

**"Free Peltier Now!" The Use of Internet Memes in American Indian Activism  
[Abstract]**

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Tied into current research on both internet memes and American Indian activist rhetoric, this article analyzes selected internet memes created by campaigners and activists concerned with the imprisonment of the American Indian Movement activist Leonard Peltier and initiates debate on the internet memes employed within American Indian activism. With unprecedented potential for quickly reaching a large number of users all over the world, the use of internet memes necessitates a variety of strategies for raising awareness, educating, and triggering political activism. At a deeper level, memes also functionalize intimately connected discourses on the power to control both knowledge and representation. The creative potential inherent in internet memes and their dissemination is discussed not only in close connection to Peltier's conviction and the political activism that ensued as a result of his incarceration, but also analyzes underlying claims to knowing and owning "the truth" about the (presumed) unjust incarceration of a cultural leader and elder and the right to represent this "truth" within a framework of American Indian activism and politics within the United States. This rhetorical analysis helps us to understand the high degrees of cultural and political agency and resistance—the language of "survivance"—involved in these memes.

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