

Memeology

By Karissa Jones, Clarion Staff

Many people know and love memes, but through the years they have evolved into something bigger and better. The word meme came from Richard Dawkins in a book he wrote called *The Selfish Gene* where he tries to explain the way modern information spreads. Internet memes are a way the original idea of memes come from, and they come in many different forms: pictures, videos, hashtags, and phrases.

The time when memes first began is known as the Pre-Memebrian era (2000-2010). They were shared through emails, online chat rooms, MySpace, and other sites that came before the social media giants that are part of our everyday lives today. Many original memes are similar to the ones today, including funny pictures, GIFs, or videos that were helpful in making jokes. A well known meme from back in the day is a video called Peanut Butter Jelly Time, where a banana dances around while repeating "Peanut Butter Jelly Time".

De-motivational photos are also an important feature of memes. They can often be found in the form of motivational posters, such as ones found in the dentist, although they include smart aleck remarks. These memes are well known for how unfunny they were, which is why they died off faster than most people's grades.

As the Pre-Memebrian era memes died off and the internet became a place for entertainment instead of business and emails, the Memebrian Era was born (2011-2014). The Memebrian era created the idea of the "modern meme" where the top text, bottom text memes became the most successful species of memes to exist. Many are still popular today.

Advice animals are also one of the most popular forms of memes, where random animals would give advice to people through the top text, bottom text format. Animals would often also be replaced with movie characters. Popular top text, bottom text memes include Bad Luck Brian, Creepy Willy Wonka, and Thug Life Dude. Memes reached a point in its existence where anyone could create their own through various sites. This meant easy posting and fast attention.

The Memebrian era is well known for the amount of sharing that occurred, but also for the fact that memes could be brought up at any time without it ever being memed-out. However, like any period in history, the Memebrian died slowly and a new era began: the Dank Memebrian Era (2015-present).

We currently live in the golden age of memes where best memes are created through social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook. They are shared faster than in any other era because of the growing change in technology. The memes today are perplexing, dubious, and undeniably dank.

The appearance of "super memes" are what dominates the Dank Memebrian era. They take over social media feeds for weeks, and sometimes even months. Memes like Harambe, Caveman Spongebob, Savage Patrick, Arthur, and Dat Boi have all been recreated and shared all over the internet. Memes that do not count as "super memes" are the ones that do not take over the internet and are often disregarded. They get edited and shared until they turn into "stale memes".

The Dank Memebrian era also includes strange videos, music, and cartoons, such as the "Hi, welcome to Chili's!" vine, the Rick Roll, and The Simpsons. As technology becomes more equipped with new features, memes in turn become equipped with different content that appeal to the people today.

Meme timeline art created by Jianna Beasley

