandom. This benefits the artist as their fanbase grows, with the organizational side also profiting from the expanding customer base.

### *2.2.3 Collective intelligence of fandoms*

Involvement and engagement within a fandom give rise to a collective intelligence, which Lévy (1997) explains that as the new media environment creates a new "knowledge space" or "cosmopedia", information is "deterritorialized" and how the ability to use the web



to facilitate instant communication may enable broader participation in decision-making, new modes of community and the reciprocal exchange of information. Lévy explains “the members of a thinking community search, inscribe, connect, consult, explore.....Not only does the cosmopedia make available to the collective intellect all of the pertinent knowledge available to it at a given moment, but it also serves as a site of collective discussion, negotiation, and development” (p.217). This new media environment has ushered a transformative era in fan communications where costs have been drastically lowered, constructing environments where messages and information can be shared with fellow fans immediately. This has restructured methods of fan interactions and the cultivation of modern practices within the communities has changed the way we view the communities. Jenkins (2002) connects the understanding of collective intelligence to fandom, citing the ability that new tools and technology have to enable consumers to utilize media content in new functions, as well as subcultures now having the capacity to promote their own media productions as contributors towards a shared identity. These products from fandoms may have the ability to impact popular culture as they gain higher visibility and are pushed by the respective fandoms.

The characteristics of a fandom engaging in participatory culture also enables one to view them as Communities of Practice (CoP), where there is a shared interest, members actively engaging with each other as a community, and the creation of a sense of community through the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). CoP literature ties in with the understanding of how network effects are derived from being part of a community (DiMaggio & Garip, 2012), therefore reinforcing the point that the increased utility in larger communities represents a more enhanced experience to be a part of, incentivizing users to join. This theory has been used to frame how fan communities operate online and more specifically has been applied to online music fandoms, where it has been found they exhibit all characteristics to be considered a working CoP in which members contribute to build the community (Malik & Haidar, 2023). These discoveries illustrate the ability of fans to engage in a participatory culture with each other and contribute to the collective intelligence, which can be used to form an identity which actors in the music industry can observe and use to strengthen their understanding of the consumer base of the artist. These economic trends have been found to favour media organizations, as the flow of images, ideas, and narratives across media channels creates more active modes of spectatorship (Jenkins, 2002).

## 2.3 Memes

### 2.3 Shaping of memes by humour evolution of generations

The bandwagon effect is crucial to the perpetuation of memes, as their very existence is representative of a cultural artefact continually replicating itself (Ball, 1984). Existing within a digital space acts as a catalyst for this bandwagon effect of replication, as it is easier than ever before to access the tools require to remix, create and distribute memes – meaning the proliferation of them and internet users joining the bandwagon is extended. An important contributing factor to the proliferation of memes is their malleability to different socioeconomic scenarios and their ease of adaptation and applicability. Since their inception, memes have been seen to constantly evolve – this genre development demonstrates the generative capacity for continued memetic transformation and participation among members of digital culture (Wiggins & Bowers, 2015). Online communities develop and legitimize memes relevant to what their focus is on, creating a plethora of possible thematic pathways for these memes to explore and develop on.

The evolution of memes towards absurdist humour is a curious phenomenon. This type of humour cannot be understood by reducing the text to a linear succession of individual jokes. Literary humour can only be understood in terms of the reading process, how readers engage with literary texts, a process facilitated by schemata (Couder, 2019). Absurdist humour is caused by a conceptual juxtaposition between the fictional and experienced world of the reader, causing them to simultaneously experience contrasting interpretations of the fictional world. Valensise et al., (2021) posits the question about meme transcendentality and how they evolve. They find that the period of post-memetics explains the growth of visual memes on the internet due to their simplicity and broad applicability. Memes have grown to become part of the emerging internet metalanguage and their complexity increasing to represent social trends. They explain:

*The tendency of memes to evolve towards more complex structures can be explained considering this object as part of the emerging internet meta-language. In fact, memes are used to quickly vehicle context-specific content, which in turn evolves towards more and more specific templates. This may lead to a segregation effect, with a specific dialect depending on the community in which a meme is shared. In fact, a meme created for a specific community, e.g. gaming community, does not have*

*universally comprehensible across the web. This aspect leads to the use of more complex and specific patterns (p.3)*

These findings complement the earlier understanding developed in section 2.2.1 of the impact on cultural capital that more niche memes have. The ability to understand absurdist and seemingly nonsensical memes demonstrates a deep understanding of the artist and community, therefore generating more utility for members to consume than straightforward memes. The evolution of memes can also be understood through their embrace by a new generation of creators and consumers, Gen Z. The meme culture of Gen Z shows a structure of generational feeling that anticipates experiencing disappointment in their future. This leads to the generation of memes that carry absurd, surrealist sentiments with the notion that they can make depression laugh (Gilbert, 2021). In other words, these forms of transmitting messages “allows one nonsense to give sense to another nonsense” (Heller, 2005, p. 149). It is characteristic of memes used in communities to adopt a satirical tone, which includes the use of double meaning, metaphors, ironies, and profanities (Vitiuk et. al, 2020). The nihilism and existentialism that one experiences in the digital age have altered the humour, and therefore the contents of contemporary memes which are shared as expressions and manifestations of feelings.

Zahoor (2020) speaks about the despair in the communications indicates the dark side of generational malaise around things like civic engagement, community, and other socioeconomic topics. They claim humour is used as a mitigating device to relieve the severity of potential stresses that may arise from hardships, as making light of situations can foster a more emotional approach and illicit rationality and pragmatism. Although this may be a factor, absurdist humour and existentialism has existed in all previous generations. One need only look at Foucault’s 1917 sculpture “fountain”, which illustrates the culture of nonsensical and seemingly meaningless productions existing for over a century. Despite this, there can be no doubts that the newer generation has embraced the culture and shaped it for themselves, with the use of memes during the coronavirus lockdowns corroborates this, this sense of hopelessness of a generation translates into the medium of communication through memes.

This major occurrence had a global impact, and therefore was the muse for the generation of many memes. As was witnessed during the pandemic, social media is a significant facilitator of memes using contemporary humour and satire to offer global comic

responses, social media is a significant facilitator of memes using contemporary humour and satire to offer global comic responses (Zahoor, 2020). The nexus of the globalized nature of online communication, differing viewpoints and levels of irony (Her, 2016) has led to substantial variations in the themes of the memes used in discourse about significant events (Nissembaum & Shifman, 2022).

Additionally, the growth of popularity of purposely low-quality posts, or “poor images” has been discussed in the past. Steyerl (2009) explains the popularity of the phenomenon to come from how these images are a personification of the proliferation of memes in general. The constant remixing, reducting and changing of images leads its humour to be taken from the ridiculousness of the changes it has gone through. Its imperfection and nonsensical nature represent its step away from being seen as a consumerist entity, and more so taken control by the community – reiterating the importance of a sense of organic interactions within these spaces. Although memes that use modern humour can be easily dismissed as meaningless, shallow and insignificant, they can be seen as a product of contemporary digital culture and epitomize many of its inherent qualities (Shifman, 2013; Milner, 2018) This impact is palpable enough to make the argument that online and offline culture are so deeply intertwined that they can be considered to be one, with online cultural actions having the power to influence overall culture in subtle as well as convincing ways (An Xiao, 2019), creating an interesting insight for music industry actors to see just how much online culture contributes to the commercial aspects of their business.

In the past, the previously mentioned theory of social capital has been applied to memes. Community users are motivated to gain social capital through the posting of memes which are well received, which in terms fulfils a sense of belonging and a granting of place for the digital inhabitants when the interactions from these memes are positive (Bourdieu, 1986; Julien, 2015). Another theory of memes that can be linked to social capital posited by Blackmore & Dawkins (2000) was that once imitation begins amongst a group, selection pressure would generally favour those who could not only make appropriate decisions on what to imitate, but also how to imitate intelligently. Applying this framing to the context of this research, we can understand how substantial cultural capital is gained by users when they have the ability to recognize meme topics and formats to imitate, and do it in a way that will be well received by the community. By doing so, memes will perform better in the community by driving increased engagement in contrast to memes which are produced by those with lower cultural capital and lesser ability to recognize opportunities.

As the literature demonstrates, it is of particular value is users' ability to intertwine current events within their memes, as they are often invoked as a tool by different groups to express their views on current socio-political issues (Milner M. R., 2013). This can be expanded to the case of online communities, in the sense of expressing their views on issues relevant to the fandom. Cleverly implemented well-known phrases and symbols to interpret real-world events allows users to gain a particular distinction amongst the community. The distinctive signals used within the memes posted in the community contribute to the uniqueness of the discussion, meaning while users attempt to gain social capital from these posts, they in turn contribute to the collective intelligence within the fandom.

## ***2.4 Music Industry Actors***

### *2.4.1 Relationships with fandom*

To understand how music industry actors can utilize fan communication to their benefit, we can use Dean's (2005) theory of "Communicative Capitalism" as a basis. This theory argues how modern-day capitalism relies on and reinforces communication as a primary mode of social and economic exchange. The author states that communication is no longer simply a means of transmitting information, but rather has been usurped by industry players to model it into a means of production. By constantly broadcasting and sharing their identities online, individuals become "entrepreneurs of the self," using their communication skills and personal brands to gain social and economic capital. These technologies are utilized by companies to use fan communication as a means of gains for them and provide insights into data which can be used to shape strategies, and contextualizes the combination of sociological aspects in strategies to derive economic gain.

Saragih (2019) uses this as a basis for the argument that future research on co-creational experiences in the music industry should focus on how co-creation strategies are used to leverage social focus and how co-creation experiences embedded in music contexts promote social objectives and a better quality of life for consumers. This speaks about the lack of understanding regarding the interpersonal aspect of brand and fan communities; that is, what coming and being together means to the fans. These findings imply that music industry actors can gain learnings by appropriately engaging with their audience, though it does prompt questions on what methods and best practices can be used when implementing strategies to utilize these learnings.

Before conceptualizing this, it is important to understand the perception of engagement in this industry, as the rapid development of digital promotional culture has presented a challenge to practitioners to express a deeper understanding of the concept. This has led to the adoption of the “engagement imperative”, which dominates communicative working practices, and can be defined as the implication “that organisation’s communication of all sorts is built on the precepts of creating engagement and dialogue among their audiences and stakeholders” (Edlom, 2022, p.66). The ever-changing digital landscapes means forms of communication and the themes of the messages being transmitted vary a great deal, thus creating the potential for organizations to lose track of the engagement and dialogue amongst their audiences. This poses an issue for music industry actors, as placing an onus on this engagement imperative and then not fully being entuned into the communication amongst their audiences can be unappealing for stakeholders. Engagement as an industry concept can be seen to be the usage of engagement as a means of creating value and marketing the products, and as a measure of success (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013), demonstrating the importance to be able to recognize current discourses that exist in their respective fandoms. As mentioned earlier, platforms will benefit from engagement regardless of the connotation of it, although this does not apply to music industry actors as well. Negative engagement can be harmful to music industry actors, as it may be damaging to the reputation of the music artist. This may subsequently result in fans losing their affinity and affecting their perception of the worth of the artist, and in extension – their brand. This is particularly prevalent in online communities where fans are heavily influenced by the opinions of their peers, seeking out other users’ opinions to validate their interpretation. (Bridson et. al, 2017). This understanding illustrates the potential domino effect of new branding strategies receiving negative engagement to fans no longer consuming products.

To avoid this potential pitfall, the conception of ideas to improve engagement can use Best, et al.’s (2017) findings that for artists to maximize their opportunities, they must be perceived as genuine to audiences within the subculture the artist associates themselves with. Subcultural capital can be leveraged by artists themselves by reaching across these identifications. It is imperative to consider the role the industry plays in the way that fans behave, as many studies focus on this behaviour as an independent act, when in reality the media industry looks to guide fans into particular forms of fannish practice and participation, which will therein generate the most potential utility for the industry (Stewart, 2021). This guidance allows industry actors to engender fan behaviours in the way that would be most

beneficial for them. Hence, investment in public relations can be critical for maintaining the strength of the brand.

Organizations often find public relations difficult to manage, as there is a lack of trustworthiness in terms of how audiences view organizational communications. Public relations from peers, however, can be deemed more trustworthy as there is not assumed to be a biased agenda behind the communication of the message. The result is that organizational hybridity, the combining of core organizational elements that potentially conflict with each other (Albert & Whetten, 1985), has been on the rise, including the adaptation of organizations to apply to PR strategies. This strategy assumes an innovation function in systems and facilitates learning (Hoffjann, 2021), and an unexplored area for music industry actors in the analysis of online music fandoms and their discussions. Through analysis of fan discussion and engagement on certain topics, industry actors can understand what sort of strategies fosters positive engagement from fans, and subsequently use this understanding to shape their planning to replicate strategic thinking which has been successful in generating engagement in the past.

Over the last decade, the music industry has adapted a specific promotional strategy to take advantage of the fluid and dynamic contemporary platform-based media landscape (Bengtsson & Edlom, 2021). It is crucial for music industry actors to be flexible and have the ability to adapt to this constantly changing landscape, with the implementation of this strategy they are enabled to keep entuned with changes in the market. Contemporary digital campaigns are often strategically planned to engage audiences across diverse platforms with the intention to generate market value (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, *Spreadable media, creating value and meaning in a networked culture*, 2013). This allows diverse actors (e.g., advertisers, platform owners, content distributors) to profit from users' activities, but it simultaneously offers people experiences of community, belonging, and joy (Baym, 2018). It is clear that in the case of Reddit, the modern platform technology simplifies information access and collection, particularly at this moment when the data is freely available to analyse. Promotional transmedia music campaigns are such hybrid spaces of online and offline practices mixing commercial and cultural expressions to form materialised instances of promotional culture. This research sets a precedent for understanding how the effects of engagement in online communities transcend the limitations of the platform and can impact music industry actors.

#### *2.4.2 Consumer effects & actors using this as a tool*

To succeed in the long run, it is imperative to constantly create new content and have the creativity and expertise to do so, as this is a large contributing factor to building a fanbase/consumer base (Gaenssle & Budzinski, 2020). In the context of music industry actors, it can be costly to generate content, which also comes with the risk that it may not be well perceived by fans. To mitigate this, organizers within the music industry may look at the possibility of using consumers as a production tool. This will not only reduce costs, but also ensures that fans who have generated social capital and an understanding of how fans communicate with each other will be the producers of this content.

For the industry and the media, fans have become increasingly essential as the most effectively engaged and loyal consumers who might produce abundant benefits by serving as material and immaterial labourers (Yin, 2020). The productivity of fans can be measured in numerous ways, one of which is ‘textual productivity’; where “fans produce and circulate among themselves texts which are often crafted with production values as high as any in the official culture. The key differences between the two are economic rather than ones of competence, for fans do not write or produce their texts for money” (Fiske, 1992, p. 39). Although Fiske wrote in a very different context to the current digital age, we can still use this theory as a basis for understanding memes as fan production. With rapid technological change, fan productions have evolved past their initial roots of fictional texts about the artists and remade music videos, increasing the scope of what fans can produce and circulate amongst their communities. Hills (2013) argues that there needs to be a shift in the conceptualization of textual productivity to also include contemporary forms such as online postings or commentaries which themselves share the original definition in the sense of being digitally produced and reproducible. For this research, we will apply this concept to the production and circulation of memes related to the fandom. When it comes to themes of memetic production in fandoms, it is often observed that cultural productions evoke playfulness – as a fun and pleasurable consumption experience enables fans to unite with their peers, further strengthening the bonds (Fathallah, 2016) and contributing to the development of the innate collective intelligence within the communities. Furthermore, Edlom & Karlsson (2021) in their research found that fans do not feel used or exploited in the sense of being used as working customers, so it can be seen that this casual form of engagement such as creating memes is not viewed as exploitative, but rather recreational.



Rather than ‘art for art’s sake’, these communities approach their productions as ‘memes for meme’s sake’.

The application of this theory to memes has been discussed in the past (Souza-Leão et. al, 2020) and has demonstrated how productive consumer behaviour collapses with other social spheres when skilled creative consumer practices appropriate and re-signify the meaning of products and brands. Specifically, the production of memes that simultaneously propagate fan culture can be viewed as topics that are relevant to music industry actors and considered potential inciters of impact. Connecting this to the aforementioned points in the section 2.3, regardless if memes convey their message with the new form of absurdist humour, they are still a form of productivity. This is ‘because they produce new possibilities, even apparently pointless, nihilistic and playful forms of creativity are contributions to knowledge’ (Burgess, 2008, p. 106). A crucial basis for the pertinence of this research is acknowledging that regardless of the theme of the memes posted in the communities, the engagement they drive is what is of relevance for the impact they have on music industry actors.

### **3. Methodology**

The development of the netnography approach emerged as online social spaces became increasingly recognized as open cultural sites that are rich with informational data, and as such can serve as important fields for social scientific research (Kozinets, 2019). Immersion within these communities through the extraction of the memes has fostered an understanding of the memes which are being posted, this understanding was extended to the most popular memes in the communities also. The combination of the caption, image, and text within the image, as well as the pre-existing knowledge of the artists and fandoms enabled an understanding of the memes, and therefore assign them appropriate codes. Online music fandoms are fertile grounds for research, as they function as a significant space of community which contextualizes theories of evolving online groups, illustrates practices from current communities, and fosters an understanding of how different social media platforms affect the interactions of the groups (Waldron, 2018).

The use of mixed methodology in the study to allows the findings to answer the research question through qualitative and quantitative research outputs and include both approaches in the data collection, analysis, integration, and the inferences drawn from the results (Creswell & Tashakkori, 2007). For this research, quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed to investigate the same dataset, allowing a hybrid methodology including the

use of digital methods to analyse our dataset and broaden the scope in terms of findings. Reddit has been found to be an appropriate platform to approach research with, as it provides a richness in terms of the quantity and quality of data provided. It allows the researcher to observe a plentiful online ecosystem, with users demonstrating agreement and disagreement, how they build a sense of community, and online-specific traits such as posts with ironic dispositions, how polarization on topics are communicated etc. (Medvedev, Lambiotte, & Delvenne, 2019).

### 3.1 Data Collection & Sampling

The subreddits selected for the analysis were *r/frankocean*, *r/tylertcreator*, *r/lanadelrey*, and *r/radiohead*. This selection allowed for a diverse genre range, encompassing a wider exploration of fan communities, and in turn, widening the scope of fan perspective. These communities were also selected due to their popularity, with the smallest subreddit (*r/lanadelrey*) having ~150k members, *r/tylertcreator* and *r/radiohead* having ~280-290k members respectively, and the largest (*r/frankocean*) having ~389k members<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, these subreddits could be filtered by the flair “Meme”, which allowed the identification of the relevant posts for this research. This also ensured there was consistency across the research in what can be categorized as a meme, which was very beneficial in some cases where the ironic layout of the post would leave it difficult to decipher a categorization. The data from these posts can be seen in the below table.

Subreddit	No. of meme posts	% of total posts
<i>r/tylertcreator</i>	122	14%
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	80	10%
<i>r/radiohead</i>	62	7%
<i>r/frankocean</i>	100	12%

*Table 1: Number of meme posts per subreddit, and what percentage of total posts they made up*

Data was gathered on March 27<sup>th</sup> of this year, therefore within the data any post from this date was removed and posts from March 26<sup>th</sup> at the latest were analysed, as if the post is a few hours old it will not display the number of upvotes.

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<sup>1</sup> These are the member statistics as of 10<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Although this is several months after the data collection period, there has been no observable reason that the numbers would have grown or declined considerably during this time period.

To find the most appropriate images to analyse for this, purposive sampling was applied to identify the posts which created the most discussion amongst the communities within the timeframe (Silverman, 2013). Memes which had 20+ comments were used for this, as they were deemed to have generated the most discussion in the communities, and engagement through commenting rather than simply upvoting represents a more weighted form of engaging (Dolan et. al, 2016). Using this technique, 105 posts were identified for the thematic analysis.

### 3.2 *Quantitative*

In this study, quantitative research was used as a basis, conducting a straightforward data analysis of the number of posts with the 'meme' flair. Pertinent variables that were able to be extracted from the posts were the number of upvotes the post received, the number of comments, the date and time it was posted and the username of the poster. In order for data to not be skewed by outliers, only Flairs with  $n > 5$  posts were analysed. In the case of Reddit posts, flair is a small image with a short text description that is attached to a post. Examples of these in music artist subreddits are 'discussions', 'news', 'photos of artist' etc. Flairs on posts are useful to filter and search for particular content for this research (Tigunova et. al, 2020). *ParseHub* was used for this, a platform which scrapes the data from these subreddits enabling them to be collated in an Excel spreadsheet, making the data easier to read and ultimately analyse. A limitation of this method was that it did not extract data from a consistent amount of web pages, resulting in differences in the number of posts per subreddit that data was extracted from.

### 3.3 *Qualitative*

Following this, qualitative research was conducted to gain an understanding of the themes of the most popular memes in the data period. This research was done through a social constructivist lens, which will allowed efficient interpretation how members of these online communities create meaning through their interactions with each other and other objects in their environment (in the case of these music fandoms, this can be seen as objects associated with the artist such as music releases or news regarding the artist). This view understands learning as a social process, occurring when members of the community engage with each other in a social context (Kim B. , 2001).

The research technique used was content analysis. This has been found to be an appropriate method of investigating linguistic and communication patterns in messages

within online communities (Herring, 2004), and is advantageous for the desired form of results as it is unobtrusive due to its lack of structure, allowing the opportunity to investigate cultural artefacts instead of individuals (Kim & Kuljis, 2010). This allowed for operationalization of the data and conduct thematic analysis – through the categorization of memes in a similar fashion once I identify the most recurring and relevant topics in the discussions on meme posts within the online community. The content analysis follows an inductive approach, which is complementary to this form of content analysis as there is no hypothesis that will be tested regarding the categories of memes that will be extracted from the communities. Although this approach is selected usually when there is a lack of knowledge of the researcher about the subject, which is not the case of this research, it has been selected to enable conceptualization and categorization to be done from specific observations in the data collection period and communities.

For the 105 sampled memes, coding dimensions were identified by investigating posts as per Braun & Clarke (2006), and then adapting the framework of Gauthier, Costello, & Wallace (2022) to develop themes from identified codes, then reviewing these themes to ensure they are fully sorted and refined as per the dimensions within the memes. The posts extracted from the purposive sampling were investigated through the caption, image, and text within these images – the knowledge of the music artist will then be applied to translate the topics and keywords into codes, which then develop into themes. This process was then repeated to refine the categorizations, this scrupulous nature of the analysis will ensure fully distinguished and finalized themes of the memes.

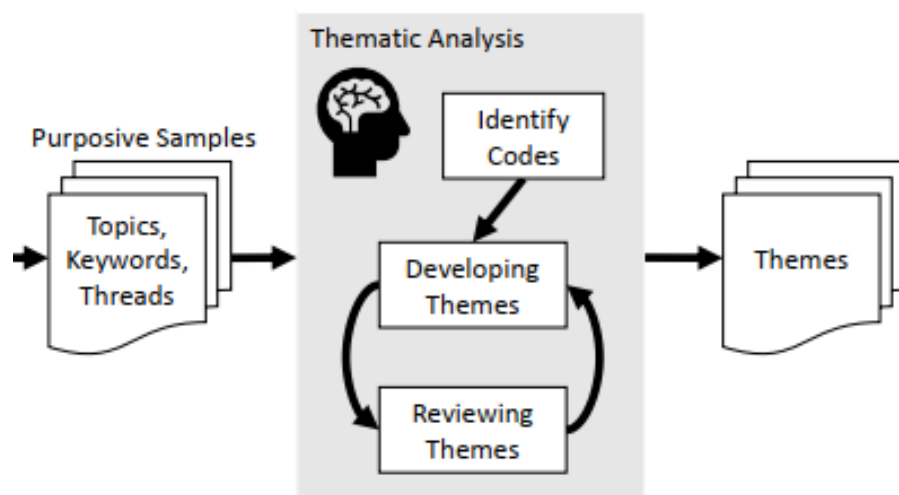


Figure 1: Gauthier, Costello & Wallace (2022) model of thematic analysis

These research techniques will allow an initial understanding of the number of memes posted in the selected online communities, as well as the levels of engagement with the posts. Furthermore, the qualitative methods of analysis will allow me to identify words, expressions, and imagery within the memes that denote recurring themes. Once this is explored, the data will be operationalized to make the concept measurable from the identified themes, by seeing what topics are most discussed by members of the fandom and therefore contribute to fostering engagement within the communities.

### *3.4 Mixed*

Once both analysis methods were conducted, a mixed-method approach was then taken to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the popularity of the themes in terms of engagement. Once the thematic analysis has been performed on the most popular memes, quantitative statistics such as the total/average upvotes and comments can be studied, to see how these themes perform in terms of driving engagement – comparing findings of subreddits against each other to conceptualize the specificity of taste formation within individual subreddits. In particular, standard deviation calculations will be conducted to better understand the concentration of thematic posting within the communities. The combination of the calculation of means and standard deviations has been found to be appropriate for thematic analysis, as it facilitates the establishment of thematic saturation within the data (Lowe et. al, 2018).

This approach of combining quantitative and thematic analysis has been implemented in the past in studies of memes on social media, with Al-Rawi et. al (2021) employing this technique to analyse gendered memes on Instagram, to offer deeper insight into ongoing trends in public perceptions. Mixed-analysis approach allows for research to be done with a ‘critical realism’ lens, as it facilitates the merging of ontological and epistemological perspectives, ensuing in more coherent and pragmatic results (Proudfoot, 2022).

## **4. Results**

This section presents the findings of the mixed methodological research in the four subreddits. Firstly, a general analysis of posts within the communities is given. This will establish an understanding of the levels of engagement through posting, upvoting, and commenting. Further to this, the applied purposive sampling method identified 105 posts for the thematic analysis. The coding was operated in line with Gauthier, Costello, & Wallace’s (2022) technique, memes were assessed with no prior coding framework in place, and the

identified themes are discussed with examples. After this, mixed-method analysis was conducted to develop deeper insights into the memetic production and consumption habits of the fandoms.

#### 4.1 Statistical impact of memes

Overall, within the period of data collection, 3,420 posts were made throughout all of the communities, with 364(10.64%) of the posts being categorized as memes. Analysis of the quantitative data yielded insightful results in terms of levels of engagement with memes in these communities. Firstly, the percentage of memes as posts within the subreddit varied, with a low of 6.81%(62) in *r/radiohead*, to a high of 14.42%(122) in *r/tylerthecreator*. With *r/lanadelrey* and *r/frankocean* featuring 9.65%(80) and 11.99%(100) respectively.

Despite the differences in the number of memes posted per subreddit, throughout all the communities it was found they received the most average upvotes per post of any of the flairs. Memes in *r/radiohead* received 417 upvotes per post, *r/tylerthecreator* received 206, *r/frankocean* received 369, and *r/lanadelrey* received 188. The average number of comments per meme post differed throughout the subreddits, with memes in *r/radiohead* receiving an average of 45 comments per post, *r/frankocean* receiving 21, *r/lanadelrey* receiving 19, and *r/tylerthecreator* receiving 16. It was found that the flair that received the most comments on average per post was discussion/news, as these were more directly inviting for members to engage with.

With the presented data, it was revealed there was so noticeable variation in the number of memes posted on weekends compared to weekdays. The data indicates the frequency of posting remained steady throughout all seven days of the week, except for Wednesday's, which were found have lower levels of posting. Thereby suggesting that there was no discernible correlation between the day of the week and the number of memes posted. In the case of *r/lanadelrey*, the artist released an album during the period of data collection, therefore on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 40 out of the 80 memes in the period were posted on this day, with the succeeding days having 17 and 16 memes posted respectively. In the other three communities, there was no date which featured noticeably more posts than others.

The results from the quantitative study also found there were no members of the community who had posted a large portion of the memes within the subreddit, with the number of posts dispersed relatively evenly amongst different members of the community. Even if a user was found to have posted multiple times within the period, there was no

relation between the number of posts and the amount of engagement they would receive from the community.

#### *4.2 Themes of popular memes*

Subsequent to the quantitative research, Gauthier, Costello, & Wallace's (2022) coding technique was applied to the memes which created the most discussion in the respective fandoms. The thematic analysis on the 105 posts across the online music fandoms resulted in 22 codes being identified, which were then grouped into 6 themes. The dataset across the four subreddits reveals to be diverse as a broad selection of discourse and dimensions can be found across the subreddits, including several of the codes which are found throughout all of the communities. These codes resulted in themes which are related to various concepts including consumption capital and the new generation of humour, which have previously been introduced in the theoretical framework.

It should be noted that despite the diligence of the coding process, some identified codes eluded categorization due to their unique nature, resulting in them being untranslatable into a theme which represented a coding group. An insight that can be drawn from this is that communities contain inherent complex and fluid methods of communication, some going beyond the ability to be defined under a theme. This outcome highlights the thoroughness of the coding process, as codes were not categorized for the sake of allocation, but rather a refinement of appropriate categories which exist and can be used as insight into communicational practice within these online music fandoms.

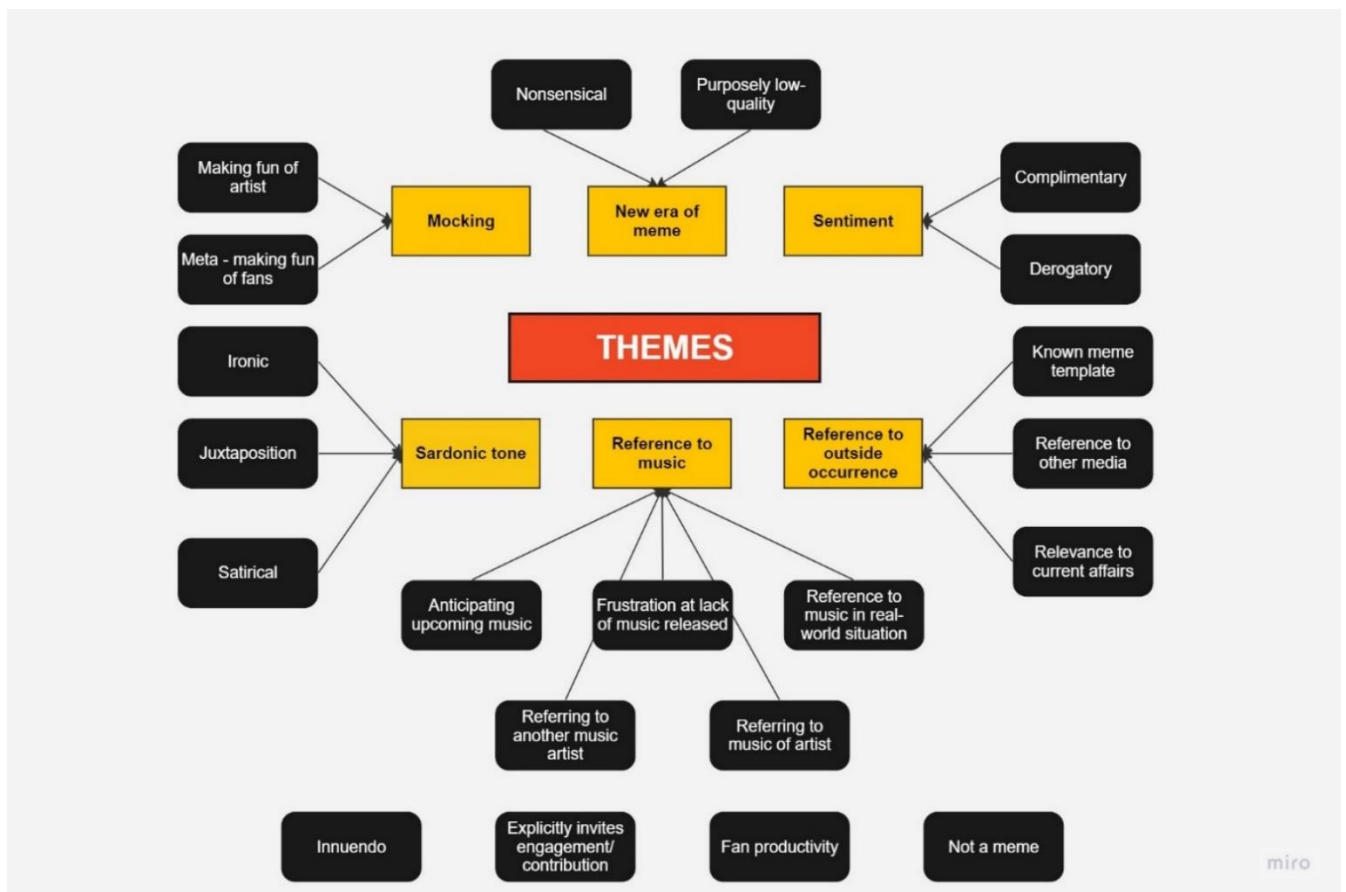


Figure 2: Themes and code groups from thematic analysis

### Reference to music

The most prevalent theme was memes which would reference music, requiring a knowledge of the discography of the artist, and in some cases that of a similar artist. This theme was consistently prevalent across all four of the subreddits, which is not surprising given the sample. These messages conceptualized the product of the artist as a form of discussion, also enabling posters to express opinions on different aspects of the artist. References made, regardless how of obscure, were assumed to be understood by others in the community.





Figure 3: An example of a meme referring to the music of the artist and featuring another music artist, posted in r/radiohead and r/frankoccean respectively

Fans employ their own behaviours that have developed in the community and adapt products and extended products (through the likes of references to similar music artists) into amusing contexts, aligning with the humour of the community. These memes serve as a digital cultural artefact which combines fans' creative expressions and the cultural impact of the music artist.

#### *Sardonic tone*

The second theme featured memes which possessed a *Sardonic tone*, where the main characteristics of the meme were irony, satire, or juxtaposition. They were critical of societal norms and other conventions, challenging preconceptions of what music fandom discourse involves.

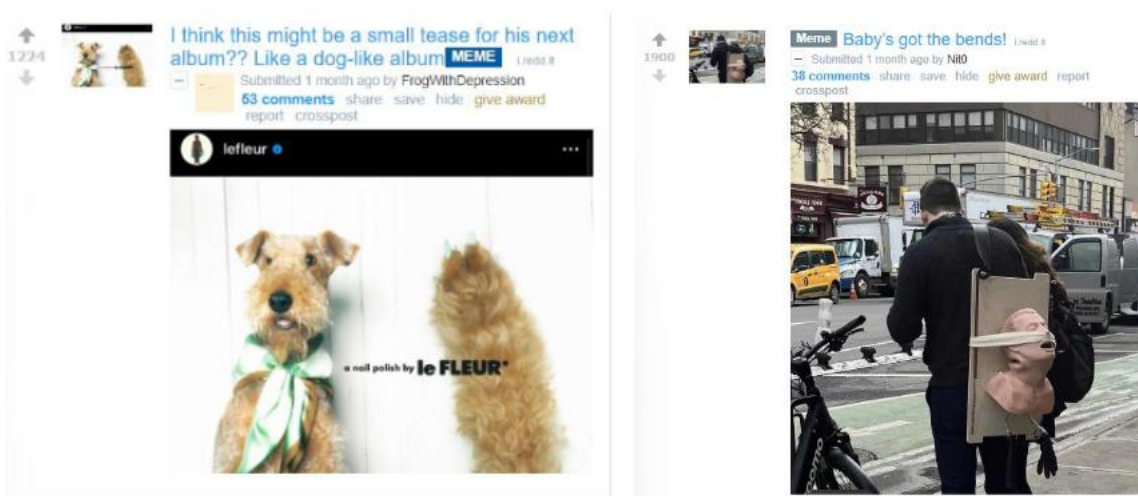


Figure 4: Two popular memes featuring references to future/past albums – using satire and juxtaposition to generate the humour behind the meme

These memes featured the new generation of humour. Complex messages conveyed in these memes were under multiple layers of irony/satire for the community to decipher to be able to consume the message. *Sardonic tones* were positioned to comment on a wide range of things, from the artists' sexuality, to how it feels to identify as a fan of the chosen artists' music. These memes could transform mundane actions into grand conspiracies, or jokingly decipher hidden messages from the artists. These memes created a shared language amongst users allowing fans to engage in light-hearted social commentaries in their respective communities, and links with the previous discussions on the new generation's use of humour.

### Mocking

Many of the memes took playful jabs at the artist, as well as the fan base. The messages in these did not carry scathing criticism of its subject, but rather light-hearted jesting at their target. These memes were demarcated from those carrying true negative sentiments towards the artist, as the playful nature of the message contended that they were not intended to make a scornful comment on their subject matter.



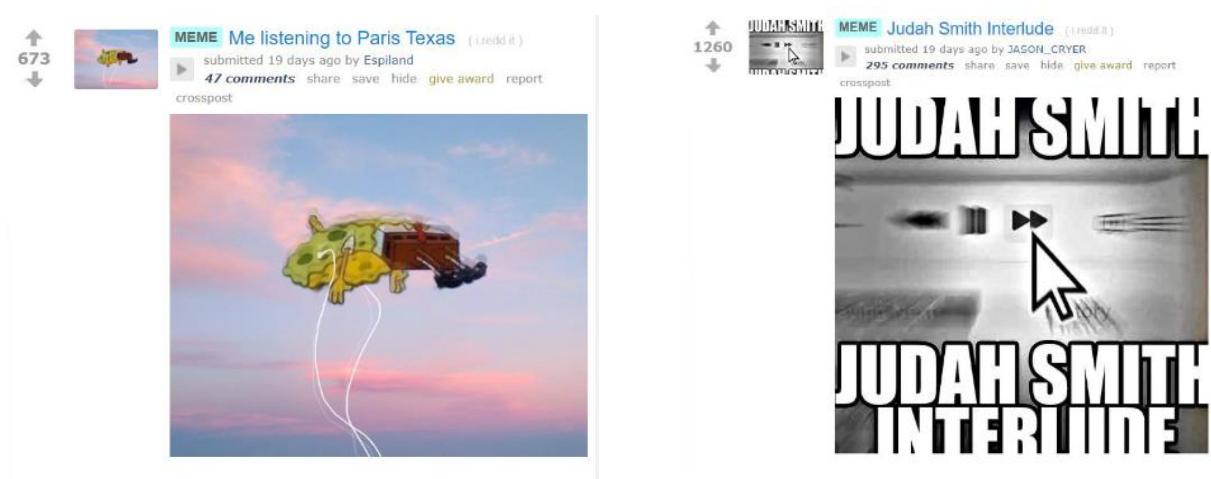
Figure 5: Two memes posted in separate communities, poking fun at the artist without sincere criticism.

The recurrence of both codes of making fun of fans and making fun of artists was similar, featuring 19 (43%) and 25 (57%) times respectively. The codes were also similarly balanced in the communities, except for *r/tylerthecreator* which featured 2 memes making fun of fans compared to 8 making fun of the artist, suggesting the tastes of this community

differ and prefer to consume the former form of *mocking* meme. The memes throughout the different communities used a collective voice to enable the community to understand that the message constituted a teasing observation, with memes containing commentaries on different topics such the likes of the style of dress of the artist, their romantic relationships, or their similarities in looks to other people.

### *Sentiment*

The final theme was posts that have been categorized as conveying opinions, both positive and negative, through the form of a meme. Contrary to other posts where the message behind the meme was communicated through layers of irony/satire, some memes posted were unabashed in their expression of opinion. Similar to most memes identified across the subreddits, these messages were usually straightforward and succinct in their opinions, as the meme formats and templates that were popular in the communities were usually not text-heavy, as is most common (Barnes, et al., 2021).

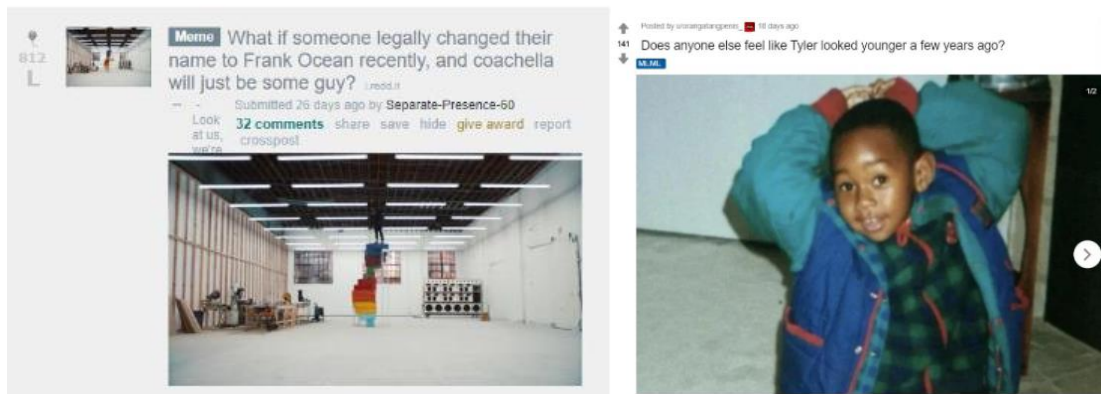


*Figure 6: Two memes posted in r/lanadelrey, both conveying polarizing opinions about songs from the latest album.*

Interestingly, this is the least recurring theme out of those identified during the coding process. Memes which conveyed sentiment and expressed opinions under layers of irony and satire were more well-received than ones that were candid about the emotions they were expressing towards certain elements of the artist.

## *New era of meme*

Several memes featured what can be defined as the current state of memes, the humour and message behind them drawn from the lack of surface-level context and how nonsensical the meme appears, as well as it being purposely low quality to illicit a (positive) reaction from the community. These images were slightly ambiguous in what they were trying to express, and often the tone that was being expressed was up to the interpretation of the reader.



*Figure 7: Memes posted in r/frankocean and r/tylerthecreator containing absurd/nonsensical humour*

These forms of memes can be viewed as a form of anti-meme, the viewer being compelled into expending time and effort in vain to try to interpret the meme, coming to the realisation that there is no substantial joke or message behind it. The unfunny, mocking nature is how the viewer will derive its humour (Kumar & Varier, 2020).

## *Reference to outside occurrence*

The following theme featured memes that's subject matter was not directly related to the artist, but required knowledge of current affairs or other media (such as TV shows or movies) – that the poster would link with something related to the artist. There were some images alluding to a certain socioeconomic message, although, unlike other political memes, they were not directly critiquing what the message was related to. As well as this, there were memes that subverted the common theme of being nonsensical or not utilizing framing to conceptualize the message within the meme, and instead used known meme templates that have already garnered popularity on social media and have been remixed repeatedly throughout these music fandoms to apply a different/more relevant message than its predecessors.



Figure 8: Memes posted in *r/frankocean* and *r/lanadelrey* which features known meme templates and references to previous events featuring an affiliated artist

#### 4.3 Engagement with popular themes

After the analysis revealed 6 recurring themes in the memes of the communities, these were then used to compare the number of times each code within the themes featured within the corresponding communities. These totals can be seen in the below table:

	<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	<i>r/radiohead</i>	<i>r/frankocean</i>	Total
<b>Sardonic tone</b>	21	6	20	13	<b>60</b>
<b>Reference to music</b>	16	12	16	19	<b>63</b>
<b>Reference to outside occurrences</b>	1	11	11	11	<b>34</b>
<b>Mocking</b>	10	5	18	11	<b>44</b>
<b>New era of meme</b>	11	1	10	9	<b>21</b>
<b>Sentiment</b>	0	7	4	3	<b>14</b>

Table 2: Number of memes containing themes per subreddit

To gain insights into the diversity and dispersion of the memetic themes within the selected online communities, the standard deviation of the themes present was calculated. This figure was consistent across the communities, revealing the standard deviation of *r/lanadelrey* to be 4, both *r/radiohead* and *r/frankocean* to be 5, and *r/tylerthecreator* to be 7. The steady dissemination of the themes across the spaces revealed that it was discovered the analysed themes were consistent across the communities, albeit the levels of engagement with the posts would differentiate. *r/tylerthecreator* slightly differed in these numbers, as the appearance of the theme *Reference to outside occurrences* appeared only once, slightly skewing the numbers compared to the others. This revealed the dynamics of the production of memes within the digital space.

As anticipated, the largest subreddits, *r/radiohead* and *r/frankocean*, featured the highest number of average upvotes and comments per post, which can be attributed to the larger user base of these communities. Interestingly, across the different subreddits, users exhibited different engagement behaviours with memes. Users of *r/lanadelrey* were found to be more likely to comment, as there was an 8:1 like-to-comment ratio, compared to 12:1 in *r/tylerthecreator* and the highest ratio of 17:1 in *r/frankocean*. In spite of this finding, it does not seem appropriate to assign this finding to the size of the community, as *r/radiohead* has a ratio of 9:1, despite being the second largest subreddit in this study. This finding provides empirical support for the alignment of the observed results and the substantiation of SMEB theory (Dolan et. al, 2016). Members of the separate communities exhibited different forms of engagement behaviour, with some being more passive in their engagement by simply upvoting, whereas others would be more prone to delve deeper into interactions with the community by posting a comment and engaging in discussion.

The insights into the most popular themes within the communities revealed different aspects of community behaviour. Unsurprisingly, the most recurrent theme within the communities featured memes referencing the music of the artist. This ubiquitousness was an expected result, as the infrastructure provided by the platforms for fans with shared interests results in the main discussion topics revolving around the product of their interests (Baym, Cavicchi, & Coates, 2017), which in the case of the study is the respective music artists. What is surprising about this theme, however, is that it featured in 63/105 (60%) memes in the research, meaning there were 42/105 (40%) that made no reference to the music of the artist. Considering the context of the data collection, this is a considerable amount. This suggests that being a member of the fandom goes beyond the enjoyment of the music, but alternatively about the para-social relationship with the artist and sense of belonging that comes from engaging in discussions and posting in the community, regardless if it is about the artist or not.

The second most popular theme consisted of memes with a *Sardonic tone*, which featured in 60/105 (%) of the memes. This aligns with the understanding of the current state of humour and its use within digital spaces (Gilbert, 2021). The high levels of production of these memes suggest a rejection of conventional humour and former ideas of memetic communications where popular meme templates were used as the sole medium for this format of posting. This finding is complemented by the recurrence of the theme *new era of meme*, as its use of an “anti-meme” format removes surface-level humour, requiring the

reader to use their adopted behaviour of the community to recognize the humour and be able to engage in discussion on what appears to most as a meaningless image.

Further to this, the communities differed in how they engaged with certain themes. Memes containing references to music were found to have the most upvotes per post in *r/lanadelrey* and *r/frankocean*, whereas the most popular theme in *r/tylerthecreator* and *r/radiohead* were *mocking* and references to outside occurrences respectively. Building from this finding, there was no considerable relationship between the posts which received the most average upvotes, and those which received the most comments on average – as the most commented theme differed throughout the subreddits.

Another curious insight was how *r/lanadelrey* appeared as an outlier when compared to the number of recurring themes in the other subreddits. In this community, the theme of *sentiment* featured in 7 out of 16 (43.75%) memes, whereas it featured 4/33 in *r/radiohead* and 3/29 in *r/frankocean* and 0 times in *r/tylerthecreator*. As well as this, the themes of *new era of meme*, *Sardonic tone*, and *Mocking* were present in 1/16, 6/16, and 5/16 memes respectively, which is lower compared to the other communities. The main themes of posting in this subreddit were references to music and references to outside occurrences, which could be considered more surface-level and traditional discussion topics in music fandoms compared to the others. This results in supporting the idea that taste is built within communities, with the social factors within these subreddits contributing to the high engagement with behaviours that have developed within the communities themselves, away from external factors surrounding the artist.

There is a dichotomy between the popular themes and the least recurring theme, *Sentiment*. This result can be explained as these memes were used to convey sincere opinions on certain topics. This form of communication was mostly done through posts in the community which were not memes, and rather labelled as “Discussion”. Those seeking to engage in discourse that was straightforward in terms of expressing their thoughts on something relevant to the fandom without the use of humour or satire would choose to interact with these posts, which acts as an explanation as to why “Discussion” posts were found to have the highest average of comments per post amongst the subreddits.

## 5. Discussion

To develop knowledge and theory surrounding the behaviours taking place within online music fandoms, the data yielded from the mixed methodology was analysed in three parts. Further to this, the observational data was analysed with considerations of knowledge and literature surrounding social capital, fandoms, and internet memes. Applying this theoretical lens to the analysis, the primary implications to come out of the research is the contribution of memes towards positive engagement within the community, how critical of a factor social capital is within these fandoms to understanding the memes, and the understanding of how a 'collective intelligence' influences taste formation and engagement habits.

### 5.1 *Impact of memes on levels of engagement in community*

The main results that can be drawn from the quantitative data is the high level of engagement with memes across all of the subreddits, despite the differences in gender, genre, and memetic themes in these communities. Despite the differences in occurrences of 'memes' as posts, across all subreddits memes were the post categories with the most average upvote per post. This links in with Dolan et. al's (2016) SMEB theory, particularly the behaviours of *positive contribution*. The high levels of engagement in this form highlight that memes are the most positively consumed type of post within the communities. Users may be less likely to create memes to post in the community as although they have the cultural capital through knowledge of the artist and social environment of the community, the prospect of creating an original meme that will potentially be well received to transmit the message can be seen as a barrier to progressing from *positive contribution* behaviour to *co-creator*. Further from this, users may also be hesitant to leave comments on a post they enjoy, as their contribution may not be more than what an 'upvote' can exhibit. However, it is clear from the findings that users will demonstrate positively valenced behaviour in the community on high levels through engaging with posts by consuming the content and leaving an 'upvote' before moving on to the next post.

Additionally, with the consistency in this finding compared to the different levels of the number of memes posted per community, this can be assumed to be attributed to the role of moderators as gatekeepers in these communities. Influential people in a network can control the flow of information between individuals and the wider community, regulating what sort of posts enter the community to be interacted with (Price, 2019). From the differences in the number of codes such as 'purposely low-quality' or 'nonsensical' in



different subreddits, we can understand that moderators possess diverse understandings of what constitutes a “low-effort post”, with subreddits such as *r/radiohead* and *r/tylerthecreator* featuring more memes with these codes than the others. As these moderators oversee the flow of posts in just their specific community, they may choose to remove a post from their subreddit, which may be allowed by a moderator in a different subreddit who has a different threshold for levels of quality within the memes. This demonstrates the influence that individual moderators have on the community, and the market power they possess in terms of controlling the flow of posts and the discourse within the communities.

Despite the fact there is a lack of noteworthy occurrences within the fandoms other than *r/lanadelrey* in the data collection period, it is justifiable to assume that the advent of a relevant event, such as the highly anticipated release of an album or the announcement of an upcoming tour, would generate a surge of enthusiastic posts specifically on the day of said event, and also remaining a fervent topic of conversation for the days to follow. However, the converse phenomenon does not seem to be present in the communities. Looking at *r/frankoccean*, the artist Frank Ocean has not been active in terms of releasing albums or touring in a number of years, with the last music released by the artist being three years ago. Despite this, the community is very active in regular posting and communicating with each other, which relates to Bergstrom & Poor’s (2021) findings of community members being resilient and not prone to migrating of communities managing to use the existing music of the artist as content to generate humorous memes, regardless of how old the albums are. Similarly, *r/radiohead* remains an active community, despite the inactivity of the music artist over the previous years. In both communities, the theme of the most upvoted posts on average was references to music. This perpetuation of music as a discussion topic amongst artists that have not released or been active for numerous years supports the previously discussed theories that social capital will not be transferred to other communities, therefore building a communal resilience preventing members from migrating away when they are faced with unwelcome circumstances (Wilson, 2014; Chin, 2018).

Community members can augment the relevance of artists by producing and engaging in discussions through memes as a medium, therefore preserving the cultural applicability of the artists, which results in memes having a significant impact as artefacts of discourse. Thus, it can be concluded from this that the activeness of the artist is irrelevant, as the lack of activity in itself generates material for creating memes about, which is how the theme

*Mocking* was found to be recurring. Therefore we can determine that some aspects which would be thought to have an impact that generates less production has the opposite effect.

The findings showed that there was no regular occurrence of any one user in a specific fandom who posted the most engaged with memes. From this, it can be understood that Adler's (1985) 'superstar effect' does not affect individual members within online music fandoms on Reddit, as the characteristics of the platform do not allow for building up a follower account, meaning that cultural capital gained from posting in these communities is done for non-pecuniary reasons. Théberge (2005) corroborates this finding as it can be attributed to the non-rhizomatic nature of the posts in the community not being controlled by algorithms. This confirms that the interactions with memes can be deemed as organic, members of the community will not upvote posts because they recognize the username nor because it is the product of a poster that the algorithm has pushed to their feed, but rather because they derived utility from consumption due to the characteristics of the meme itself.

These findings have implications for music industry actors who look for methods to increase engagement with fans. Meme posts within these communities are highly engaged with on a surface-level, as can be seen through the high amount of average upvotes not equating to the highest amount of average comments. Regardless, members of the community still consume these types of posts in a largely positive manner. The findings show that the status of the poster does not affect members' perceptions of the post, combined with the moderators contributing to the natural flow of posts. From this, we can assume the high levels of positive engagement can be explained by the organic feeling within these communities, as there are no ulterior motives behind posts other than to contribute to the natural discourse. For organizations in the music industry to implement this into their strategy to drive engagement, it is imperative they have an understanding of the discourses and tones of posting within the community, which in turn will allow them to align their strategic vision with the nature of the community. Further to this, they have the potential to take advantage of the influx of engagement when significant events occur, with the knowledge to utilize these periods of posting for feedback on the product as well as being flexible to change their communications to fit the narratives of discussion in the community.

Fiske (1992) argues that products from the cultural industry do not necessarily need to be understood in terms of reception, rather in terms of productivity. Therefore, even if memes are posted that receive low engagement in terms of upvotes and comments, the contribution

of the members of the community in terms of productivity by creating memes to spread discourse ultimately remains beneficial to not only the platform, but also the relevant stakeholders involved with the music artist.

### 5.2 *Necessity of cultural capital*

Further to the discussion of engagement rates within the community, another main finding was the necessity of possession of cultural capital for users in the fandom wishing to produce and engage with memes.

The results section demonstrated that cultural capital is needed to understand the most popular themes, and this requirement is further extended to engage with the posts. To involve oneself in discussion in these posts will require a relatively concentrated knowledge of the artist, adjacent artists, outside occurrences, and behaviours of the community users. Therefore, the ability to not only post these types of memes, but also understand and engage with them, is a form of expressing cultural capital. This fosters the opportunity for members of the online community to exhibit their relevant erudition of the artist, and challenges other members' comprehension ability. Memes which display knowledge of pertinent aspects of their subject are regularly well-received (Milner, 2013), and this phenomenon is present within these online communities. Although it can be seen to be an axiomatic result that online music fandoms will engage in discourses regarding the music of the artists, it does lead to interesting discussions. The most popular theme, *Reference to music*, derives its categorization from a variety of codes. The code 'referring to music of artist' was usually straightforward in its state, as it would directly refer to a certain release by the artist. This code was present in 10 memes respectively in *r/lanadelrey* and *r/radiohead*, whereas it was only present in 2 memes respectively in *r/frankocean* and *r/tylerthecreator*. The former two subreddits featured more variety of codes within this theme, and it is interesting to note that a theme which is linked directly to cultural capital exhibits different forms of expression throughout the communities.

The 'new generation of humour' being a key trait in the popular themes confirms the theoretical hypothesizing that modern memes are characterized by their use of traits such as satirical tones, the use of double meaning, metaphors, ironies, and profanities (Vitiuk et. al, 2020). Some of the most engaged with memes do not draw their popularity from the simplicity and ease of consumption, but rather the opposite. These memes are used as vehicles for messages which contribute to the discourse within the community, but any message deciphered from these memes must be done by having a similar sense of humour to

other members of the fandom, which has shown in the case of the investigated music fandoms to be ironic, satirical, and finding pleasure from juxtapositions and absurd memetic images. This is complementary to Spitzberg's (1983) theory of 'communication competence', showing the fandom acts as an environment that is difficult for those without cultural capital to enter, and disputes Shifman's (2014) claim that 'simplicity' is a key factor in a meme's viral success, as the research has found that in online music communities memes will be more popular if there are levels of knowledge and cultural capital needed to consume and enjoy it. This also argues against Hillman, Procyk, & Neustaedter's (2014) finding that there are low barriers of entry for fandoms in the modern age, as although it is relatively simple to find and join the community, the purposeful incompetency of some posts, particularly memes, rejects those without the required cultural capital to understand different layers which mask the meaning behind the posted message.

It is interesting to note that there is a relatively larger gap between the two most popular themes and the remaining ones. The domination of these themes appears to signal a form of bandwagon effect in the communities, which can be linked back to the theory of Blackmore & Dawkins (2000). Once imitation began, members with the highest cultural capital would utilize these themes more, therefore making more popular memes that would garner engagement. Subsequently, other members would follow suit in an attempt to replicate the increased engagement with these memes, resulting in a dominance of a smaller number of certain themes. Most music industry actors may not expect to see the most popular themes so close together in terms of levels of posting, as well as the spread of thematic engagement throughout the different number of subreddits. This illustrates that the proliferation of discourse and engagement can be subject to the members of the communities and extend beyond the products of the artists, demonstrating the importance of the role of fans in maintaining the conversation on their favourite artist and continuing to engage within their community.

Cultural capital was exhibited in different forms of expression throughout the subreddits, as can be seen with the variations in codes and themes in the communities. While some communities would express their capital through memes referring to music and other relevant objects associated with the music artist, others would choose to express messages through the medium of difficult to decipher memes under the guise of the new generation of humour. Despite the contrast in the memes of the different themes, they are connected in their ability for fans to express their cultural capital through the knowledge and expertise of the

artist, requiring members to match this knowledge level to fully participate and engage in the communities.

Another persistent expression of cultural capital was through the memes posted across the communities with the theme *References to outside occurrences*. Interestingly, the most occurring code in this theme was memes that used an existing meme template. While memes that have been remixed to be heavily satirical, nonsensical etc. have been found to be very popular in these fandoms, formats that follow general rules of memetic practices still exist and are well received – although it should be noted that much of these memes maintain tones of satire and irony. Cultural capital is displayed when users can incorporate a former meme template into the communication of their message, without being perceived as outdated or not belonging to the community. There appears to be a fine line between users deriving utility from a meme using a former template when it is applied in an appropriate manner in line with the consumption habits of the digital space and recognizing it as an attempt by someone with a lack of knowledge on the artist and community to produce an appropriate meme, therefore diminishing their cultural capital in the process. This theme also contained references to other media and current affairs, which aligns with Milner's (2013) finding that it is of considerable value to members' social capital when they are able to intertwine current events with memes. As Shifman (2012) argues, memes can be seen as a cultural manifestation that bridges the gap of understanding the relations between contemporary digital culture and society. Combining this with the findings of this paper it can be recommended to music industry actors that they are able to see how the fandoms link the artist with societal occurrences.

### *5.3 Taste formation and exhibitions of collective intelligence*

The results confirm the idea that the new media environment has transformed fan communications and given rise to a collective intelligence, although in cases it appears to apply to a specific community. An immediate observation which illustrates this is the varied distribution of how much the themes are featured in the different communities. Despite containing the second highest number of popular meme posts out of the sample group, *r/tylerthecreator* does not feature a single meme with the theme of *Sentiment*, although this theme occurs multiple times in the other three communities.

Relating to the previous finding on the popularity of the theme of *Reference to music* in communities where artists have been inactive, this exhibits previous theories on taste formation. This phenomenon mirrors what Adler (2006) devised, suggesting that popular artists remain enticing for people to join the fandom, as the sheer number of engaged

members creates the potential for discussion and communication within the community. Once a music artist has established a dedicated fanbase, it is inconsequential whether or not they remain as active as they once were in terms of touring, releasing music etc. as new members will flock to the communities which are popular and feature larger numbers. Consequently, it becomes evident the role taste formation plays in the fandom process. Initial connections with communities are formed due to taste being influenced by the possibility to interact with a wider community, therefore creating a broader sense of belonging and collective intelligence.

A finding which corroborates the idea of a collective intelligence within the fandom was the emergence of the theme of the *New era of meme*. This discovery demonstrated that memes which are seemingly meaningless are popular and perform well in terms of engagement among the fandoms, aligning with our understanding of the current state of humour among newer generations. These contemporary meme formats allow for remixes and varied interpretations as traditional formats are deemed worthy to rebel against, for they are a symbol of rebellion themselves. They are a representation of the desire to move away from consumerist aspects of fandoms, instead to establish the fandoms as its own entity which focuses on the artistic side of the music artists the community follows. This trend signals the importance to the fandom of ensuring that production within their community maintains its organic nature, as also discussed in section 5.1.

However, that is not to say that fandom acts as a gatekeeper to a high level, as earlier findings have suggested (Spitzberg, 1983). There were no explicit gatekeeping or misanthropic themes of popular memes that could be considered a deterrent to newer fans who would like to become involved in the community, with the discouragement more done through the necessity of possessing cultural capital to enjoy the most engaged with memes. The anxiety that is associated with new users entering the community without the required cultural capital is mitigated by the digital space and the ability of those who passively interact with the posts and act as an observer, therefore giving them the time needed to build the required capital. This results in digital spaces being more accommodating for taste formation as there is no punishment for lack of knowledge, and new users can take all the necessary time to develop knowledge to be able to become a part of and contribute to the collective intelligence.

Building from our understanding of the application of collective intelligence to fandoms, the mixed-method analysis suggests that taste formation is specific to individual

fandoms. This was illustrated through the theme of *sentiment*, which contains posts that have been categorized as conveying opinions, both positive and negative, through the form of a meme. Relating again to Barnes, et al.'s (2021) finding, memes that carried detailed messages which constituted of deeper exploration of opinions were not recurring amongst the most popular in the period of data collection. As well as this, much of posts similar to this form would be under a "Discussion" flair in the subreddit. Despite this, a noticeable insight was its presence in the community of *r/lanadelrey*, appearing in 7/16 (43.75%) of the memes. This can be attributed to the fact that the artist Lana Del Rey is female, and historically female fans of female singers operate differently, as they are more likely to deify and celebrate the artist (Lister, 2001). This deification also holds them to a certain high standard, with the fans more willing to express negative emotions concerning the artist. This understanding corroborates the finding that consumption habits can differ through separate communities, as a theme which didn't occur at all in one subreddit was featured persistently in another, which supports Chin's (2018) .

This links to the result of *r/lanadelrey* being an outlier in several aspects of the data findings. Looking at the other subreddits, there was a wide array of diversity in terms of what themes featured most, engagement levels and what themes would be most upvoted or commented on average, and other engagement behaviours. This heavily implies that taste formation is characterized by environmental factors within the community. A potential avenue for further research on this would be linking thematic popularity to these environmental factors to identify possible causation.

#### *5.4 Implications for music industry actors*

These findings have interesting implications for music industry actors. Firstly, the evolution of the tone of humour that coincides with the *New era of meme* shows that for brands to create a deeper engagement in terms of having users go further than passive interaction with the meme by commenting on it, they will no longer be able to engage with consumers simply through posting a meme template and applying something relevant about the artist to it. Rather, to initiate a dialogue, music brands should ensure their line of thinking and humour within their communication aligns with that of the community. Although they can be hesitant to engage with the online communities as a marketing venture, it is found to be a venue where it can be observed what topics are being upvoted and engaged with, and how the posts as well as the associated discussions evolve throughout each post. Through

observing popularity trends, it enables actors to pick up trendy memes and popular topics to incorporate into their representation of the brand.

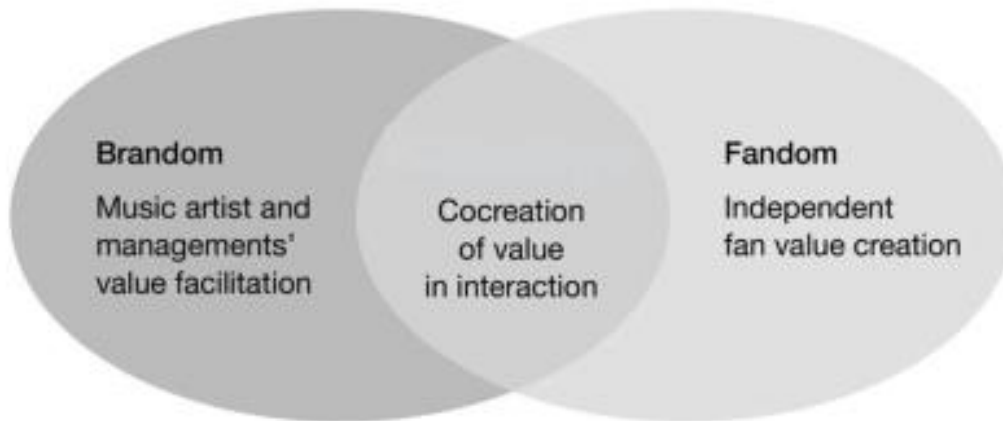
Music industry actors should also be mindful of the existence of the bandwagon effect within the communities, and the effect it has on cultural capital within the fandom, as well as the development of a collective intelligence. Bandwagon effects also have the potential to extend to have economic implications, with past economist purporting the possibility of the effect flipping the demand curve of products to be upward sloping, implying that even as prices rise, the demand rises (Becker, 1991). This is exemplified in the music industry when looking at the growth in popularity of artists, and how this corresponds with increases in price for merchandise, booking fees, tickets for their concerts etc. Therefore, we can make a connection between a bandwagon effect occurring that increases the popularity of an artist, and its ensuing economic implications. Music industry actors may utilize the potential of acknowledging when a bandwagon effect begins to occur and adjusting their strategies to take advantage of this, therein perpetuating the growth of popularity of the artist which will facilitate the price increase on related products for the music artist.

Platforms may benefit from moderators being laxer in their decisions of what posts constitute removal from the communities, as an increasing number of posts is in itself increased engagement, and also raises the possibility of users to upvote and comment on these. However, negative externalities may arise for music industry actors with lower restraints on which posts enter the community. The saturation of the community with low-quality posting may lead to a substantial drop in engagement rates, as it would cause users to interact with the community less. Low-quality posts would not generate discussions, therefore making it difficult for music industry actors to assess the discourse within the community and what forms of production have the greatest impact on engagement rates. Slow reaction times to address and remove content that can be deemed very low-quality or problematic can affect the platform, as advertisers and investors may withdraw if there are lenient content policies. The loss of a platform like Reddit would make it difficult for music industry actors to track concentrated discourse from fans and make their data collection more difficult.

Further to the suggestions mentioned in this section, it can also be recommended that the marketing department may mitigate the risk of producing content that is not well received by fans, by looking at the possibilities of using consumers as a production tool. As can be



seen in Edlom & Karlsson's (2021) model, fans can be used as co-creators of value for the brand. This not only reduces costs, but ensures fans who have developed strong social capital will be behind the production of content to drive engagement.



*Figure 9: Edlom & Karlsson's (2021) adapted model to demonstrate the potential of value co-creation within fandoms*

Additionally, studying these organic interactions and levels of engagement depending on topics will facilitate the actors with a better understanding of improving their PR to have a more natural way of interacting with the more engaged of the fanbase. Combination of the PR team, marketing department and data analysis allows this trilogy to complement each other's knowledge and ability to positively engage with fans, as an example of innovation driving learning and formulating and organizational hybridity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Hoffjann, 2021).

## **6. Conclusion**

As has been demonstrated, the evolution of memes has been a curious yet palpable occurrence. They have progressed to be no longer just a vernacular practice, which has been exhibited by the potential success and influence they have in online communities. There is a gap in the literature on the new generation of memes, particularly their use in online communities. Four music fandoms were analysed to analyse levels of engagement with the use of memes in their communities, as well as conceptualizing the traits of the most popular memes and understanding the reasoning behind this.

The research question that this research aimed to answer was "What makes a meme successful in terms of fostering word of mouth and consumer engagement within online

music fandoms?”. There were found to be high levels of positively valenced engagement with memes, particularly passive contributions through the medium of upvoting them. This shows that not only are members willing to contribute to the discourse and community by producing and posting memes, but these memes are largely received positively through the medium of members upvoting the posts. Themes within the most popular memes varied, but most significantly it was found that a large number of successful memes contain the new generation of humour in terms of conveying a message through memes which feature tones of irony, satire, mocking, nonsensical etc. We are now in a time where the media industry pays close attention to fans, constantly discovering methods to monetize their contributions (Chin, 2018). From this, it can be understood how developments in the way fans interact with each other has implications for those in the industry. Platforms benefit from the culture of memes posted as a form of interaction as they attract high engagement and production from users. Further to this, music industry actors may further their understanding of the communications within the fanbase of respective music artists by analysing the discourse and memetic practices within these communities. We have seen Lil Nas X utilize meme culture to his advantage, which sets a precedent for the successful implementation of these artefacts of culture to drive success.

The theoretical basis for the relevance of this study used a combination of economic and sociological concepts, merging the two disciplines to create new perspectives on approaching the researched phenomena. Firstly, the platform economics of Reddit are discussed to understand how the site operates, and the effects this has on the relevant groups who use the platform. We acknowledge how the digital age has impacted the operations of fandom, and how members have adapted to utilize these platforms. Theories on fan behaviours and categorizations can be used to understand the frameworks for different levels of user engagement that exist in these fandoms. The opportunity to gain social/cultural capital from these behaviours is a big driver of contributing to and engaging within these spaces, the more time spent in the community results in more social capital for the user – which can then be translated into memes that require higher levels of cultural capital to understand. The outcome of the production within these communities to gain social capital is the simultaneous rise of a collective intelligence within the fandoms. The ease of information exchange between fans leads to the growth of a new media environment and gives rise to a participatory culture with the continuous posting and engagement from fans. As the communities grow, the positive network effects become more lucrative, as there are benefits

for fans when the community grows in numbers – such as more engagement with their posts, more suitable conversation partners and a higher number of posts to consume.

Since their inception, memetic images have constantly evolved. We looked at how the current state of memes has been shaped by the new generation of humour, which can be characterized by the use of irony, satire, and nonsensical humour which on the surface level can appear shallow and meaningless. However, once social capital is gained in these communities, these seemingly insignificant images can be understood to convey messages relating to a range of topics.

The relationship of music industry actors with fandoms was discussed, allowing us to understand how organizations can use the communications of fans to better understand the community, and therefore how they can use fans as co-value creators for the brand. The importance of engagement makes it necessary for the industry to maintain an understanding of the fanbase, and what strategies they would positively engage with. Further to this, using the productivity of fans as a tool can mitigate risks when music industry actors develop strategies to drive engagement, as it utilizes the cultural capital of fans which will appeal to the community if used in strategies for different business areas such as marketing, public relations etc.

The mixed methodology approach allowed for a broader scope of findings. The quantitative approach resulted in discovering the extent to which memes are posted and engaged with in the fandoms, as well as interpreting data to generate insights in concerning the differences in the number of posts on a specific day of the week, if there were any dominant users who posted the majority of memes/received the most engagement on theirs, or if certain events have a noticeable effect on the number of posts during the day/the proceeding days. The qualitative research approach investigated the most popular memes and conducted a thematic analysis, to discover what makes a meme successful in different communities in terms of driving engagement through comments. Thus, upon conclusion of both analyses, results were combined to discover the levels of production and engagement with memes under different themes in each specific subreddit to gain insights into taste formations and the distinctive behaviours throughout the communities.

There were some limitations to the research, including the period of data collection being limited to forty pages of posts, as that is the maximum the data scraping tool allowed for. Due to this, certain phenomena that existed in one fandom were unable to be observed in

others, namely the influx of memes posted due to a significant event occurring in the fandom. Also, the researcher acknowledges the limited number of communities analysed may not represent the wider music fandoms on Reddit or other social media sites. There was also limited opportunity for co-creation between the researcher and participants (Costello, McDermott, & Wallace, 2017), this observation would allow for more tangible results for music industry actors curious to see the potential of being able to immerse themselves in the discourse and gain the ability to create posts that would be positively received.

Further research is welcomed to continue to contribute to the academic understanding of the subject. There is potential to widen the scope in terms of extending the period of data collection, as well as the number of communities which are investigated – which may give way to more themes being discovered, and analysing possible correlations between themes and genres, gender, and other traits of the artist. Other possibilities are conducting *sentiment* analysis in comments to see if it is possible to investigate how memes are perceived and the possibility to derive meaning from comments if they are more straightforward to understand than the nonsensical memes that are posted. A deeper ethnographic approach may be taken allowing the researcher to attempt to create memes which are well-received by the community.

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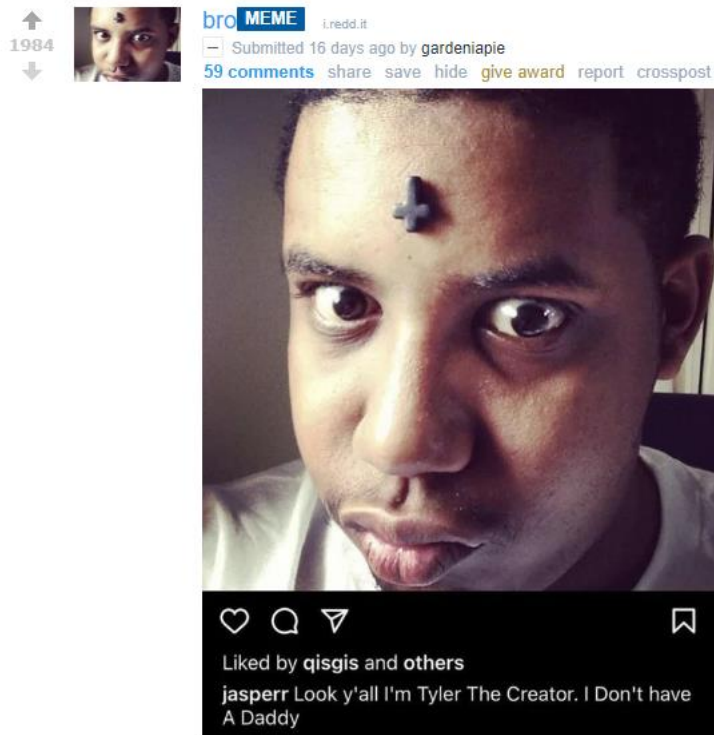
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## Appendices

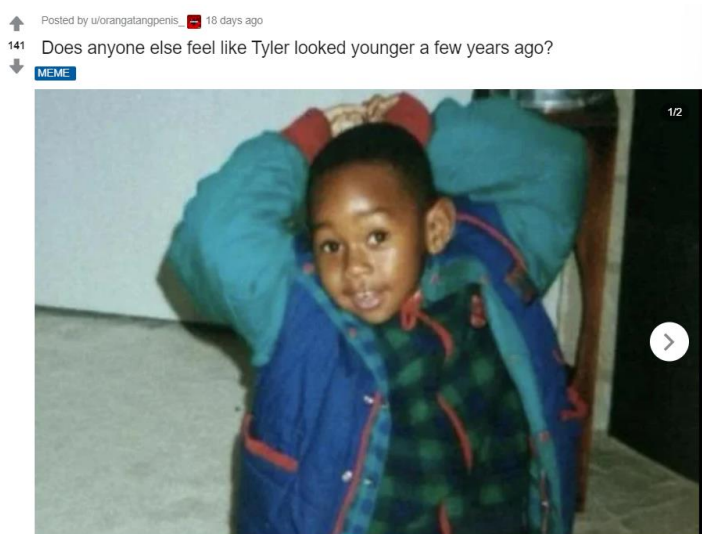
Appendix A – Popular memes from different subreddits posted over data collection period

### r/tylerthecreator

1.



2.



3.

↑  
879  
↓



is tyler really uncircumcised? he says it all the time in his lyrics **MEME** l.redd.it

Submitted 21 days ago by **MacgowanDoo**  
**164 comments** share save hide give award  
report crosspost



4.

↑  
638  
↓




Tyler, the Creator x Walmart Collab **MEME** l.redd.it

Submitted 21 days ago by **varimbas**  
**36 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



5.

↑ 617 ↓

 **what'd he do??** MEME i.redd.it

Submitted 23 days ago by [Apart\\_Ad810](#)

[24 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#) [crosspost](#)



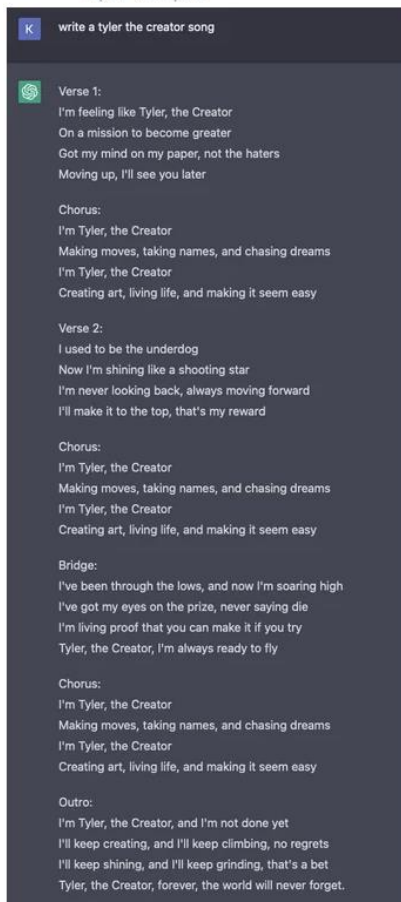
6.

↑ 552 ↓

 **I asked ChatGPT to write a tyler the creator song** MEME i.redd.it

Submitted 24 days ago by [KingOfWeiners](#)

[129 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#) [crosspost](#)

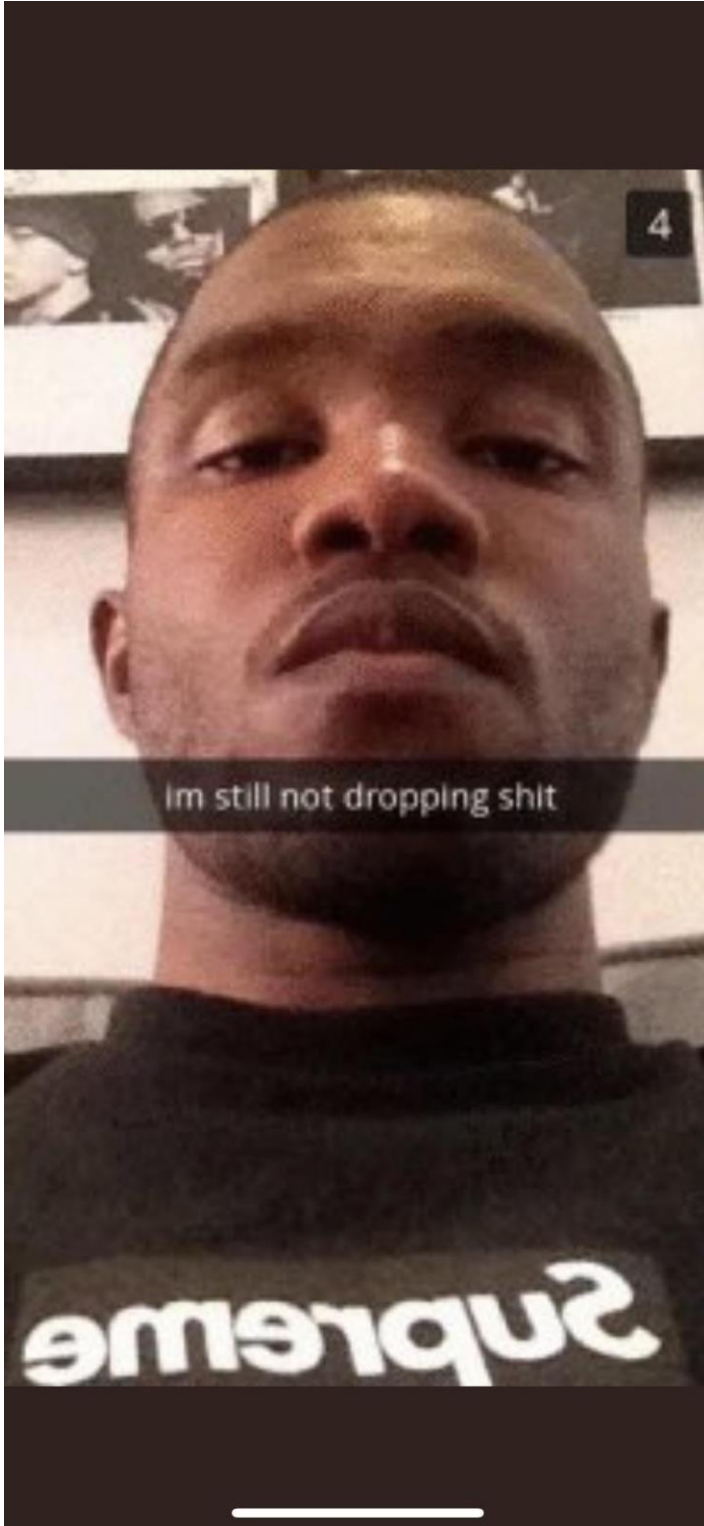


7.

↑ Posted by u/NUD3LS 🇺🇸🇺🇸🇺🇸, 26 days ago

239 Tyler and Frank will never have a collab album and here's proof

↓ MEME




Caption: "he acknowledged it was real"





*Caption: "aaaaand nevermind"*


8.

↑ 670  
↓



bro  MEME i.redd.it  
Submitted 27 days ago by Flashy-Abalone-957  
46 comments share save hide give award report crosspost




12:26 5G% 



Comments


Top Timed Newest

Remember to keep comments respectful and to follow our Community Guidelines

 butterNIC · 3y ago  
why Tyler dressed like he about to start communism  
6.3K    
30 replies

9.

↑ 1003  
↓



Anybody else think this line is violent/out of place? MEME i.redd.it  
Submitted 28 days ago by this\_is\_such\_a\_pity  
75 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

I want to be the reasons why all lesbians hate dick  
I make this down. Dullwinkle the red moose  
Game of duck-duck-duct tape with a dead goose  
She running round this motherfucking dung heap,  
her legs loose  
Until I accidentally get the saw to her head, oops  
Victim, victim, honey, you're my fifth one  
Honey on that topping when I stuff you in my system  
Rape a pregnant bitch and tell my friends I had a threesome



10.

422  
↑  
↓



Did not expect to find a Tyler reference in my comic books **MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 29 days ago by Tina\_sometimes  
37 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



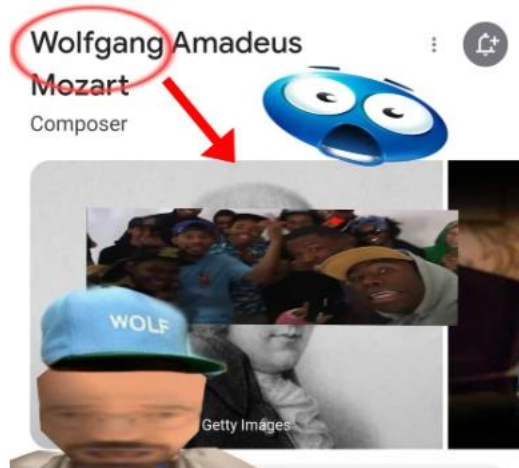
11.

676  
↑  
↓



made this funny (i hope no one has done this before) **MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Acceptable\_Throat319  
23 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



12.

↑  
763  
↓



**nah wtf** MEME

redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by visionriel

25 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



13.

↑  
307  
↓

Posted by u/FunnyPenisMan 1 month ago

LEAKED ALBUM IN SO SERIOUS Country Phonk Trap Metal w Track list

MEME

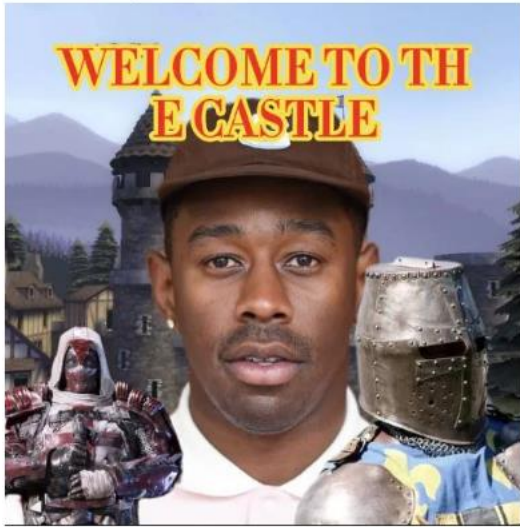


Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm



14.

↑ 594  
 ↓  what if tyler dropped a medieval phonk album?  
 MEME i.redd.it  
 Submitted 1 month ago by 10000000gecs  
 36 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



15.

↑  
1617  
↓



no in between tbh **MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Livid-Variety-8112  
125 comments share save hide give award  
report crosspost



16.

↑  
571  
↓



TYLER???? **MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by d8f\_  
36 comments share save hide give award  
report crosspost



17.

↑  
352  
↓



EARFQUAKE but I remade it using the shitty low quality default midi instruments **MEME**

v.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by awayplageriddenrat  
31 comments share save hide give award  
report crosspost



18.

↑  
203  
↓



I predict the next Tyler album will be released  
**MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by GrandE\_3  
29 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



19.

↑  
114  
↓



Which one you marrying? **MEME** i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by 1SirJava  
26 comments share save hide give award  
report crosspost



20.

↑ 211  
↓



IGOR'S THEME but I made it using shitty low quality default midi instruments **MEME** v.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by awayplagueriddenrat  
28 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



21.

↑ 359  
↓

Posted by u/Foreign-Magician-767 1 month ago  
All Tyler covers recreated by me (But they're actually good):

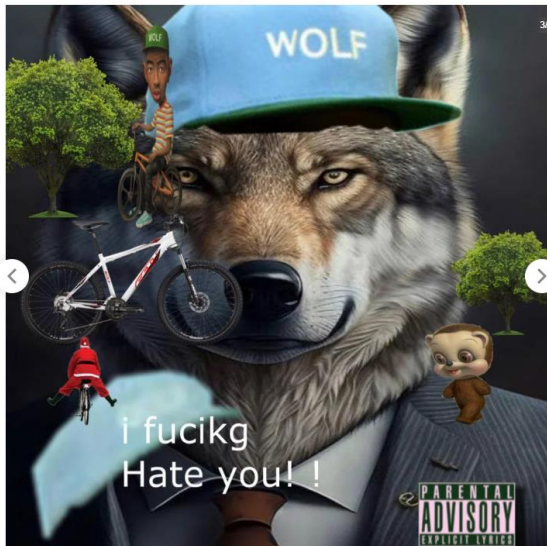
**MEME**



Bastard



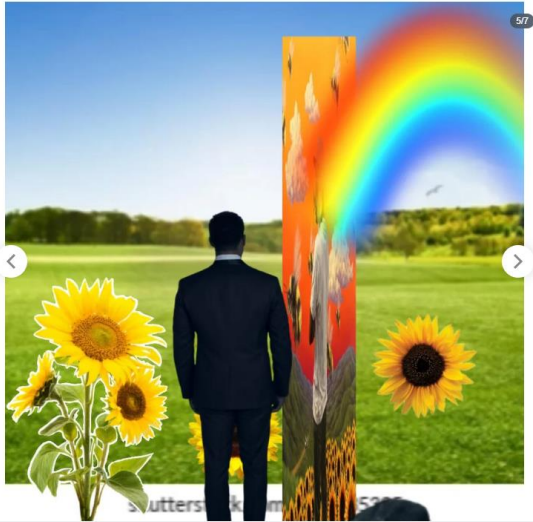
Gobin



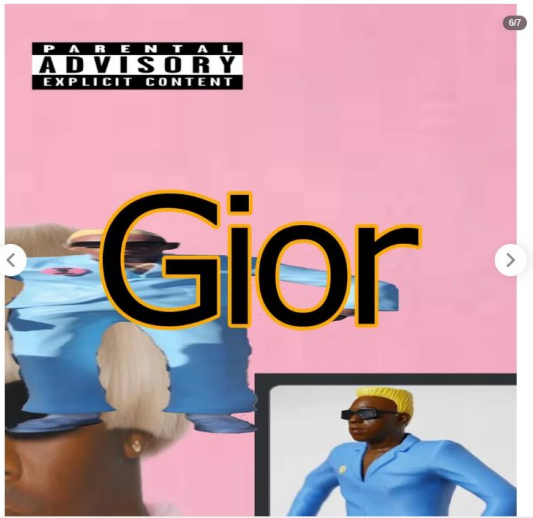
Wolf



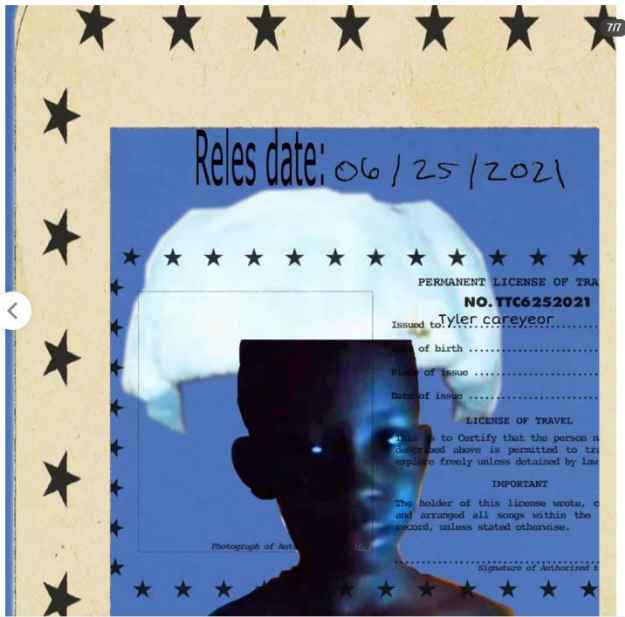
Cherry bomb



Flower boy



Igor




Call me if you get lost




22.

↑ 902 ↓



**Me when WTTD drops** MEME i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by Commercial-Incident3  
26 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost


Mfs be like "I listen to Tyler the Creator" yeah bro we can tell



23.

↑ Posted by u/veryneelguy 1 month ago  
608 ↓ MEME


**Who is T dating?  
Most likely  
someone who...**




1/3

46 Comments Award Share

Someone who is in ads for his brand



Someone who is in his instagram posts



2/3

Someone who appears in his music videos



Someone most people would NOT want to have sex with


I ain't even wanna fuck 'cause your presence was enough

(Lyrics from WILSHIRE)

3/3

24.

↑  
1224  
↓



I think this might be a small tease for his next album?? Like a dog-like album **MEME** l.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by FrogWithDepression  
**53 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

le fleur



a nail polish by **le FLEUR\***

25.

↑  
155  
↓



can we stfu about this tyler guy? nobody fucking cares about him and his music is dogshit **MEME** l.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Difficult-Channel420  
**28 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



26.

↑  
511  
↓



## honestly I prefer AGOR or Flower Guy MEME

i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Sahmapunk

67 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

Jay Versace has produced songs for artists like SZA, Tyler the Creator, Lil Yachty, and Westside Gunn.

Jay proved that he's a jack of all trades when he won a Grammy for his work on Tyler the Creator's *Call Me When You Get Home*.

Recently, Jay worked with yet another industry heavy hitter, SZA, a longtime friend, tapped the producer for her new album. Jay produced not one, but two songs for the project — "Smoking on my Ex Pack" and "SOS."

"It was probably a few years ago, where she was just like, 'I'm about to do my album. Come to the studio and play me some beats,'" he told *Rolling Stone*. "She was just like, 'I need you on my album,' and we were just trying to figure it out, but I was still learning my sound."

Lo and behold, with patience and time, their collab came to be when SZA released her second studio album in December 2022.

In the past, Jay has also produced songs for Tyler the Creator, Lil Yachty, and Westside Gunn.

27.

↑  
460  
↓



## Igor MEME i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by MR\_NINYA

34 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



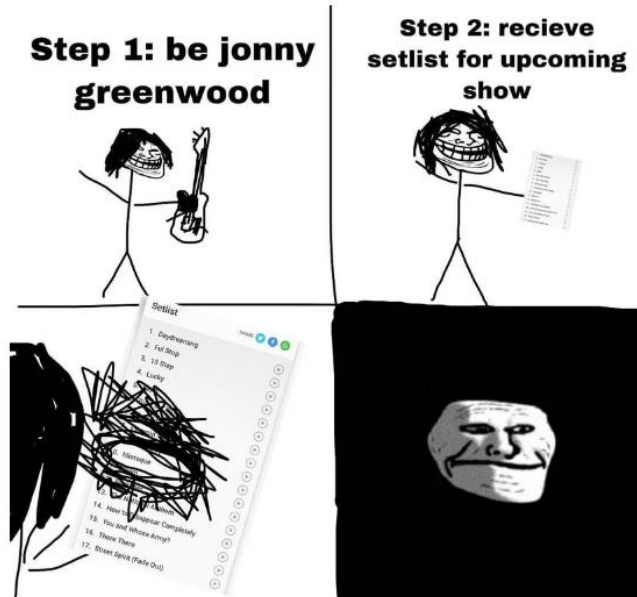
1.



Meme **step 3: cover yourself in oil** i.redd.it

Submitted 22 days ago by TurbulentAnimator478  
faster johnny

36 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



2.



Meme **Motion Picture Soundtrack** i.redd.it

Submitted 23 days ago by TurbulentAnimator478  
faster johnny

107 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



imgflip.com

3.

↑  
1287  
↓



Meme 🤔 i.redd.it

Submitted 24 days ago by Thesmilehead  
38 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



4.

↑  
594  
↓



Meme the smile 2.0 i.redd.it

Submitted 24 days ago by TurbulentAnimator478  
faster johnny

26 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



5.

↑  
43  
↓



Meme Is it just me or does Messi look a bit like Thom in this pic? i.redd.it

Submitted 24 days ago by AnxiousVegetable769 🤔 Nude

29 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



6.



**Meme** Add on my dick to a Radiohead song

**title** i.redd.it

Submitted 24 days ago by wannabebobafett

**50 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



7.



**Meme** not sure if anyone did this before but here's my take i.redd.it

Submitted 26 days ago by NapoleonGonaparty151

**116 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

### Every Artist has:

Either you love it or you hate it



The one everyone forgets about



Greatest album of all time



Which divides the fandom



Overlooked masterpiece



Fan favourite



Mental breakdown



Locals favourite



8.

↑  
420  
↓



Meme [The Radio-Heads of Corporate.](#) i.redd.it

Submitted 26 days ago by Pepperbyte Kid A

[38 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#)  
[crosspost](#)



He's a very busy man. Chop chop, pronto pronto.

9.

↑  
221  
↓



Meme [Live footage of Thom Yorke writing Hail to the Thief](#) i.redd.it

Submitted 29 days ago by ertu29 OK Computer

[27 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#)  
[crosspost](#)





10.

↑  
2020  
↓

**Meme** **I'm really really sorry** i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by Jocta The King of Limbs

60 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



**THIS IS  
Radiohead**




11.

↑  
732  
↓

**Meme** **it's true** i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by TurbulentAnimator478 faster johnny

128 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

**TKOL and Pablo Honey fans explaining  
how unappreciated and underrated the albums are**



12.

↑  
888  
↓



**Meme** Went to this great restaurant, was about to leave a positive review i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by OtherW1zard19  
86 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



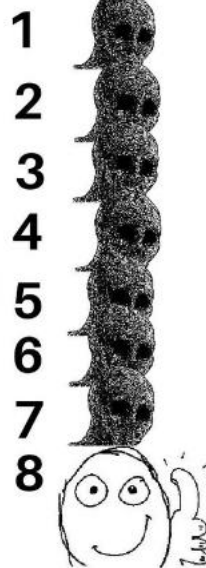
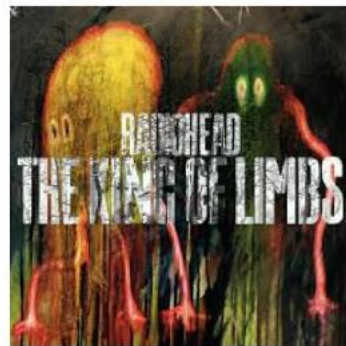
13.

↑  
954  
↓



**Meme** the king of limbs in a nutshell i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Epsilon\_Music  
126 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



14.

↑  
642  
↓



**Meme** what did bro say 🤖 i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by OK-Connection4791  
The Bends

**111 comments** share save hide give award report  
crosspost



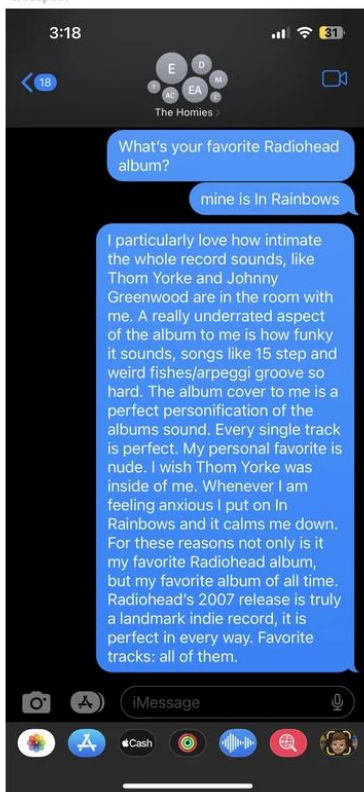
15.

↑  
455  
↓



**Meme** My ADHD is showing 🤖 i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by seangrey03


**116 comments** share save hide give award report  
crosspost



16.

↑  
1900  
↓

**Meme** **Baby's got the bends!** i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by **Nit0**  
38 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost




A photograph of a man in a dark jacket walking away from the camera on a city street. He is carrying a baby in a carrier on his back. The baby's head is visible, and it appears to be looking back over its shoulder. The background shows a city street with buildings, a yellow taxi, and a white van.

17.

↑  
766  
↓

**Meme** **Time flies...** i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by **SamuelLalia17** Amnesiac  
74 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



A photograph of the band Radiohead. The text "50 YEARS AGO RADIOHEAD RELEASED CREEP" is overlaid at the top, and "LET THAT SINK IN" is overlaid at the bottom. The image shows the band members in a dark setting, with one member in the foreground looking towards the camera.

18.

↑  
37  
↓

**Meme** **turn the comments into his search history** i.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by **TurbulentAnimator478**  
faster johnny  
25 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost




A close-up photograph of a man with a wide, toothy smile. He has dark hair and a beard. The image is a meme where the man's expression is used to represent a search history.

19.

↑ 147  
↓

**Meme** this is what I feel when I'm listening to "A Moon Shaped Pool" (don't ask me why) what about you? l redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by AdPowerful8405  
37 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



20.

↑ 131  
↓

**DISCUSSION**

**Meme** In terms of Apple Vs Android, where do you think Yorke sits? self.radiohead  
Submitted 1 month ago by Straight\_Equal\_1541

I'm thinking Apple, since hes scared of android

53 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

21.

↑ 0  
↓

**DISCUSSION**

**Meme** Im terms of Muse VS Coldplay, where do you think Thom shits? self.radiohead  
Submitted 1 month ago by VanderlyeSorrow  
the greatest left turn in music history

Fun exercise I just thought of. I, of course, don't like neither of those. Much prefer real music to shit to 👍 (Radiohead, The Smile, Thom Yorke)

26 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

22.

↑  
364  
↓



**Meme** My GF apparently needs Radiohead?

self.radiohead

Submitted 1 month ago by EI\_Barbosa

Sorry if this is too personal, but I had to get this off my chest with some true radioheads:

I'll cut to the chase: My gf needs background music whenever we have sex. One song specifically: How to Disappear Completely by Radiohead. It needs to play in the background every time we sleep together. Literally, every time. So once upon a time my gf masturbated in her room and How to Disappear Completely happened to be playing in the background when she came. Since then, it's become part of the routine when she does anything sexual. That was the story she told me at the beginning of our relationship. At first, I was okay with it. But now I can't stand it (nothing against Radiohead which I like a lot). What made it even worse was a few nights ago my gf and I got into an intense argument about something unrelated and out of anger or whatever she decided to tell me the true story: Her ex-bf was the one who played Radiohead when he took her virginity, which was like 2 years ago, and that is actually what's been helping cum this entire time. The song was a fucking trigger.

I've not said a word to her since. Is it even possible for someone to cum from a 2-year-old memory of their first love? Or do I have every reason to feel like I meant nothing to her sexually? Thanks for reading radioheads

[97 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#)  
[crosspost](#)

23.

↑  
1160  
↓



**Meme** Just a normal average highway in Hartford, Connecticut that has no significance! l redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by [BitterMojj](#)

[57 comments](#) [share](#) [save](#) [hide](#) [give award](#) [report](#)  
[crosspost](#)



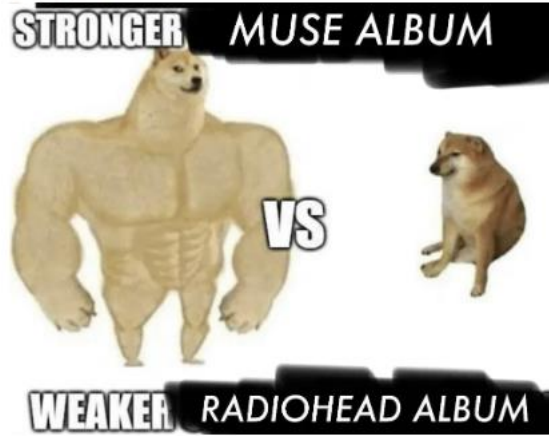
24.

↑  
16  
↓



**Meme** Thoughts? I love both bands, just curious to see your takes. i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by BlueJay9726  
70 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



25.

↑  
126  
↓



**Meme** Good News i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by whenapostateissus  
33 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



26.

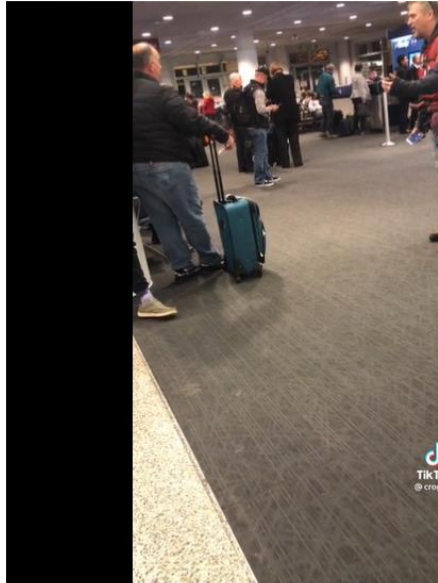
↑  
858  
↓



**Meme** Airport meltdown with a Radiohead reference. v.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by [dylandog89](#)

[119 comments](#) share save hide give award report crosspost



27.

↑  
1082  
↓



**Meme** Didn't need to call me out like that

i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by [fart005](#)

[54 comments](#) share save hide give award report crosspost





28.

↑ 662 ↓

**Meme** Name this band (wrong answers only) i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by TurbulentAnimator478 faster johnny

459 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



29.

↑ 766 ↓

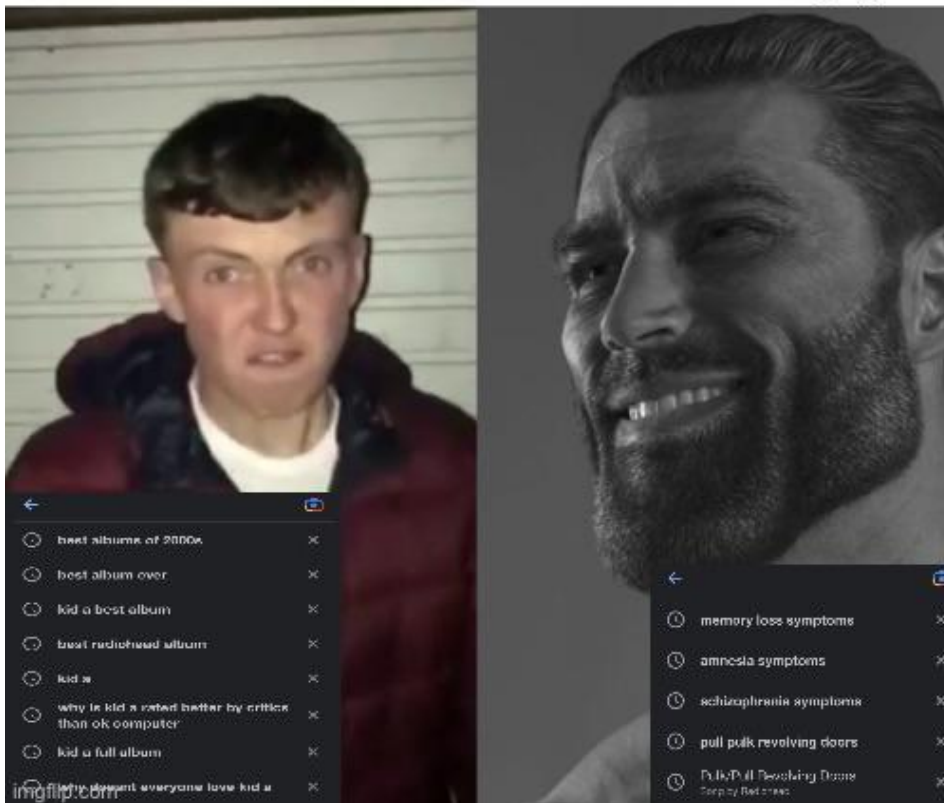
**Meme** Average Kid A fan vs Average Amnesiac enjoyer i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by Salakast-1

51 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

Average Kid A fan

Average Amnesiac enjoyer



30.

↑  
607  
↓

They began playing together in 1986, rehearsing in the school music rooms at the end of the week, hence their initial name: On A Friday. They all knew one another even before forming the band. Older than the rest, 18-year-old drummer Phil Selway was part of a gang of school bullies who had picked on younger students, including bookish 16-year-old bass player Colin Greenwood and his shy younger brother Jonny. Amiable beanpole guitarist Ed

Meme based phil i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by HoennDude  Kid A

36 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

They began playing together in 1986, rehearsing in the school music rooms at the end of the week, hence their initial name: On A Friday. They all knew one another even before forming the band. Older than the rest, 18-year-old drummer Phil Selway was part of a gang of school bullies who had picked on younger students, including bookish 16-year-old bass player Colin Greenwood and his shy younger brother Jonny. Amiable beanpole guitarist Ed

31.

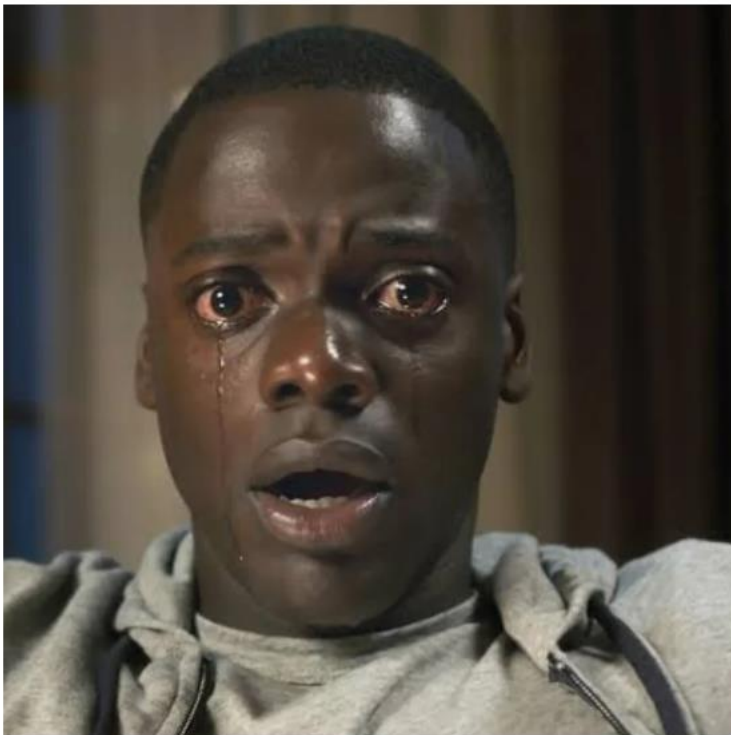
↑  
369  
↓



Meme Me listening to Videotape for the 69th time (Finally got it) i.redd.it

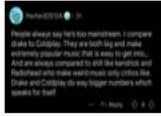
Submitted 1 month ago by ZANELLA2006  Kid A best album ever made / "we got heads on sticks"

32 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



32.

↑  
304  
↓



**Meme** Coldplay and Drake > Kendrick and Radiohead i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by farseer\_fitz

**86 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



33.

↑  
594  
↓



**Meme** Definitive proof that Radiohead fans can get girls. v.redd.it


Submitted 1 month ago by Ok\_Needleworker\_4588

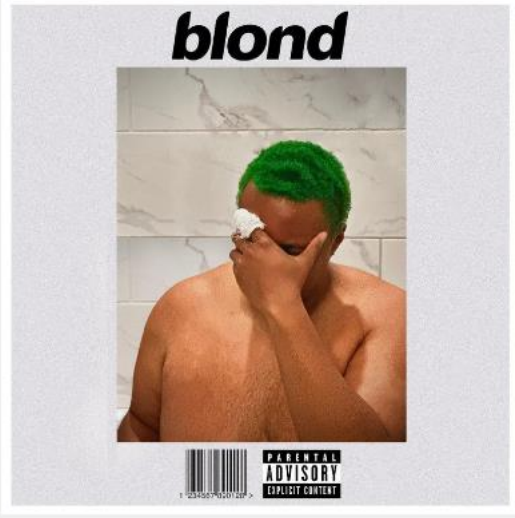
**71 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost




[r/frankocean](#)

1.

3722  **Meme** I feel like I look just like him i.redd.it  
- **blond** Submitted 23 days ago by ComedyRussell  
**182 comments** share save hide give award  
report crosspost



2.

337  **Meme** A potato flew around my room self:FrankOcean  
- Submitted 24 days ago by Lil4ksushi  
blonde

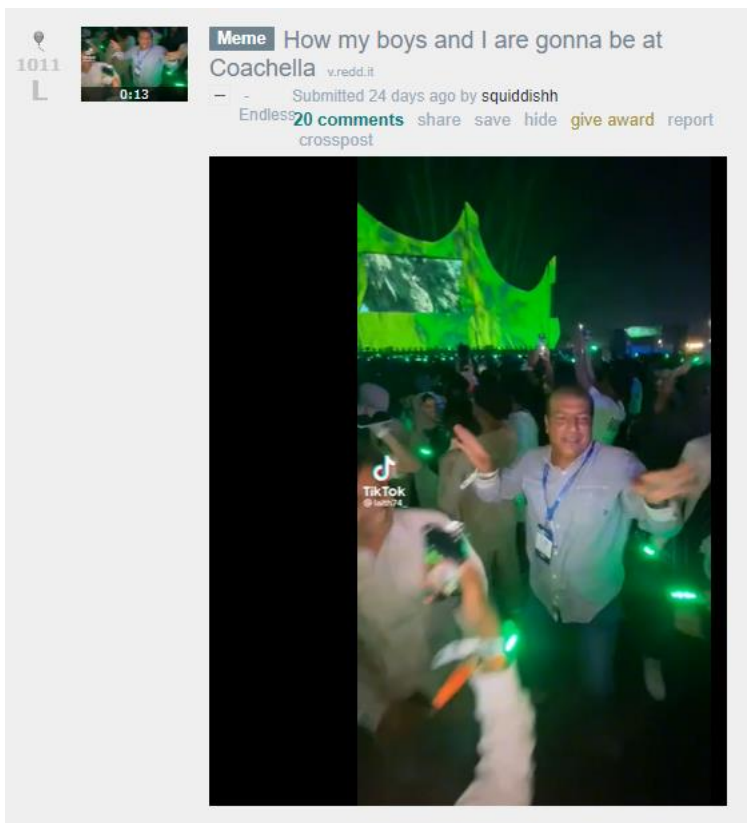
That stupid fucking vine ruined Thinking bout you for me. I saw the vine many years ago before listening to the song for the first time years later. Fuck who ever made that dumbass vine.

**44 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

3.



4.



5.

1534 L

**Meme** Frank Ocean's new album info leaked by Spotify? old.reddit.com

— Submitted 25 days ago by RodeoTheAlbum

189 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

Previous Next Back to Grid View

Caption: Apparently this artwork was leaked by Spotify, according to this Twitter fan account. Anyone got any more info on this?  
<https://twitter.com/blondedhomer/stat...>

**frank ocean clique**  
@blondedhomer

FRANK OCEAN NEW ALBUM ARTWORK HAS BEEN LEAKED BY SPOTIFY 🤖



ALT

**frank ocean clique**  
@blondedhomer

Frank's new album is called "Galactica" and the only feature is Branky Foinick, who is Frank's alter ego he invented during the 2020 Covid lockdown as his imaginary friend.



6.

812  
L

**Meme** What if someone legally changed their name to Frank Ocean recently, and coachella will just be some guy? i.redd.it

Submitted 26 days ago by **Separate-Presence-60**

Look at us, we're  
**32 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

7.

792  
L

**Meme** Please come back Frank i.redd.it

Submitted 26 days ago by **CEO\_LostCause**

**21 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

 **tiller** verified  
@brysontiller

frank ocean we need you this summer bra.

3/18/16, 12:10 AM jenyally

8.

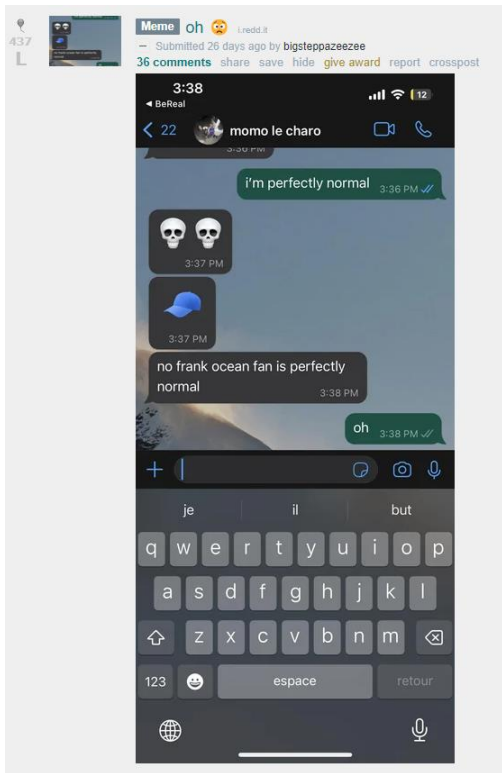
439  
L

**Meme** Just realised the time between Blonde to In My Room is shorter than In My Room to now. i.redd.it

Submitted 26 days ago by **Separate-Presence-60**

Look at us, we're  
**23 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

9.





10.

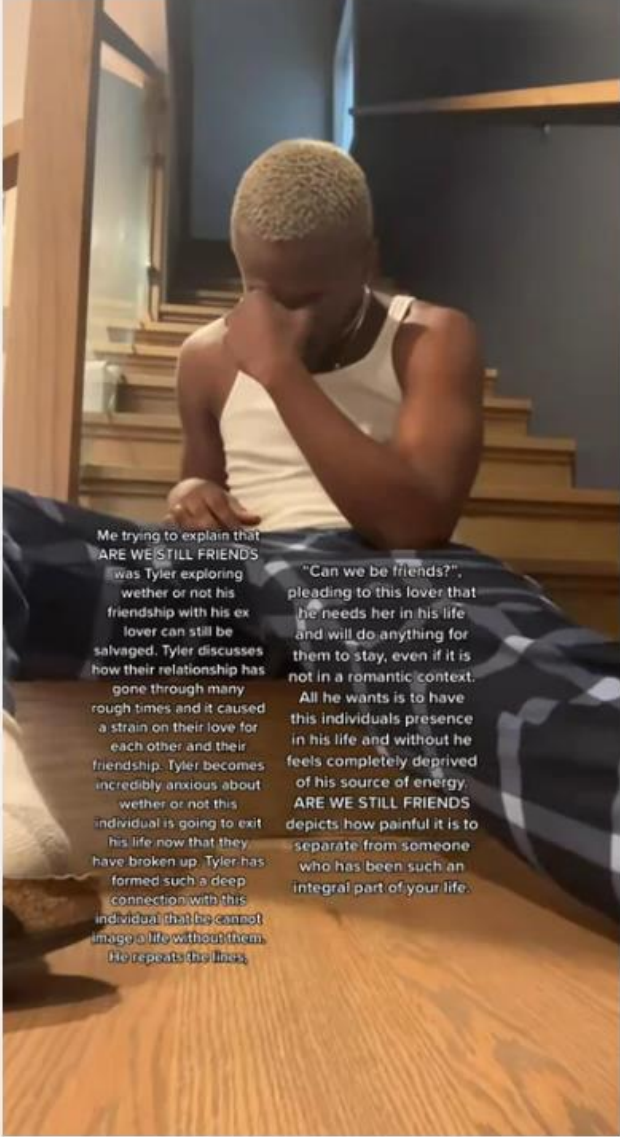
1213 L

**Meme** Bro thinks he's Christopher Edwin Breaux

i.redd.it

Submitted 27 days ago by DaBuby12

69 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



Me trying to explain that ARE WE STILL FRIENDS was Tyler exploring wether or not his friendship with his ex lover can still be salvaged. Tyler discusses how their relationship has gone through many rough times and it caused a strain on their love for each other and their friendship. Tyler becomes incredibly anxious about wether or not this individual is going to exit his life now that they have broken up. Tyler has formed such a deep connection with this individual that he cannot image a life without them. He repeats the lines,

"Can we be friends?"; pleading to this lover that he needs her in his life and will do anything for them to stay, even if it is not in a romantic context. All he wants is to have this individuals presence in his life and without he feels completely deprived of his source of energy. ARE WE STILL FRIENDS depicts how painful it is to separate from someone who has been such an integral part of your life.

11.

291 L

**Meme** Just listened to "In Here Somewhere" for the first time

i.redd.it

Submitted 28 days ago by lukelib

25 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



12.

1788 L

**Meme** nigga thinks he's christopher breaux | i.redd.it

Submitted 29 days ago by tinashect

Look at us, we're **29 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



13.

31 L

**Meme** If you really think about it, frank ocean fans got nothing on gta fans lmfao | self:FrankOcean

Submitted 1 month ago by superiorpersons

Google


gta 5 release date

All News Images Videos Shopping More Tools




About 178,000,000 results (0.62 seconds)

Grand Theft Auto V / Initial release date

**September 17, 2013**



People also search for

	Grand Theft Auto IV April 29, 2008		Grand Theft Auto November 28, 1997		Grand Theft Auto Online October 1, 2013
---	---------------------------------------	---	---------------------------------------	---	--

14.

1707 L


**Meme** REAL RECOGNIZES REAL!! | i.redd.it

Submitted 1 month ago by patricks-

**30 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost

**Tweet**


You Retweeted

 **Ice Spice** ☆  
@icespicee\_

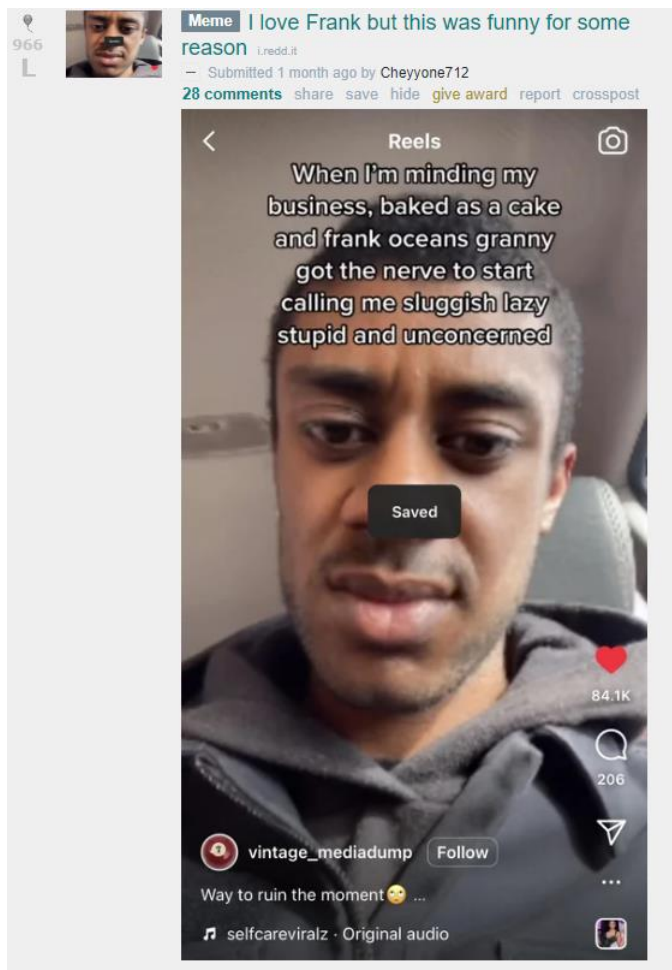
if it brings me to my knees it's a bad religion

5:51 PM · 6/21/17

1 Retweet 1 Quote 2 Likes



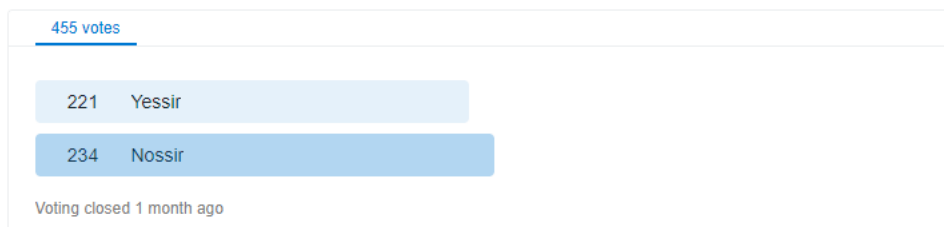
15.



16.



↑ Posted by u/Sarcofaygo channel ORANGE 1 month ago  
1 341 weeks and 3 days since Blond dropped (will there ever be another Frank Ocean album?)  
↓

Meme




44 Comments Award Share


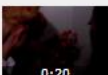
17.

 1717  



**Meme** Ain't no way... tell me twitter lyin v.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by [GrandTheftArkham](#)  
**103 comments** share save hide give award  
report crosspost



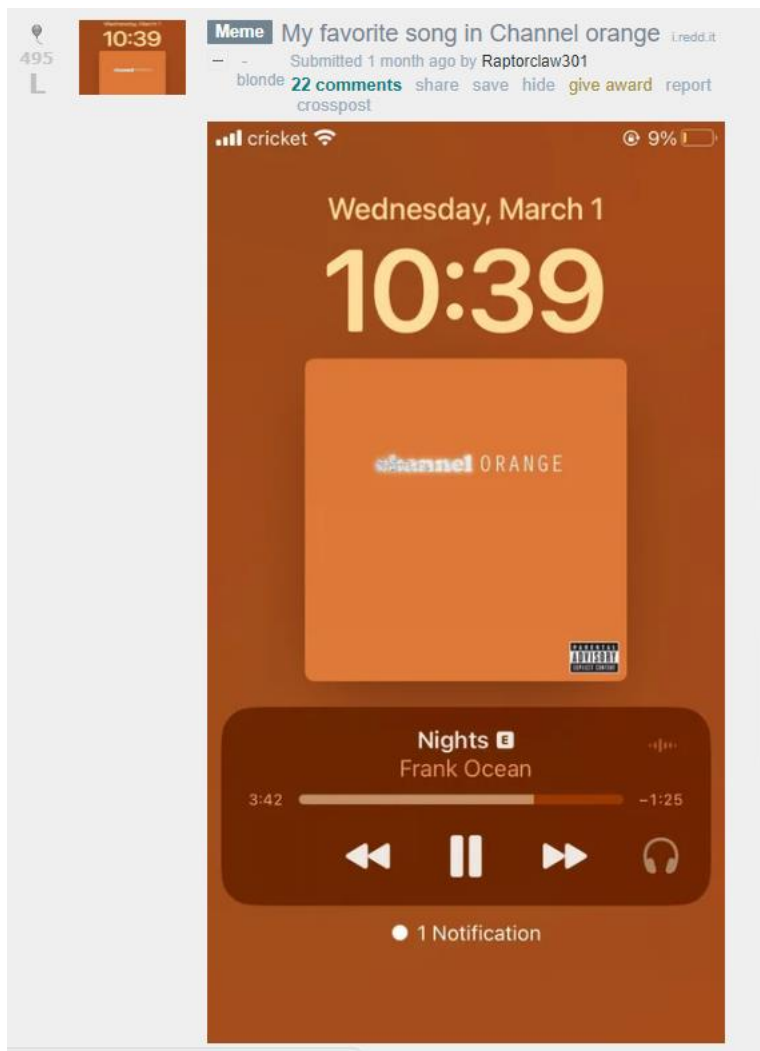
18.

 395  
 0:20

**Meme** Cause you're beautiful and you're young,  
you deserve to have the best in life... -Crystal  
LaBeija (Ambience 001) v.redd.it  
Submitted 1 month ago by [\\_panda8856](#)  
**32 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



19.



20.



21.

2499  **Meme** Frank Ocean Doesn't Care for his fans  
i.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by chEif\_B0yArdeEEEE  
105 comments share save hide give award report crosspost




22.


1196  **Meme** | GOT A RARE VERSION OF BLONDE. OFFERS?  
i.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by West\_Resolve\_2239  
51 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



23.

461 L  0:37


**Meme** "Facebook Story" -Frank Ocean (2016)  
v.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by DepressedPancake4728  
33 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



你有脸谱网主页 斯坦  
You do have a facebook page, Stan!


TikTok  
@southpark\_buttered

24.


52 L 

**Meme** When you're in a "drop ridiculously over priced merch instead of music" competition and your opponent is Frank Ocean self.FrankOcean  
Submitted 1 month ago by brndnlitt  
34 comments share save hide give award report crosspost

25.

833 L 

**Meme** Good News y'all 🤗🤗 Johnny Venus says Franks aware that he's headlining Coachella i.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by One-Plant-3347  
53 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



Liked by dreamville and 11,176 others

johnnyvenus Trying some thing new. Catch us at @coachella 2023 🌱🌱 Then come watch... more  
View all 220 comments

dan.vvvv @johnnyvenus CAN YOU CONFIRM IF FRANK ACTUALLY KNOWS HE'S HEADLINING?? 🙏🙏

johnnyvenus @dan.vvvv I talked to him yesterday. He's getting ready now.

Add a comment...

26.

WHEN I'M UP THEY GON HATE

406  **Meme** Yessir just got this off discogs for only \$80 i.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by [deleted]  
37 comments share save hide report crosspost




27.

766  **Meme** Selling my blonde vinyl reissue shrink wrap, inner sleeves, and accepted slip. Asking price is \$100 do not try to lowball me I know what I have!!! i.redd.it  
— Submitted 1 month ago by InfectedObject  
55 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



28.

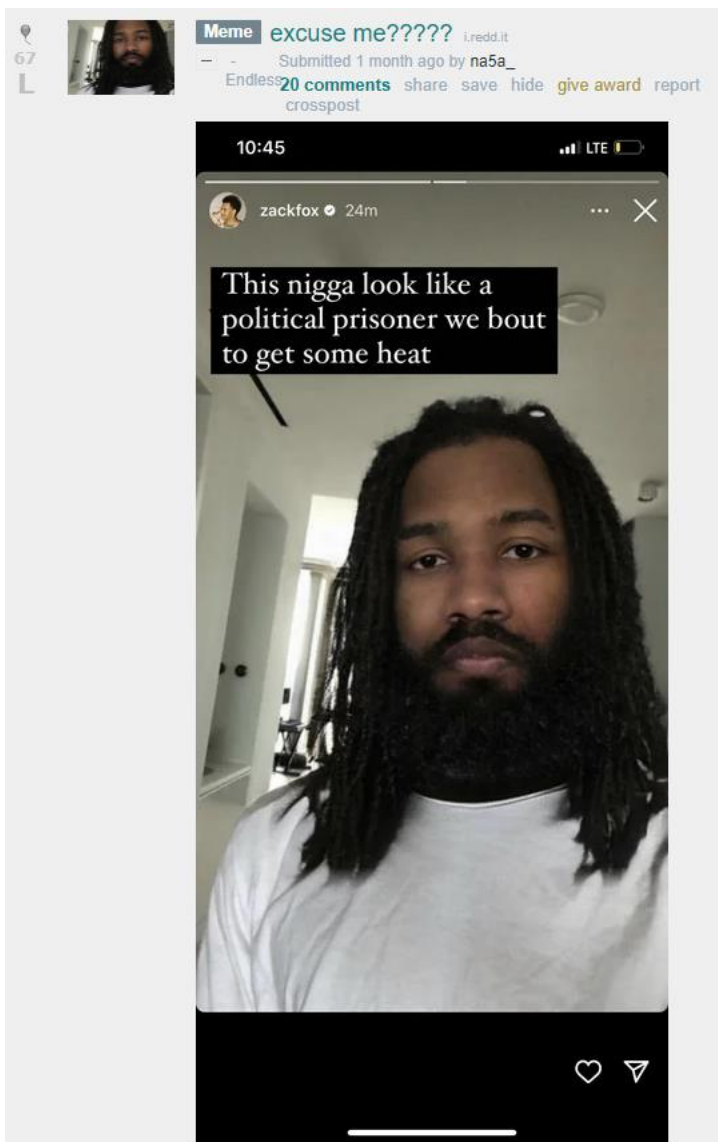
218  **Meme** she ocean on my frank until i blonde self.FrankOcean  
Submitted 1 month ago by 2006pontiacvibe  
21 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



29.



30.



[r/lanadelrey](#)

1.

↑  
638  
↓



**MEME** if this ain't true idk what is (i.redd.it)  
submitted 17 days ago by MandMreviews Paradise  
36 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost

mazzy  
@mazzypopstar

If they did a song together the title would be longer than a thesis

4:43 PM · 3/25/23 · 609K Views

1,658 Retweets 183 Quotes

25.4K Likes 405 Bookmarks

2.

↑  
304  
↓



**MEME** Mother is mothering 🤪🤪 (v.redd.it)  
submitted 18 days ago by IfiwasaBluebird-  
27 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost

A day in the life of Lana Del Rey:

0:01 1:15

3.

↑  
534  
↓



**MEME** Now that Ocean Blvd has dropped...

( i.redd.it )

submitted 18 days ago by bonersforbukowski

 **Blue Banisters**

**47 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



4.

↑  
673  
↓



**MEME** Me listening to Paris Texas ( i.redd.it )

submitted 19 days ago by Espiland

**47 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



5.

↑  
524  
↓

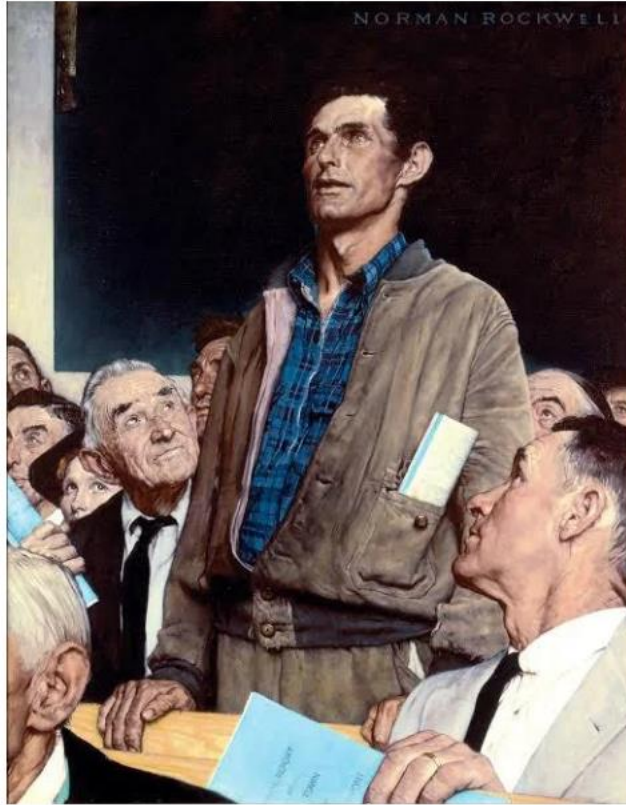


**MEME** I liked the Judah Smith interlude and think it added something important to the album (i.redd.it)

submitted 19 days ago by feelsblind1312

Lana Del Rey A.K.A. Lizzy Grant

74 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



6.

Posted by u/MoonBread42 **4k Born To Die** 19 days ago

640 just spent \$2k on this vinyl 🤔👍

↓ Meme





7.

↑  
1260  
↓



**MEME** Judah Smith Interlude (i.redd.it)

submitted 19 days ago by JASON\_CRYER  
295 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



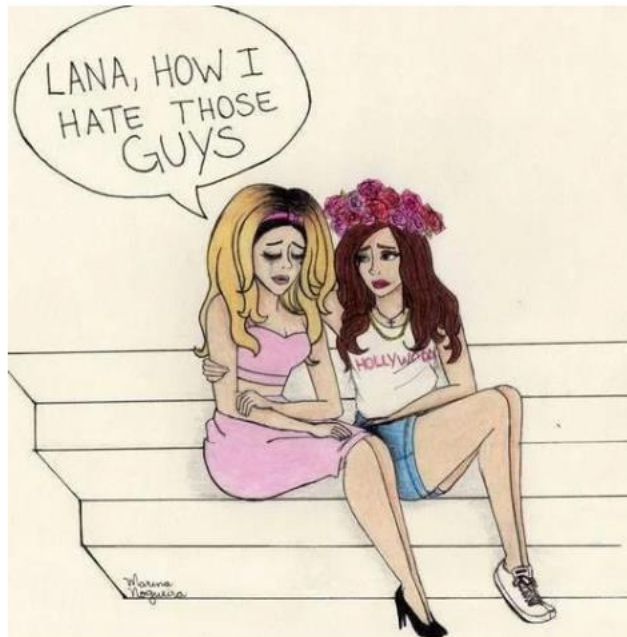
8.

↑  
552  
↓



**MEME** Lana's "super suicidal" lyric as a (potential) homage to Teen Idle reminds me of this timeless classic (i.redd.it)

submitted 19 days ago by Olqabot\_TM  
Norman Fucking Rockwell!  
52 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



9.

↑  
127  
↓



**MEME** Me looking at all of your tier lists making sure Kintsugi is at the top 🤪👤 (l.redd.it)

submitted 19 days ago by bonersforbukowski

**Blue Banisters**

33 **comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



10.

↑  
624  
↓



**MEME** me discovering what the "VB" refers to in "Taco Truck x VB" (l.redd.it)

submitted 20 days ago by athena\_boom

28 **comments** share save hide give award report crosspost



11.

↑  
492  
↓



**MEME** I made this while on my second listen.

( i.redd.it )

submitted 20 days ago by SealSquasher  
▶ **30 comments** share save hide give award report  
crosspost



12.

↑  
1411  
↓



**MEME** STAY AWAY FROM HER 🤖🤖🤖

( i.redd.it )

submitted 20 days ago by melodramaticfools  
▶ **105 comments** share save hide give award report  
crosspost





13.

↑  
162  
↓



**MEME** just one little fix! (i.redd.it)  
submitted 19 days ago by youlovenaomi  
25 comments share save hide give award report  
crosspost



14.

Posted by u/Own\_Negotiation\_6576 21 days ago

306 **Waiting**

Meme



The fans of America (yes, México, Colombia and Brazil is América too) waiting the álbum

29 Comments Award Share ...

1/2



2/2



The fans of America (yes, México, Colombia and Brazil is América too) waiting the álbum

15.

1019



**MEME SO REAL** (redd.it)

submitted 20 days ago by GautamXo

Did you know that there's a tunnel under Ocean Blvd

66 comments share save hide give award report crosspost



16.



Appendix B – Coding of meme images

Image document	Post number	Codes
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	1.	Making fun of artist, Referring to music, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	2.	Nonsensical, Satirical, Ironic, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	3.	Innuendo, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	4.	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	5	Making fun of artist, Innuendo, Juxtaposition, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	6.	Relevance to current affairs, Fan productivity
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	7.	Anticipating upcoming music, Ironic, Purposely low-quality, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	8.	Making fun of artist
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	9.	Juxtaposition, Ironic

<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	10.	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Ironic, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	11.	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	12.	Making fun of artist
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	13.	Anticipating upcoming music, Nonsensical, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	14.	Anticipating upcoming music, Nonsensical, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	15	Juxtaposition, Meta - making fun of fans, Referring to music
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	16	Innuendo, <i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	17	Fan productivity, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	18	Anticipating upcoming music, Nonsensical, Purposely low-quality, Ironic, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	19.	Purposely low-quality, Nonsensical, Making fun of artist, Innuendo, Ironic, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	20.	Purposely low-quality, Fan productivity
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	21.	Fan productivity, Purposely low-quality, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	22	Meta - making fun of fans, Anticipating upcoming music, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	23	Making fun of artist, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	24	Anticipating upcoming music, Making fun of artist, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	25	Satirical, Making fun of artist, Nonsensical, Ironic
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	26	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Satirical
<i>r/tylerthecreator</i>	27.	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Nonsensical
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	1	Making fun of artist, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	2.	Making fun of artist, Satirical
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	3	Referring to music, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	4.	Referring to music, Complimentary, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	5	Complimentary, Referring to music, Meta - making fun of fans, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	6	Ironic, Juxtaposition

<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	7.	Referring to music, Ironic, Known meme template, Derogatory
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	8	Referring to music, Making fun of artist, Satirical
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	9.	Referring to music, Complimentary, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	10	Complimentary, Referring to music, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	11	Referring to music, Juxtaposition, Derogatory, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	12	Relevance to current affairs
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	13	Derogatory, Referring to music
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	14	Purposely low-quality, Anticipating upcoming music, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	15	Anticipating upcoming music, Referring to music, Known meme template
<i>r/lanadelrey</i>	16	Satirical, Meta - making fun of fans, Known meme template
<i>r/frankocean</i>	1.	Referring to music, Juxtaposition, Meta - making fun of fans, Satirical
<i>r/frankocean</i>	2	Known meme template, Meta - making fun of fans, <i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/frankocean</i>	3	Referring to another music artist, Nonsensical, Ironic
<i>r/frankocean</i>	4.	Juxtaposition, Anticipating upcoming music, Satirical, Meta - making fun of fans
<i>r/frankocean</i>	5	Ironic, Anticipating upcoming music, Nonsensical
<i>r/frankocean</i>	6	Anticipating upcoming music, Ironic, Nonsensical
<i>r/frankocean</i>	7	Frustration at lack of music released, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/frankocean</i>	8	Frustration at lack of music released
<i>r/frankocean</i>	9	Meta - making fun of fans
<i>r/frankocean</i>	10	Meta - making fun of fans, <i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation
<i>r/frankocean</i>	11	Complimentary, Referring to music, Known meme template
<i>r/frankocean</i>	12	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Ironic
<i>r/frankocean</i>	13	Frustration at lack of music released
<i>r/frankocean</i>	14	Relevance to current affairs, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/frankocean</i>	15	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Making fun of artist

<i>r/frankocean</i>	16	Not a meme
<i>r/frankocean</i>	17	Juxtaposition, Making fun of artist
<i>r/frankocean</i>	18	Not a meme
<i>r/frankocean</i>	19	Juxtaposition, Satirical, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/frankocean</i>	20	Relevance to current affairs, Ironic, Known meme template, Nonsensical
<i>r/frankocean</i>	21	Known meme template, Making fun of artist, Frustration at lack of music released, Referring to another music artist
<i>r/frankocean</i>	22	Known meme template, Juxtaposition, Ironic, Nonsensical
<i>r/frankocean</i>	23	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Known meme template
<i>r/frankocean</i>	24	Frustration at lack of music released, Making fun of artist, Derogatory, Anticipating upcoming music, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/frankocean</i>	26	Known meme template, Ironic
<i>r/frankocean</i>	28	Purposely low-quality, Known meme template
<i>r/frankocean</i>	27	Ironic, Known meme template
<i>r/frankocean</i>	29	Known meme template, Making fun of artist, Derogatory, Anticipating upcoming music
<i>r/frankocean</i>	30	Anticipating upcoming music, Making fun of artist, Juxtaposition
<i>r/radiohead</i>	1.	Reference to particular event involving artist, Known meme template, Referring to music, Making fun of artist
<i>r/radiohead</i>	2	Referring to music, Known meme template
<i>r/radiohead</i>	3	Known meme template, Referring to music, Meta - making fun of fans
<i>r/radiohead</i>	4	Satirical, Juxtaposition, Nonsensical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	5	Purposely low-quality, Making fun of artist, Ironic
<i>r/radiohead</i>	6	Purposely low-quality, Explicitly invites engagement/contribution, Nonsensical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	7	Referring to music, Known meme template, Complimentary
<i>r/radiohead</i>	8	Explicitly invites engagement/contribution, Nonsensical, Ironic, Juxtaposition
<i>r/radiohead</i>	9	Making fun of artist, Satirical, Referring to music, Reference to other media
<i>r/radiohead</i>	10	Reference to other media, Making fun of artist, Juxtaposition, Ironic, Nonsensical, Known meme template
<i>r/radiohead</i>	11	Referring to music, Meta - making fun of fans, Complimentary

<i>r/radiohead</i>	12	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Satirical, Referring to music, Derogatory
<i>r/radiohead</i>	13	Referring to music, Juxtaposition
<i>r/radiohead</i>	14	Juxtaposition, Nonsensical, Ironic
<i>r/radiohead</i>	15	Meta - making fun of fans, Satirical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	16	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Juxtaposition
<i>r/radiohead</i>	17	Nonsensical, Satirical, Purposely low-quality
<i>r/radiohead</i>	18	Explicitly invites engagement/contribution, Making fun of artist
<i>r/radiohead</i>	19	Explicitly invites engagement/contribution, Referring to music, Known meme template, Meta - making fun of fans, Reference to other media
<i>r/radiohead</i>	20	Meta - making fun of fans, Purposely low-quality, Satirical, Nonsensical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	21	Not a meme
<i>r/radiohead</i>	22	Nonsensical, Meta - making fun of fans, Ironic, Innuendo
<i>r/radiohead</i>	23	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Satirical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	24	Known meme template, Referring to another music artist, Ironic, Explicitly invites engagement/contribution
<i>r/radiohead</i>	25	Referring to another music artist, Known meme template, Making fun of artist
<i>r/radiohead</i>	26	<i>Reference to music</i> in real-world situation, Juxtaposition
<i>r/radiohead</i>	27	Meta - making fun of fans, Purposely low-quality, Nonsensical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	28	Explicitly invites engagement/contribution, Known meme template, Making fun of artist
<i>r/radiohead</i>	29	Known meme template, Juxtaposition, Meta - making fun of fans, Satirical
<i>r/radiohead</i>	30	Making fun of artist, Ironic
<i>r/radiohead</i>	31	Referring to music, Complimentary
<i>r/radiohead</i>	32	Referring to another music artist, Meta - making fun of fans, Ironic
<i>r/radiohead</i>	33	Innuendo, Meta - making fun of fans, Ironic

Appendix C – Number of occurrences of codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Times featured</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Ironic	33	<i>Sardonic tone</i>
Known meme template	30	<i>Reference to outside occurrence</i>
Making fun of artist	25	<i>Mocking</i>
Referring to music	24	<i>Reference to music</i>
Satirical	23	<i>Sardonic tone</i>
Nonsensical	21	<i>New era of meme</i>
Juxtaposition	19	<i>Sardonic tone</i>
Meta - making fun of fans	19	<i>Mocking</i>
Purposely low-quality	17	<i>New era of meme</i>
<i>Reference to music in real-world situation</i>	15	<i>Reference to music</i>
Anticipating upcoming music	14	<i>Reference to music</i>
Referring to another music artist	11	<i>Reference to music</i>
Complimentary	8	<i>Sentiment</i>
Innuendo	6	<i>none</i>
Derogatory	6	<i>Sentiment</i>
Explicitly invites engagement/contribution	6	<i>none</i>
Frustration at lack of music released	5	<i>Reference to music</i>
Relevance to current affairs	4	<i>Reference to outside occurrence</i>
Fan productivity	4	<i>none</i>
Not a meme	3	<i>none</i>
Reference to other media	3	<i>Reference to outside occurrence</i>
Reference to particular event involving artist	1	<i>Reference to music</i>



## Appendix D – Post data from subreddits

r/tylerthecreator					
Row Labels	Number of posts	Total post upvotes	Average upvotes per post	Total post comments	Average comments per post
APPRECIATION POST	19	1336	70	104	8
CONCERT	5	101	20	9	3
DISCUSSION	195	21806	112	7483	44
FAN ART/ALBUM ART	101	8582	85	745	9
GOLF WANG	9	170	19	74	12
INSPIRED BEAT/SONG/	26	393	15	94	6
<b>MEME</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>25125</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>1758</b>	<b>16</b>
NEW TO TYLER	8	273	34	87	15
NEWS	9	734	82	59	10
PHOTO	70	11755	168	1041	16
PLAYLIST	7	12	2	3	2
QUESTION	157	15749	100	3875	27
RANDOM DISCLAIMER	5	880	176	222	56
REQUEST	5	11	2	19	5
SONG COVER	9	247	27	40	6
SONG DISCUSSION	19	46	2	22	2
THREAD	8	41	5	59	12
VIDEO	44	5415	123	297	9
VINYL/CD/CASSETTE	28	1736	62	391	15
<b>Grand Total/Average</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>94412</b>		<b>16382</b>	

r/frankocean					
Row Labels	Number of posts	Total post upvotes	Average upvotes per post	Total post comments	Average comments per post
Appreciation Post	10	473	47	116	12
Artwork	43	7847	182	461	11
Blonded	59	9064	154	1159	22
blonded merch	60	6454	108	1001	19
Buy / Sell / Trade	46	965	21	432	10
Covers / Remixes	14	343	25	28	3
Discussion	324	34275	106	8972	28
Fan Art	20	1411	71	191	12
Homer	31	2138	69	274	10
<b>Meme</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36873</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>1934</b>	<b>21</b>
Music	17	721	42	153	10
Off-Topic	8	331	41	94	13
Photos / Video of Fran	39	9208	236	657	17
Question	29	3050	105	626	22
unofficial merch / boo	34	5894	173	750	24
<b>Grand Total/Average</b>	<b>834</b>	<b>119047</b>		<b>16848</b>	

r/radiohead					
Row Labels	Number of posts	Total post upvotes	Average upvotes per post	Total post comments	Average comments per post
Art	48	3171	66	511	12
Article	21	3295	157	1056	59
Audio	21	497	24	108	6
Cover	39	783	20	182	8
<b>Meme</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>25833</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>2688</b>	<b>45</b>
Photos	29	4385	151	373	14
Video	72	1165	16	237	4
nil	619	42430	69	14627	25
<b>Grand Total/Average</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>81559</b>		<b>19782</b>	

r/lanadelrey					
Row Labels	Number of posts	Total post upvotes	Average upvotes per post	Total post comments	Average comments per post
Discussion	484	19561	40	8100	18
Fan Art	20	1654	83	131	7
Fun & Games	23	399	17	157	8
<b>Meme</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>15068</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>1319</b>	<b>19</b>
Merch	53	1427	27	425	9
News	24	3864	161	667	32
Photo	126	13194	105	1426	12
Video	19	2031	107	187	13
<b>Grand Total/Average</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>57198</b>		<b>12412</b>	

Appendix E – engagement statistics vs. themes

r/tylerthecreator						
	Featured	Total Upvotes	Total Comments	Avg upvotes per post	Avg comment per post	Like:Comment Ratio
Sardonic tone	26	14366	1141	43.88	43.88	12.59
Reference to music	17	10138	683	40.18	40.18	14.84
Reference to outside occurrence	1	555	129	129	129	4.30
Mocking	10	8343	450	45.00	45	18.54
New era of meme	14	3409	382	27.29	27.29	8.92
Sentiment	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00

r/radiohead						
	Featured	Total Upvotes	Total Comments	Avg upvotes per post	Avg comment per post	Like:Comment Ratio
Sardonic tone	25	10471	1194	418.84	47.76	8.77
Reference to music	18	13793	1246	766.28	69.22	11.07
Reference to outside occurrence	13	9868	1062	759.08	81.69	9.29
Mocking	18	10416	1428	578.67	79.33	7.29
New era of meme	14	7940	817	567.14	58.36	9.72
Sentiment	4	3081	362	770.25	90.50	8.51

r/lanadelrey						
	Featured	Total Upvotes	Total Comments	Avg upvotes per post	Avg comment per post	Like:Comment Ratio
Sardonic tone	7	2656	488	379.43	69.71	5.44
Reference to music	13	7595	814	584.23	62.62	9.33
Reference to outside occurrence	11	6742	787	612.91	71.55	8.57
Mocking	5	1805	224	361.00	44.80	8.06
New era of meme	1	310	29	310.00	29	10.69
Sentiment	7	3761	525	537.29	75	7.16

r/frankocean						
	Featured	Total Upvotes	Total Comments	Avg upvotes per post	Avg comment per post	Like:Comment Ratio
Sardonic tone	17	16829	879	989.94	51.71	19.15
Reference to music	22	21950	1143	997.73	51.95	19.20
Reference to outside occurrence	12	11028	550	919	45.83	20.05
Mocking	11	12074	651	1097.64	59.18	18.55
New era of meme	9	6964	522	773.78	58.00	13.34
Sentiment	3	769	80	256.33	26.67	9.61