and a Black homeless man stealing 100 dollars. An image of the Joker with the catch phrase "justice isn't blind, it's racist" attracts attention with the purpose of raising a question about colorblindness. Though the meme does not provide enough background to judge the fairness of the legal cases, it is successful in questioning our so-called post-racial society. Many people responded to the meme by leaving numerous comments, including more memes with a surprised face or other evidence of racial inequity. From this perspective, the meme in Figure 6 raises awareness of racial issues and effectively challenges colorblindness.

Figure 6. Justice isn't blind, it's racist http://www.memecenter.com/fun/1389757/are-they-even-serious

Powell (2008) argues that the individual frame of racism, which is a narrow merit-based and individualist viewpoint, misdirects our attention from systematic and structural racial issues. Instead, he proposes the structural racism framework that highlights the "cumulative" impact of racial discrimination within and across domains (p. 796). He suggests that the reason many African Americans and Latino/a are living below the poverty line is related to their lifelong relationship to not only the labor and housing

market, but also to educational and criminal justice systems. Though I found one example of memes addressing structural racism (see Figure 6), most Internet memes do not show this connection between structural racism and minority groups' lives. Rather, they perpetuate colorblindness by saying that racism is a personal issue.

Implications

I found that racism manifested in various ways in Internet memes, including stereotyping, othering, and the denial of structural racism. One of the key themes throughout many racist memes is colorblindness, which is widely accepted and justified through different strategies (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). For example, some of my university students have talked about affirmative action as reverse-discrimination. Internet memes not only reflect these thoughts, but are also a factor that impacts people's understanding of racial issues. Thus, I argue that Internet memes can be an effective channel to discuss colorblindness and racial issues, and I suggest possible activities for engaging university students in the discussion of racial issues by using Internet memes. As I mentioned in the literature review, few educational researchers have discussed using Internet memes as a pedagogical tool. Just as teaching students how to create memes for visual language or social activism is significant, teaching critical analysis of Internet memes is necessary to challenge the dominant ideology. Knobel and Lankshear (2006a) note that the analysis of memes can include

> where and how certain memes were most likely acquired; what effects these memes have on decision-making, mindsets, and action; the effects these memes may have on other people; and what ethnical decisions must be made with respect to passing on, or not passing on, certain memes. (p. 85)

I employ Duncum's (2010) seven principles for visual culture education, including "power, ideology, representation, seduction, gaze, intertextuality, and multimodality" (p. 6) as a frame of critical questions for meme analysis. Duncum's (2010) principles provide a guide post for art educators who would like to examine various forms of visual culture with their students. Possible educational activities are two-fold: critical questions which can be used to analyze Internet memes about racism, and a counter-meme making activity. The suggested ideas are geared toward university students.
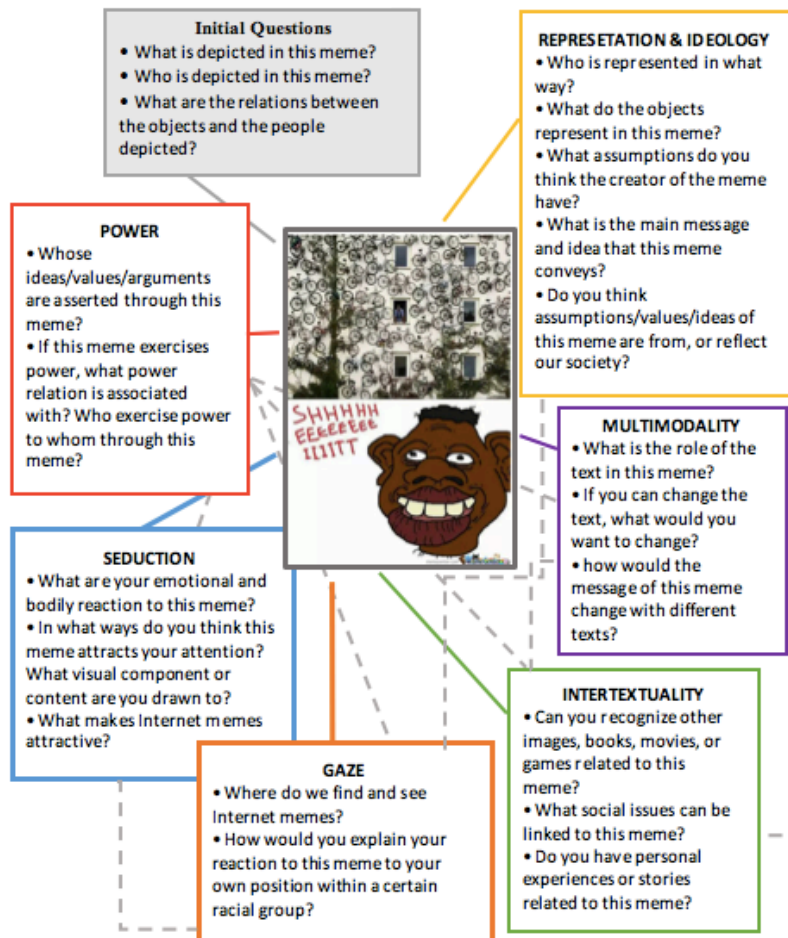
Figure 7. Critical Questions for Internet Meme Analysis

Creating counter memes to challenge colorblind memes is another way to raise critical consciousness. A counter-meme is an Internet meme created as a reaction to other problematic memes. Knobel and Lankshear (2006a) define "counter-meming" as "the deliberate generation of a meme that aims at neutralizing or eradicating potentially harmful ideas" (p. 86). For example, Godwin (1994) created counter-memes in order to subvert the prevalent Nazi comparison in Internet memes and mass media in the 1990s. Godwin (1994) found problematic comparisons on Usenet newsgroup discussions between Nazism and government regulation, such as gun regulation or birth-control. In order to challenge this trivialization of the Holocaust, he coined the term "Godwin's law" to point out

the illogical and offensive comparisons to Nazism or the Holocaust during the political discussion (Godwin, 1994). The term "Godwin's law" spread fast through online discussion boards at that time (Godwin, 1994) and it is still commonly used and manifested in Internet memes. Like "Godwin's law," students can create Internet memes to counter colorblindness by showing examples of social injustice (see Figure 6) or sharing their own counter-narratives.

Since Internet memes have the power to engage students in the art-making process, art educators should be involved in creating them. This topic is beyond the scope of my study, but I should note that the Internet meme has a different aesthetic than fine art or school art styles (Effland, 1976). Douglas (2014) names it "Internet ugly" and states that it can be sometimes intentionally chosen as a dialect or created without specific aesthetic intentions. He contends that Internet ugly is usually manifested in Internet memes due to its bottom-up creation system. Since this ugly aesthetic is the core value of Internet culture (Douglas, 2014), art educators should study this different aesthetic and how to embrace it as a part of our pedagogical practice.

Conclusion

Internet memes have the potential to open a new door to engage students in art activities that are closely connected to their lives. The Internet itself has enhanced voluntary participation in the variety of activities through two-way communication. For instance, Kellner and Kim (2009) argue that YouTube is a new space for activism and dialogical learning communities where individuals become deeply involved in democratic knowledge production and mutual pedagogy.

Nevertheless, we also need to be mindful of the possibility of misleading and misrepresenting aspects of Internet culture. Shifman (2014a) contends that Internet humor is not particularly subversive; rather, Internet users tend to circulate conservative humors. This contradicts theory arguing that Internet humor has "the potential to express the voice of marginalized and disempowered groups" through the liberation from the institutional structures (Shifman, 2014a, p. 391). Similarly, I found that the majority of meme creators and commenters misunderstand not only the meaning of racism and racial issues, but also the detrimental impact of systematic racism. I contend that educators can effectively rectify this misunderstanding and teach students to question the dominant ideology by examining

popular Internet memes in the classroom.

Desai (2010) argues that students should develop "racial literacy to identify and critique racial discourse in popular culture, media, and other sites of visual culture" (p. 23). Kraehe, Acuff, Slivka, and Pfeiler-Wunder (2015) also note that talking about race and racism in the art classroom is one way to counter racial injustices by bringing to light the narratives of people affected by racial oppression. Nevertheless, teaching about racism is not an easy task in that it is accompanied by intellectual and emotional challenges for both teachers and students. Lee (2013) suggests that teachers encourage attentive and nonjudgmental classroom conversations. He also proposes that teachers should thoughtfully respond to students' questions and set the tone that welcomes open inquiry in racial issues. Another way to start a racial dialogue is to introduce visual culture that can facilitate conversations about racial issues. Desai (2010) used visual culture to open dialogue about how race relations affect our lives and shape our beliefs about different racial groups. In a similar vein, teaching students how to critically analyze Internet memes about racism and creating counter memes can enhance their understandings of racial issues and give them an opportunity use their own voices to challenge the racial status quo.

References

Aiello, G. (2006). Theoretical advances in critical visual analysis: Perception, ideology, methodologies, and social semiotics. *Journal of Visual Literacy, 26*(2), 89-102.

Barthes, R. (1967). *Elements of Semiology.* New York, NY: Hill & Wang

Billig, M. (2001). Humour and hatred: The racist jokes of the Ku Klux Klan. *Discourse & Society, 12*(3), 267-289.

Billing, M. (2005a). Comic racism and violence. In S. Lockyer & M. Pickering (Eds.), *Beyond a joke: The limits of humour* (pp. 25-44). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Billlig, M. (2005b). *Laughter and ridicule: Towards a social critique of humour.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Black, J., Castro, J. C., & Lin, C. (2015). *Youth practices in digital arts and new media: Learning in formal and informal settings.* New York, NY: Palgrave McMillan.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the united states* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Carpenter, B. S., & Tavin, K. M. (2010). Drawing (past, present, and future) together: A (graphic) look at the reconceptualization of art education. *Studies in Art Education, 51*(4), 327-352.

Chalmers, G. (2001). Knowing art through multiple lenses: In defense of purple haze and grey areas. In P. Duncum & T. Bracey (Eds.), *On knowing: Art and visual culture*, (pp. 86-98). Christchurch, New Zealand: Canterbury University Press.

Davidson, P. (2012). The language of Internet memes. In M. Mandiberg (Ed.), *The social media reader* (pp. 120-134). New York: New York University Press.

Davies, C. (1998). *Jokes and their relation to society.* New York, NY: De Gruyter Mouton.

Dawkins, R. (2006). *The selfish gene* (30th anniversary ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

De la Rosa-Carrillo, E. L. (2015). *On the language of internet memes* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest database. (UMI No.: 3703692).

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: New York University Press.

Desai, D. (2010). The challenge of new colorblind racism in art education. *Art Education, 63*(5), 22-28.

Dixon, A. D. & Rousseau, C. K. (2005). And we are still not saved: Critical race theory in education ten years later. *Race Ethnicity and Education, 8*(1), 7-27.

Douglas, N. (2014). It's supposed to look like shit: The Internet ugly aesthetic. *The journal of Visual Culture, 13*(3), 314-339.

Duncum, P. (1990). Clearing the decks for dominant culture: Some first principles for a contemporary art education. *Studies in Art Education, 31*(4), 207-215.

Duncum, P. (2001). Visual culture: Developments, definitions, and directions for art education. *Studies in Art Education, 42*(2), 101-112.

Duncum, P. (2002). Clarifying visual culture art education. *Art Education, 55*(3), 6-11.

Duncum, P. (2010). Seven principles for visual culture education. *Art Education, 63*(1), 6-10.

Efland, A. (1976). The school art style: A functional analysis. *Studies in Art Education, 17*(2), 37-44.