

**US VS. THEM IN CYBERSPACE: COMPARISON OF INTERNET MEMES RELATED TO ETHNICITY SHARED AFTER THE EASTER SUNDAY ATTACK AND DURING SRI LANKA'S *ARAGALAYA*.**

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This paper discusses how internet memes related to ethnicity were used during two significant events in Sri Lanka: after the Easter Sunday attack and during *Aragalaya*. It is evident that many memes were shared online on both occasions, and it is apparent that ethnicity played a crucial role in determining what memes were shared. The paper analyzes how memes have been utilized as a tool of division in one context and as a tool of unification in another context, still with hidden divisions. In the aftermath of the Easter Sunday attacks, many memes were shared on the internet, spreading hatred against certain ethnicities, while those shared during *Aragalaya* stressed the necessity of being united as one to resist the current regime. By analyzing memes that have been shared on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and different websites, the study will uncover how two occasions have been interpreted by people in different contexts. This study uses more than a thousand memes created and shared in the Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages. It was determined that memes shared until three months after the Easter Sunday Attack on April 21 2019 and during *Aragalaya*, particularly between March and November 2022, were included in the study. In order to compare and contrast these memes, visual methodology has been employed, and content analysis, along with critical discourse analysis concepts, have been adopted. Despite the tendency to construct ethnic binaries within one context, the paper explores how these binaries can be disregarded in another context where they are hidden like sparks within ashes.

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