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An apparently adorable tool
Using ghiblification in political communication

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Abstract: PR specialists in political communication go with the trend; in 2025 they started using a tool inserted in ChatGPT, to "ghiblify" images, a word which made its way into vocabulary, but not (yet) into traditional dictionaries. "Ghiblification" refers to the process of generating images that mimic the art of the Japanese filmmaker Studio Ghibli. As Studio Ghibli is successful worldwide, so is the tool.

In order to understand the global success of Ghibli Studio anime, the study explores some of the myths and archetypes underlying their stories. Then it moves its focus on the ghiblification feature, both successful as well as sparking controversies, while looking at the ethics of using it. The research further concentrates on political communication and the official postings with ghiblified images of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As politicians become 2D characters in new narratives we are looking at the reason why the tool is so popular across cultures. The main question regards the underlying values politicians wish to be connected to and the myths and archetypes from the collective unconscious their ghiblified images point to. Because universal myths and archetypes are once again used to build bridges between politicians and their public.

Key words: ghiblification, Studio Ghibli, Open AI, ChatGPT, ethics, copyright, political communication, myths, archetypes.

1. Introduction or "Hello, Can You Convert This to a Ghibli Style Artwork?"

Since Open AI has integrated the Ghibli feature in ChatGPT in 2025, user numbers sky rocketed. One million users were added only in one hour, as Open AI CEO Sam Altman (Sriram 2025) who posted his own "ghiblified" image declared. The terms "to ghiblify" or "ghiblification" are not (yet) included in traditional dictionaries, but are used in social and traditional media. The *Wiktionary* provides a definition: "The process by which an image is transformed into a style resembling the work of Japanese anime studio Studio Ghibli using generative AI." (2025) It is *Encyclopædia Britannica* that reveals both sides, highlighting that the "image generator [is] capable of mimicking the studio's signature style" and that "many fans found the tool nostalgic", but also showing the concerns raised "about unauthorized imitation and the future of human creativity." (Bauer 2025) Miyazaki, cofounder of the studio, is being cited previously calling AI "an insult to life itself." (Bauer 2025)

With getting viral came criticism. First, the question of the author's license. Then, ethical questions, when Ghibli-style images made their way into political discourse. A private person uses the feature for fun, but political discourse generated by the PR staff has a target. This study aims to explore the use of the Ghibli tool in political discourse, the transformation of the image of politicians and the reason why it is so popular among politicians from different societies and cultures.

2. Theoretical framework and methodology

The following research questions have arisen:

RQ1: What are ghiblified images in relation to art? What are the ethical issues regarding the use of the Ghibli feature?

RQ2: What are the implications and purposes of using the Ghibli feature on the image of politicians transforming them into 2D characters?

RQ3: What makes the Japanese anime style popular among political leaders from different cultures and religions? What are the myths and archetypes their new images point to? What values do they want to connect to?

The research will first identify the characteristics of the Ghibli style, by analysing some of the most successful anime films created by Studio Ghibli. In order to reveal their essence, the author of this paper watched a four-parts-documentary on Hayao Miyazaki's life and creative process and four of his best known and most acclaimed creations, *Princess Mononoke*,

Howl's Moving Castle, *Ponyo*, and *The Boy and the Heron* as well as looked at some studies and articles on the Ghibli style.

In the next chapter, the focus moves to the first research question, discussing issues of ethics and copyright. The main focus of this paper rests on the use of ghiblification in political discourse. The trend being new, there is hardly any academic literature on the phenomenon, but a consistent discussion is present in the media. Analysing the ghiblified images with a mix of tools from aesthetics, semiotics and discourse analysis reveals the answers to the research questions. Finally, the conclusions summarize the findings of this research.

3. Meet the Original: Studio Ghibli and the Creators behind the Anime Films

3.1. A Giant Japanese Animation Studio Entering Pop Culture

In 1985, two already experienced Japanese animators and directors, Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, together with producer Suzuki Toshio founded Studio Ghibli. (Britannica 2025) The anime studio has become one of the most successful in the world, which is reflected not only in the awards won, but also in its global audience. Studio Ghibli is known for "the high quality of its filmmaking and its artistry" (Britannica 2025) and has sparked a trend in pop culture and inspired a museum and a theme park in Japan. (Eliot 2022)

The studio that owes a big share of its fame to Hayao Miyazaki won the Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature twice, with *Spirited Away* and *The Boy and the Heron*, and several other awards like BAFTA, Golden Globes, Golden Bear and the Japan Academy prizes.

Anime is a style of animation popular in Japanese films. While "early anime films were intended primarily for the Japanese market and (...) employed many cultural references unique to Japan (...), at the turn of the 21st century, anime began to attain wide international popularity." (The Editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica* 2025) Anime films target children, but some also target adults. *Britannica* points out that new productions are "the modern equivalent of the epic folk adventures once filmed by Japanese masters." (*Ibidem*)

3.2. Exploring Studio Ghibli and Miyazaki in four movies

Watching some of the most famous productions of Studio Ghibli and Miyazaki himself should unveil the essence of these anime films, looking for themes, patterns, symbols, archetypes and myths transcending cultures and religions.

The four selected anime films are *Princess Mononoke* (1997), *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004), *Ponyo* (2008), and *The Boy and the Heron* (2023). The selection was made based on their success and their variety: they may target children or adults, are based on books or come with an original story.

A common feature is the inclusion of myths. Anime films and fairy tales are made of the same dough: the hero's journey or in Joseph Campbell's words: "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men." (2022, 34) This "monomyth" (Campbell, 2022, 7) underlies stories in various cultures and mythologies. The stories of all four anime films analysed here are based on it.

Prince Ashitaka, the main character in *Princess Mononoke*, has to leave his people and find cure of the spell that touched him, by finding the Great Forest Spirit. He has to face dangers and overcome difficulties, proving himself. The fight between good and evil underlies this story. The English poster to *Princess Mononoke* brings it to a point: "The fate of the world rests on the courage of one warrior." (IMDb n.d.) Miyazaki empowers also heroines: The goldfish Ponyo turns into a five-year-old girl, Sophie saves Howl and herself from the spells. They all have to start a journey, face challenges and undergo a transformation into a better self.

Myths are also encountered in political discourse. One of the four myths Raoul Girardet analysis in politics is the myth of the saviour. The saviour in political discourse and the hero in fairy tales have certain common features. As Girardet explains, the saviour is "the one who becomes all-powerful, the Hero who captures around him the excitement of a community that hopes." (1997, 50) According to Girardet, the personality of the virtual saviour has to be adequate to "the needs of society at a certain moment in its history." (1997, 63) When thinking about ghiblified images of politicians, why do today societies need these ghibli-style-heroes?

Anime films are fantasy stories peppered with monsters, creatures, spirits (the *warawara* are unborn human souls living in the Sea World in *The Boy and the Heron*) and gods (e.g. the Great Forest Spirit/The Nightwalker in *Princess Mononoke*, the sea goddess Granmamare in *Ponyo*), demons (Calcifer in *Ponyo*) or gods turned into demons (the boar in *Princess Mononoke*), witches and wizards (the sorcerer Fujimoto, Ponyo's father, serving as the Guardian of Sea Life in *Ponyo*; the Witch of Waste, wizard Howl and his Majesty's Witch Sorcerer in *Howl's Moving Castle*). We find common archetypes like the hero or the mother.

We can also find examples of Japanese folklore characters like the *kodama* (Japanese tree spirits, a specific type of *kami*, spirits or deities in Shinto) in *Princess Mononoke*. While introducing them into the story,

Miyazaki revisits one of his favourite themes, "the conflict between human progress and natural order and the persistence of the spiritual world alongside the mundane." (Ray 2025)

Although scholars argued that Shinto influenced Miyazaki (e.g. Morgan 2015, 172), he himself denied his films being religious. With some Shinto elements included, the films nevertheless appeal to people from different cultures or religions. What appeals to people? What makes politicians from different societies and cultures turn to Ghibli-style images?

The films analysed are about healing, becoming better, overcoming barriers (the healing of the forest in *Princess Mononoke*, Sophie's breaking of the spell in *Howl's Moving Castle*, Ponyo's transformation into a human). They are stories about the devastations and tragedies caused by war (the damaged forest and relation between man and nature in *Princess Mononoke*; the war in which the wizards take part in *Howl's Moving Castle*; Mahito, the main character from *The Boy and the Heron*, loses his mother in the firebombing of Tokyo). Nature is seen as positive, good, even magical. Humans destroy nature and its magic, humans kill gods. The hero comes to protect nature and the gods, bring peace and restore the coexistence.

Another common feature of the anime films is that they all are hand-drawn, with an eye for detailed, luxuriant, exquisite backdrops. Some scenes resemble a hidden object book. Creating them took a lot of time. In episode 4 of the *Documentary 360 – 10 Years with Hayao Miyazaki*, it becomes clear what this means: A four seconds long chart for *The Wind Rises* took the team a year and three months to complete. (Arakawa 2019, at 19:28-19:35) This draws attention to Miyazaki's belief: "But it was worth it. [The scene] was a good one." (Arakawa 2019, at 19:40-19:50)

The documentary gives an insight in Miyazaki's creative process and his perfectionism. He is influenced by arts, by strolling, but also staying in isolation in a friend's house by the sea, cooking, meeting the locals, connecting with nature: "It's in everyday, ordinary scenery where I discover the extraordinary." (Arakawa 2019 ep.1 at 03:39-03:46) Miyazaki doesn't start with a screenplay, but with images; this gives him "maximum creativity freedom." (Idem at 09:56-10:02) He believes in the power of the film over its creator: "I'm a slave to movies." (Arakawa 2019 ep. 2 at 04:31-04:41)

We already assessed how much time and energy is put into the backdrops of the anime films. By contrast, characters are simple. One of their key features are big, trustworthy eyes, a barely sketched nose and a mouth that ranges, according to the situation, from a dot to a full-fledged smile. The large eyes are one of the key features of the anime films that focus attention and should be brought into discussion for several reasons: They are "commonly perceived in Japan as multifaceted 'windows to the soul'." (The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica 2025) At the same time, they are a trait of "cuteness". Studio Ghibli incorporates elements (but

doesn't solely rely on) of what is called the *kawaii culture* in Japan, "a cultural phenomenon that celebrates cuteness through embracing people, objects, and fictional characters that portray youthful innocence, charm, warmth, and playfulness". (Payne 2025) *Kawaii* characters "often feature bright or pastel colors, round faces, large eyes, a small or nonexistent nose, minimal facial expression, small bodies, and (in the case of 2D figures) thick black outlines." (*Ibidem*)

Miyazaki puts a lot of effort in some gestures and reactions of the characters so that they transmit a real vibe. In *Ponyo* it is the hug scene between Ponyo and Sosuke that Miyazaki asks for an emphasize on, so that the viewer actually gets a feeling of this hug. With all this effort put into the creation process, we can easily identify what psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi called the "flow" in creativity, "the timeless and total involvement of individuals in the activity with which they are engaged." (Kerr 2025)

4. Meet AI Nouveau

4.1. Ghiblification and Issues Regarding Ethics and Copyright. Discussion

The pun in the title of this chapter Art Nouveau/AI Nouveau aims at the following questions: How can we call an AI image mimicking Ghibli style? Art? Appropriation art? Pastiche? Or is it faking? Counterfeiting? Forging? Does the ghiblification tool turn the user into an artist or a forger? The reactions to the wave of ghiblified images varied and critics rose questions on copyright issues.

Talking about aesthetics, J. T. Mitchell highlights that it also "concerns itself with taste", and "it thus invariably addresses questions about the difference between good and bad art." (2005, 1) It also addresses questions "about different kinds of experiences associated with arts (beauty, sublimity, wonder, disgust, horror), and with specific features of these experiences such as the problem of form and content, the relation of pleasure to moral and political virtue, and the arousal of emotions." (*Ibidem*)

With the rise of media art, a "media aesthetics" was required, "one which examines the new perceptual universes opened by virtual reality, the world-wide web, and immersive art environments." (*Idem* 3). Ghiblified images are mainly transmitted in social media which have their own aesthetics.

Regarding the question "Is it art?", J. T. Mitchell highlights it must rather be: "What happens if we see this as art?" (2005, 7) Twenty years on, this question became even more trickier and it has definitely to do with ethics and copyright issues.

The author of this paper doesn't believe that pressing a button transforms us into artists. Having watched both the pain as well as beauty of Miyazaki's creative process shows that art is so much more.

Creativity is defined "as the ability to make or otherwise bring into existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form." (Kerr 2025) But on the other hand, as historian Yuval Noah Harari points out, a "common but mistaken assumption is that creativity is unique to humans." (2024, 275) Today computers "imitate human cultural prototypes, writing texts that appear to be handwritten by humans and composing music that appears to be created by humans." (Harari 2024, 191) What happens to this imitation? Is it ethical to publish the images mimicking the Ghibli style? And: Is it even legal?

Philosopher Sandu Frunză underlines that "deontology constitutes a means of ethical construction of public space" (2011 43) and "ethics is increasingly becoming an active presence in public life." (*Ibidem*, 23) So when a part of the targeted public rejects the quick and abundant generation of images mimicking Ghibli style, this should ring a bell. Media outlets pointed to this problem and *Britannica* did it too, as shown in the introduction (Bauer 2025).

On the copyright issues, two essays by Justin Bonfiglio give some answers: The main arguments are that style remains "largely un-copyrightable", several of the reasons being "foundational principles of copyright law" such as: "ideas are not protectable"; or "scènes à faire" (meaning that "elements standard or indispensable to a particular genre, topic, or setting are not protectable"); or the "merger doctrine" ("when an idea can only be expressed in a very limited number of ways, the expression is said to 'merge' with the idea, rendering it unprotectable."); or the "fair use" ("*transformative* uses of works—those that add something new, altering the original with new expression, meaning, or message—are frequently especially favored under fair use"). (Bonfiglio b 2025)

Bonfiglio speaks about "copyright law [that] intersects with style", "when style is deeply intertwined with other, more clearly protectable elements like specific characters or the overall 'total concept and feel' of the works." (*Ibidem*)

The author's conclusion is that "the Ghiblification trend is a hint at a future challenge facing our copyright laws" because of "its scale" and "fairly high quality" and that "incredibly thin" "line between unprotec-table style and protectable expression" (*Ibidem*). The "tsunami of images" produced with AI "will put considerable pressure on our sense of what is a permissible use of another artist's work, and precisely where the lines should be." (*Ibidem*) In Sarah Spiekermann's words, technology can influence "the development of vices and negative values and the undermining of positive values." (2019, 34)

Moreover, Bonfiglio believes that "we should remain mindful of the core purpose of copyright: to promote creativity for the public good" (*Ibidem*), because "overzealous protection of style risks enclosing the common building blocks creators rely on, preventing one creator from building on the style of another." (*Ibidem*)

Nevertheless, a clear answer has been given by the ruling of the D.C. Court of Appeals: "a non-human machine cannot be an author under the U.S. Copyright Act" (Bonfiglio a 2025). While the Ghibli style images generated with AI are not art, the fine line concerning the copyright issues stays.

4.2. Ghiblified images of politicians. Discussion

One of the core research questions of the present research regards the ghiblified images of politicians and has several more questions attached to it: What is the purpose? Why are they being used in political communication? What in the Studio Ghibli anime appeals to politicians from different cultures, faiths and backgrounds?

A private person uses the Ghibli feature to divert oneself and show that she/he is a fan of Studio Ghibli. With a politician, it is PR that enters the arena, the message is aiming the voters, the politician becomes a brand. In a brand, products or people are "associated with a certain manifestation of the sacred (...). This presence (...) is lived as an assumption of a set of values" associated with the product or person and "resonating with a cumulus of personal values." (Medveschi and Frunză 2018, 139). Archetypes are used to create a deeper relation between the politician and her/his public.

A ghiblified image turns a real and three-dimensional person into a somehow real, somehow mythical two-dimensional hero. What does this change bring with it? What kind of effects does it produce on the image of the person and on the perception the audience has?

We are going to analyse the images of two politicians portrayed in Ghibli-style, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The number of politicians portrayed in Ghibli style on the Internet is much larger; the selection of these two politicians is based on the fact that the images to be discussed were posted either by a political party or a government and are therefore part of an official political discourse. The selection also shows the interest in the Ghibly feature across cultures. But what exactly attracts politicians to use this feature?

All the ghiblified images start with an original photo that marked important events in the political careers of the two politicians and are to be recognized by voters. When talking about "who" appears in the ghiblified images, the word "character" is more adequate than the word "person", because of the simplification and transformation.

Both ghiblified images of PM Giorgia Meloni to be analysed were posted by her party Fratelli d'Italia. Both show a pleasant, happy character. In the first image, it is the full-fledged smile that captures the attention. In the background are shadows of people holding cameras, journalists. The character that is supposed to be PM Giorgia Meloni holds a cardboard in her hands with the message "Grazie Italia" ("Thank you, Italy") and the colours of the Italian flag. The focus lies entirely on the character who signals trust and is presented as a winner.

The original photo is from the election day; Giorgia Meloni indeed held a cardboard with the message "Grazie Italia" in her hands after the winning announcement and had a huge smile on her face (see for example Horowitz 2022). The photo was taken during a press conference, but the journalists were in front of her, not visible in the photo. There are some other differences: In the original photo, she wears two bracelets and red nail polish, in the ghiblified image she wears one bracelet and nude nail polish, pastels being the colours in Ghibli Studio anime films. The ghiblified image transmits "cuteness" and "warmth".

The second ghiblified image presents the PM in front of two flags, the Italian and the EU flag. She rings a bell and smiles. The bell is a strong symbol here, it stands for call to attention, it is rung by whom is in charge; in this case, it is used to open the Council of Ministers meetings. The original photo was taken in 2022 at Rome's Chigi Palace (The Italian Government 2022), when the former President of the Council of Ministers, Mario Draghi, handed over the bell to Giorgia Meloni. The ghiblified image turns the character into an outstanding one, Meloni has to make an announcement concerning Italy and the EU (the flags). There are no other characters in the picture. We should also discuss archetypes present here, derived from the Jungian theory of the "inborn", "deeper layer" of the "collective unconscious" (Jung, 2014). The ghiblified images of PM Meloni hint to the archetype of "the heroin". It is interesting that they do not play the card of "the mother", the Ghibli-style character looking very young. Both ghiblified pictures aim to stick values to the image of PM Meloni such as "friendliness" and "winningness". It is the myth of the saviour in politics revived by AI tools.

The Indian government shared twelve ghiblified photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi "reimagining key moments from his tenure" (Times of India News Desk 2025); we are focussing on three pictures. Settings and outfits differ. In one example, the public can see a Ghibli like character wearing a military uniform. There are several pictures with Modi dressed as a soldier; in this specific one he wears a camouflage uniform and sunglasses, holds a hat in his hands, his eyebrows give a stern look. He is posing as a tough guy. The original has been taken during a Diwali ("holiday of lights") celebrated together with the soldiers and posted by Modi on his official channels in 2024.

Another ghiblified image shows the PM sitting in front of a lush landscape, at the seaside. The original photo was taken during Modi's visit to Lakshadweep islands in 2024 to promote tourism. The archipelago lies adjacent to the Maldives and shares similar landscapes. Modi's move to promote tourism in India was seen in the Maldives as an attempt to draw away tourists from their country. Three Maldives officials were suspended because they made derogatory comments about Modi. (Ellis-Petersen 2024)

In the third ghiblified image, the main character is not in an official environment, he is not the "tough guy", but at home, focusing on family and traditions. He is petting an animal. The original photo shows the Indian PM with Deepjyoti, a new born calf at his residence. (Nakul 2024) The ghiblified images of PM Modi play with archetypes as "the hero" and "the ruler/the warrior" and "the sage".

It is important to look at the caption for the ghiblified images, too. The Indian government posted the pictures on X and captioned them: "Main character? No, he's the whole storyline. Experience New India in Studio Ghibli strokes." (2025) A discourse taking us back to the saviour's myth and the cult of personality.

The ghiblified images resemble the original photos, while leaving some things out, focusing on one trait, simplifying. Or they add something to the original (e.g. cuteness, warmth). The atmosphere becomes warm, cozy. The ghiblified images are portraits of a single character. Through the Ghibli style images, Meloni and Modi become characters in a new narrative, a story told by PR.

PR specialists are quite powerful. Sandu Frunză observes that "public relations are (...) an active factor in social transformation, changing mentalities, and renewing institutional and cultural practices." (2011 87) For political messages, PR specialists are looking for new tools to improve visibility, because, as Gurevitch and Blumler emphasize, political messages "must jostle and compete for limited time and space with other, often more entertaining and beguiling, kinds of messages." (1994 27)

Moving on to the ghiblified images and the politicians portrayed, we look at the way the Ghibli-style and the Ghibli aesthetics are present here. Landscapes are given in Studio Ghibli productions a huge importance, they are detailed, luxurious. We encounter scenes that resemble a page from hidden object book, teeming with people. Some of the ghiblified images with politicians analysed here have little or no backdrop; not the detailed scenery with a focus on *kami* is of interest. Instead, the focus is entirely on the politician. It is her or his story. There is only one heroin/hero. Therefor it is easy to find common values across cultures.

We are used to make the move from a 2D- to 3D-hero, even from a comics-hero to a hero of flesh and blood as for example many fans would say that Robert Downey Jr. *is* Iron Man or Chris Evans *is* Captain America. The questions raise: Why go backwards from a human of flesh and blood

into a two-dimensional character? What does this say about the message? What is it about the "Ghibli life" and "the social media craze of being a cartoon character"? (Paolo 2005)

The ghiblified images are artificial, synthetic. Back in the 1990's, G. Ray Funkhouser and Eugene W. Shaw argued that "media do not mirror reality" (1994 66) but offer a synthetic experience, one that "represents a distortion of reality that poses serious consequences for the media audience and for society in general." (1994 67). And they hadn't envisaged what we call synthetic media today!

Only a few traits are captured in the image, but the persons behind the characters are recognizable. Translating this would mean that these persons are easy to understand and easy to be liked. The ghiblified image tries to bound with the public. The characters have big, trustworthy eyes, and in some cases an all-embracing smile. The message is: This is a likeable, trustworthy person. As Sandu Frunză phrased it: "The purpose of creating an appropriate image is to increase trust." (2011 98)

Choosing the term "character" was on purpose, to show that they enter into "a story, told by a narrator about events which may be factual, fictional or mythological." (Threadgold 2005, 230) Already Lyotard pointed out that "narrative is a way of constructing, not just representing, realities and selves." (Ibidem 2005, 231) The political candidate is put into an even brighter light than in PR photos. Ghiblifying doesn't mean editing some wrinkles out with Photoshop, but turning someone into a new character in a new story. Joseph Campbell's hero's journey embedded in any kind of story: In this ideal world, even if problems occur, the main character will win. It's a story of no failure. As the hero or heroin has a pendant in political myths –the saviour – we are back on the wee-known ground of political discourse. Only the means are different. Ghiblified images distort reality, from a tiny amount up to a huge one. They can cast a bright light, add cuteness and warmth. They present a better world, a better character; after all, anime films have happy endings.

Politicians become brands and "The personal brands in the political sphere benefit first of all of this symbolic dimension (in which a significant role is played by the religious or spiritual elements). Through the role they have to assume, they are closest to the symbolic game brought by the term *persona* (mask) underlying the idea of a person. Political personalities must play a role in a scenario." (Medveschi and Frunză 2018, 141) Moreover, the glowing attached to the ghiblified characters is best described by the words that "prominent political personalities retain something of their aura of sacredness." (*Idem*, 148)

Ghiblified images don't offer information seen as "the basic building constituent of reality" (Harari 2024, 29), instead they offer connectivity. In historian Yuval Noah Harari's opinion, "information has no connection to truth, and its role in history is not to represent a pre-existing reality.

Instead, what information does is create *new* realities. (...) Its defining feature is connectivity rather than representation." (2024, 36)

The historian discusses branding in individuals, politicians, leaders emphasizing that people are not connecting with the person, but "with the story told about the person, and between the two there is often a huge gap." (Harari 2024, 43) And: "(...) what holds human networks together tends to be fictional stories." (*Ibidem*, 52) Here lies the answer to the reason of using these ghiblified images in political PR. The PR specialist hopes that the public finds them "fresh", "playful", even "humorous". Political scientists found out that "humor increases the likelihood to share political information with others and enhances people's memory for information." (Coronel et al. 2021, 129)

At the beginning of the 21st century Michael X. Delli Carpini and Bruce A. Williams argued that politics in the new media environment becomes a form of infotainment. (2001) It was media transforming political news into infotainment. Today, it is political PR that appeals to an increasingly playful audience with the tool of infotainment.

5. Results

The study pointed out the ethical concerns about ghiblification, and also how ghiblified images create a new narrative. Politicians in ghiblified images become 2D characters in new narratives. It is not the detailed backdrops in Studio Ghibli anime films joined by an environmental view influenced by Shinto that draws politicians worldwide to the tool, but rather the simple, likeable characters, and universal myths (the hero's myth), archetypes ("hero", "magician", "sage") and values ("friendliness", "winningness") underlying the message. By ghiblifying their images (adopting common features with Studio Ghibli characters and people worldwide using the tool), the politicians/characters become both "everyman" as well as personalized ("the hero/the heroin").

Through ghiblification, specific features can be highlighted, others faded out; the distortion of reality varies from small to huge. A complex situation can be simplified. Adding cuteness or a warm light, or using pastel colours sheds positive light on a story and on a character. The main aims in using the ghiblified images of politicians is to increase their likeability and the connection with the public, hoping that these memes will be virally shared.

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