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SEX, GENDER, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND RAPE ON THE RED PILL:
A THEMATIC AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

by

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ABSTRACT

The digital space has offered fertile new territory to connect with like-minded individuals and discuss anything and everything. This has resulted in the creation of the Manosphere, a collection of men concerned about the state of men and masculinity and how society views and treats men. One of the places online this community has found a home is the popular website Reddit, which offers the ability to create individual pages in which communities can form around and discuss and share information on almost any topic they desire.

This study aimed to investigate the ways in which one community on Reddit, The Red Pill, views and discusses gender, sex, and consent through the use of thematic and linguistic analysis of popular content posts. Results found that this community does not have unique or novel views of any of the topics, but taken these views to their inevitable extremes. Seeing men as stoic, rational, and concerned with increasing their success in life as well as their number of sexual partners and encounters. Women, on the other hand, are seen as emotional, child-like, manipulative, and concerned with leeching off of men's financial and social success.

This study represents one of the first examinations of the Manosphere and the emerging views of masculinity, femininity, and sex therein which have been ideologically connected to violent acts committed by young men within these groups. This study provides need detail and examples of how these online groups view gender and sex, and the ways in which they apply those views day-to-day out in the real world.

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault and harassment are, and have been for many years, major social and public health problems, the burden of which lies squarely in the laps of girls and women. 91% of all rape and sexual assault victims are female, and 1 in 3 women, compared to 1 in 6 men, will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime (Black et al., 2011; Rennison, 2002; Smith et al., 2017). The physical, mental, and social toll sexual assault and harassment take on the individual are numerous and both acute and chronic in nature, with the average economic burden to the victim being estimated at \$122,461 (Peterson, DeGue, Florence, & Lokey 2017).

Sexual assault and harassment, are, and always have been, primarily, problems resulting from the socially dominate expression of masculinity which promotes male violence and domination, especially toward women and a society which often excuses or ignore the violence, be it physical or not (Hearn, 2012; Posadas, 2017; Scott-Samuel, Stainstreet, & Crawshaw, 2009). While, in recent decades, some progress has been made in producing and promoting novel, less toxic expressions of masculinity which do not promote violent stoicism and misogyny, there has also been a marked social and cultural backlash which has attempted to buttress traditional, hegemonic forms of masculinity in order to preserve the gender status quo and associated structures (Flecha, Puigvert, & Rios, 2013; Hong, 2000).

The internet has served as a breeding ground to cultivate divergent and extreme forms of masculinity which minimize the risk and impact of sexual assault and strategize ways in which to maximize their number of sexual partners and encounter, often without little concern for consent, respect, or humanity (Ging, 2017; Mountford 2018). This process has moved quickly over the past ten years or so and while some work has already been done to investigate these spaces and

their associated masculinities, especially as media attention has piqued after the 2014 Isla Vista, California and 2018 Toronto killings committed by a young men who were radicalized to hate women within these online spaces (Baele, Brace, & Coan, 2019; Everett, 2018; Garvey, 2014).

The rhetoric of these spaces has already taken dozens of lives across several events around the globe and many more have likely been, and potentially will victimized directly and indirectly as well, more must be done to combat the violent misogyny of these spaces (Diaz & Valji, 2019; Gotell & Dutton, 2016; McKenzie, 2013). This study aims to contribute to a much needed expansion of our understanding of these spaces, their underlying ideologies, and the theorized masculinities therein.

Gender Liberation Movement

The Women's Liberation movement (Women's Lib) of the 1960s and 70s was a global movement which came from a growing desire to broaden and change the roles and behaviors women could occupy socially and economically, the impacts and continued social action we are still experiencing, and likely will for decades to come (Freeman, 1972; Giardina, 2010). A less well-known component of Women's Lib was the Men's Liberation movement (Men's Lib), which was conceived as doing for men what Women's Lib aimed to do for women; as feminist theory posits that gender norms restrict the emotional, social, and economically lives of all genders, just in different ways (Hillard, 2018; Lewis, 1981; Lindsay, 2015; Sawyer, 1970).

Men's Lib almost immediately faced internal ideological divisions over the powers and privileges afforded to men and masculinity, as well as the harms inflicted by traditional masculinity, which ultimately led to a schism (Allen, 2016; Messner, 1998). This schism left those involved one of two choices: Either moving closer to the roots of Men's Lib and embracing

feminist and critical theories around the toxic nature of traditional masculinity and the patriarchal structuring of society, or rejecting the narratives of feminism, focusing on specific issues facing men and blaming feminism and liberalization as the causes of modern woes (Maddison, 1999; Messner, 1998; Messner, 2016).

Men's Rights Movement

The Men's Rights Movement (MRM) arose from the Men's Lib members who chose to blame feminism for the problems faced by men and society and went on to gain, arguably, much more momentum than Men's Lib (Williams & Williams, 2017). The MRM focuses on laws and social orderings that negatively impact or appear prejudicial toward men, such as parental custody, child support, workplace injury and fatality, and suicide (Coston & Kimmel, 2012). The main philosophy of the MRM is that men and masculinity constitute what Maddison (1999) referred to as an "oppressed collectivity" in American society.

A major result of the ideologically unified, but topic specific nature of many MRM forums and communities was the large-scale, rapid differentiation of the MRM into various subgroups, such as the Father's Rights Movement which focuses on paternity law and a perceived sociolegal discrimination against fathers (Collier, 2009; Dinner, 2016). While this subgroups maintained a loose affiliation and continue, to this day, to share a large portion of their beliefs in common, some groups began to diverge significantly from the majority (Hunte, 2019). This differentiation was aided and accelerated by the advent of the internet which allowed for men across the world to connect, discuss, and form their specific views and ideology, creating what is now referred to as the Manosphere (Ging, 2013; Schmitz & Kazyak, 2016).

The Manosphere

The Manosphere, a term originally popularized in 2013, is typically used to describe as the loose network of bloggers, forums, communities, and other web-based interactions of the MRM (Ging, 2017). Many diverse groups have formed within the Manosphere, such as Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), which are men who believe removing any and all contact with women is the best action a man can take to improve his life (Lin, 2017). Along with growing diversity comes a growth in members, and as the Manosphere grew it became harder and harder for other parts of society to ignore (Ging, 2017).

The Manosphere at large has, in the past few years received increasing media attention, especially as young men who are openly a part of the Manosphere commit mass shootings across the country (Dewey, 2014). The label given to the perpetrators of these shootings is often, sometimes wrongly, Incel, which is a portmanteau for involuntary celibate, a term some young men identify with in online spaces (Ging, 2017). This label is sometimes born of a misguided, reduction of the Manosphere and now is the term most of the public is aware of to describe the young men who are a part of the Manosphere, despite the vast diversity therein.

While some members of the Manosphere openly identify as Incels, many do not, and there is a large amount of friction between subgroups, as to some Incel is a derisive term and something to be avoided (Ging, 2017). This friction is particularly strong between the Incels, who often commiserate and accept their status, and the Pick Up Artists (PUP) who's main goal is to maximize their number of sexual partners and spend a large amount of time developing strategies and tactics to achieve this goal (Marwick & Lewis, 2017).

Gender in Online Spaces

As Farrell and colleagues (2019) concluded that online spaces, particularly antifeminist ones such as the Manosphere, are becoming increasingly violent toward women and generally misogynistic, and some of this violent misogyny has found its way to spaces outside of the manosphere to dangerous and deadly ends (Coker et al., 2016; Xue et al., 2019; Zeppugno et al., 2019). The impact of the Manosphere in pushing its misogynistic and violent views of women require more attention from the academy, but casual misogyny and violence against women (VAW) are not inventions of the Manosphere, and, in many ways, while they concentrated and seat their misogyny and violence in a unique worldview, they did not invent online harassment of women or significantly iterate or deviate from the dominate patriarchal ideology of modern society (Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2016; Jane, 2016; Witz, 2013; Yllo & Straus, 2017).

One of the ways this takes shape online is through the narrative of false rape accusations, which anti-feminists and the Manosphere believe to be plainly obvious and exceedingly common, more so than legitimate sexual assault and harassment, and something men should be careful to avoid being victim of (Ullman, 2010). This belief is in direct opposition to the entire body of evidence on sexual assault, reporting and false accusation rates, and underreporting; with around 5% of all rape accusations being false, while only 25% of rape cases are reported (Ferguson & Malouff, 2016; Ferguson & Malouff, 2017; Chen & Ullman, 2010). The online narrative of false accusations and disbelief mirrors offline narrative seen from public reaction and often incorporated into victim-blaming narratives, with the common refrains being “she was asking for it” and “boys will be boys,” which seek to maintain the status quo by blaming women for their sexuality while absolving men because of theirs. (Cabrera, 2018).

These sentiments are widespread both online and off, but on forums within the Manosphere and elsewhere, misogyny and violent attitudes toward women are, due to their ideological uniformity, met only with confirming anecdotes and fellow believers, rarely encountering any countervailing arguments or beliefs (Breitsohl, Wilcox-Jones, & Harris, 2015). These communities also inoculate and prepare members for the counterarguments they are likely to encounter in spaces online and offline outside the forum, a strategy used by groups attempting to radicalize individuals to their cause in other arenas (van Erten et al., 2017). A large body of evidence has suggested that online pathways to extreme, violent forms of masculine identity also often lead to other radical ideologies such as white supremacy and extreme nationalism (Franson & Gallagher, 2019; Haider, 2016; Huey, 2015; Johnson, 2019; Marwick & Caplan, 2018).

Consent and Rape

Given that many Manosphere communities, as well as many in society, do not believe female victims of sexual assault and rape, much suspicion is directed at if or if not the encounter could be considered consensual. This belies a greater issues regarding discussions and beliefs surrounding consent in modern society which promote a culture which objectifies women and dismisses a woman's account almost without question (Baker, 2015; Phipps et al., 2018). Zaleski and colleagues (2016) looked at online social media forums with regards to rape culture and found that victim blaming and support for the perpetrator are common, particularly when the accused was a visible member of popular culture, in general suggesting society values the accused men more than the victimize women.

Much of the support for the accused arises from a warped view of what constitutes a consensual sexual encounter, how consent should be communicated, and when consent should be considered withdrawn and unattainable (Archard, 2019; Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013 Jozkowski

et al., 2014). Gotell and Dutton (2016) investigated the discourse within the Manosphere surrounding rape and found that sexual violence is often treated as a gender neutral phenomena, despite women being at incredibly greater risk compared to their male counterparts, and that the concept of rape culture is seen as a “feminist-inspired moral panic” (Black et al., 2011; Rennison, 2002). While the Manosphere has a tendency to be explicit, especially in comparison to wider societal norms, in their views of consent, sexuality, and sexual assault, more detailed analyses are required to gain a complete understanding of how they perceive and approach gender, sex, consent, assault, and harassment both in their private lives as well as in society (Van Valkenburgh, 2018).

The Red Pill

One of the largest forums for PUPs and Men’s Rights is called r/TheRedPill, which is a forum on the website Reddit, one of the largest websites on the internet which hosts hundreds of sub-forums, who’s tagline is “The Front Page of the Internet” (Duggan & Smith, 2013; Singer et al., 2014). It has been argued that Reddit is part of the Manosphere as it is home to many forums which delve into the topic such as r/MensRights and many more forums which have been said to promote a ‘toxic technoculture’ (Ging, 2017; Lumsden, 2019; Marwick & Caplan, 2018; Massanari, 2017). This has led to some forums being removed, such as R/FatPeopleHate, and others, such as TRP have been quarantined, meaning users are met with an explicit warning regarding the content of the forum before being able to access the content (Lumsden, 2019).

TRP takes its name from the Wachowski (1999) sister’s film, The Matrix, in which Neo, the main character, is offered the choice between a blue pill, which will allow him to continue to live, unknowingly, in the fabricated reality of the Matrix or a red pill which will let him see, as the film puts it by quoting Baudrillard (1994), the “desert of the real” and exist in the real,

physical world. The language of “taking the red pill” has constantly been used in various context as a metaphor for having a fundamental truth revealed, and the Manosphere in general coopts this language frequently (Ashkanasy, 2017).

Mountford (2019) conducted a topic model of the manosphere and found that 46% of nearly 60,000 analyzed documents focused on what they labeled “Goals and Growth,” which is a major focus of TRP as well. The explicit goals of TRP being to become as alpha and conventionally attractive as possible, which is achieved through discussions with other members on past behaviors and actions so corrective measures can be adopted and through physical exercise, primarily. The next most common topics were “Pickup,” “Personal Relationships Are Political,” and “Perspective Society,” all of which are frequent topics of discussion on TRP (Mountford, 2019).

Farrell and colleagues (2019) conducted a large scale analysis of misogyny in the manosphere, specifically focusing on several “popular” subreddits, according to the authors, which could be considered part of the Manosphere, these including pages such as r/MGTOW, all of which, while have sizable user bases, but do not come close to the last recorded, once it was quarantined user numbers are no longer shown, size of r/TheRedpill of over 400,000. Despite this Farrell and colleagues (2019) found that, among these groups, there is support for the conclusion that the rhetoric surrounding women online is increasingly violence and misogynistic. It was also found that the Manosphere spaces often offer two main responses, which TRP engages in as well, to modern feminism: “stoicism and flipping the narrative” (Farrell et al., 2019).

Van Valkenburgh (2018) conducted the first major qualitative assessment of TRP, analyzing the documents in their sidebar, a sort of glossary space for the forum, which includes

outside and internal documents sites, books, and articles TRP believes to be foundational to their belief. Van Valkenburgh (2018) found that they represent “an extension and acceleration of existing cultural norms,” focusing on rational scientific thought to support their dehumanizing commodification of women (O’Neill, 2018). Specifically Van Valkenburgh (2018) argues that TRP’s construction of a ‘sexual market value’ (SMV), scoring individuals on a 1-10 scale based on perceived attractiveness, demonstrates their fusion of socially conservative views with an economically conservative model, a model which likely aids in their objectification of women.

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods design to assess how TRP discusses gender, sex, rape, sexual assault/harassment, and consent. The qualitative portion consisted of a Thematic Analysis, using the Charmaz grounded theory approach to produce codes and themes. The quantitative portion was centered around the textual analysis tool, Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), which was used to analyze several discrete aspects of the sample. This approach offered both a robust, in-depth perspective, gained through the thematic analysis, as well as a broader view of the large-scale patterns of language and tone within TRP that quantitative, computer-based textual analysis can provide.

Sampling

Reddit has a search bar feature which allows anyone to search for posts based upon particular keywords, this feature also allows a search to be limited to a particular subreddit, in this case TRP. A list of search terms covering the topics of interest was developed, including terms such as, masculinity, femininity, sex, and sexual assault. Users on Reddit are able to “like” or “dislike” a post, these respectively give a post +1 or -1, giving every post a resulting aggregate score. Any post which was included in searches based on the keyword list with 1,000 or more aggregate likes, which contained original content, was included in this sample.

In total 11 different search terms were used, as more terms were used novel posts which had not been collected under previous terms became less and less common with the final term being used producing no new posts, this was considered the point of saturation. 109 posts met the 1,000 aggregate likes criteria for inclusion, 9 of which did not contain original content, such as

linking to other documents such as news articles or outside blogs. This left 100 posts, which contained 166,543 words, for analysis purposes.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis (TA) was conducted prior to the linguistic analysis to prevent any potential contamination of the coding and theme building process. The TA followed Charmaz's 2 step grounded theory process for coding. The first stage of coding, which is called initial coding, involves the coders remaining "open to exploring whatever theoretical possibilities" may exist within a given data set (Charmaz, 2014).

The second step, which is called focused coding, takes the codes found within the initial coding process and figuring out which codes appear most often and have the most significance to "sift, sort, and synthesize" through larger and larger amounts of data (Charmaz, 2014). The end result from both these stages are conceptual themes which are derived from, and consist of a collection of initial codes, and give a broad, theoretical analysis of the data. Typically, this process is conducted by several individuals, to provide a more reliability and validity to any codes or themes which may arise, but given the nature of this project, I was the sole coder for both the initial and focused coding stages.

Linguistic Analysis

LIWC is a textual analysis program that has a dictionary of around 6,400 word, stems, and emoticons and analyzes text for the occurrence of words falling into 90 output dimensions, including, but not limited to: positive/negative emotions, clout, analytic, emotional tone, and authenticity (Pennebaker, Francis, & Booth, 2001; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Most LIWC outputs are displayed as percentage of occurrence, for example, if the word 'data' is classified as

‘analytic’ and is 1 of 2 words in a sample, the analytic output will be 50%. LIWC has been widely used and validated both domestically and abroad over the past two decades in various contexts and methods (Balage, Pardo, Aluisio, 2013; del Pilar Salas-Zarate et al., 2014; Donohue, Liang, & Druckman, 2014; Huang et al, 2012; Jiagi, 2001).

Two LIWC dictionaries were used to conduct the LA for this study, the first being the primary, and most update-to-date, dictionary provided by LIWC, the 2015 LIWC Dictionary, which contains the above mentioned 90 output dimensions. The second dictionary used was developed by Lapinski et al (2013). to offer a more in-depth and nuanced analysis of emotion words within a text. This dictionary separates LIWC’s breaks emotional words into 16 discrete emotion categories to provide a deeper context than the base LIWC dictionary.

RESULTS

Thematic Analysis

The TA produced 6 distinct themes, which describe TRP's unique view of masculinity, their understanding of how women behave, how gender and sex are the result of evolutionary psychological pressures, the social decline which has resulted from a deviation from these norms, strategies for men to maximize their number of sexual partners, and first-person testimonials regarding the success TRP can bring. Overall, these themes describe a view of a world in decline as it has moved away from traditional, "correct" gender norms in favor of a misandrist, female world order which has left men in despair as masculinity is viewed as toxic by its very nature. In return, TRP offers a form of masculinity and view of gender and relationships which they believe to be based upon provable science and the key to boys and men being happy and successful professionally, socially, and romantically.

Extreme Hegemonic Masculinity

The specific form of masculinity presented by, and discussed at length, with TRP is, in many ways, not that divergent from well known and common traits assigned to hegemonic masculinity, particularly in the United States. The most present trait, which was consistently mentioned is what TRP refers to as "maintaining frame," encompasses men hiding their true intentions and feelings, remaining stoic, and focused on their goal in any personal interaction. They believe that by maintaining a strong frame a person is more likely to be treated the way they want, typically with respect, admiration, and attraction, as well as get what they want from a person or situation. The quotes below demonstrate how maintaining frame is a goal-oriented

tactic, as many ideas are on TRP, meant to give men an edge in achieving their desired outcomes, and sometimes to manipulate people and situations.

“My daughter's mom called me early in the morning to tell me she was pregnant. She asked me what she should do. This question is testing you in a lot of different ways. Are you going to freak out? Are you going to try to convince her to get an abortion? The correct answer is to say, in a calm and confident manner, for her to start taking prenatal vitamins... I knew immediately they would be able to see through Mom's ridiculous behavior if I just continued to maintain frame and play the perfect courtier.”

“If there is one thing that turns women off more than anything, it's neediness. A guy acts needy when he is so desperate to be with a girl that no matter what she does or says, he would still sleep with her. Neediness is suffocating. It shows that you take getting with a girl way too seriously and that you see yourself as incapable of getting another girl of her caliber if you wanted to.”

Frame is closely related to TRP's concept which they call “abundance mentality,” or the positive self-talk and view that you, as an individual, in this case a man, are more than enough, deserving, and that any rejection or negative influences in your life should not be worried about or affect your self-worth and confidence. In many ways TRP uses abundance mentality as a tool to aid in the maintenance of their frames and as a justification for not letting the stoic mask slip when rejected or dejected by an encounter or circumstance.

“You need to keep up your standards since mentality makes all the difference and once you start caving in to the occasional Miss McDonalds or Mrs. Human Potato Head since you've been having a "dry spell" then numerous problems will arise. Don't do it, only fuck who you believe you should be fucking (while also having major self confidence to uphold high standards). It's principles, it's self discipline and self control. It's right”

Abundance mentality is often intertwined with TRP's views of women, with the source of a man's confidence originating in his inherent superiority over women as a man, and the benefits that that entitles him to. This presents an internal dilemma, as a large focus on TRP is how men can increase their SMV, often by lifting weights and becoming more conventionally attractive, which would seem to run counter to the belief that a man has inherent value.

Abundance mentality and frame can often run at odds with the next piece of TRP's masculinity, one which is something many modern and historical masculinities have in common, the supremacy of logic and reason. TRP sees all of their beliefs as based within reason, evidence, and logic, and that anything of value must be based on reasoned, logical arguments. TRP also believes that men are inherently more logical and reasonable than women and that women are irrational, cannot sustain reasonable thought, and incapable, to a large extent, of changing that nature.

“Our society acts like “love” is an emotion and “our true selves” are our emotions, but that’s bullshit. Our value lies in what we can do when we are rational, what we’ve learned in our life, what we know how to do, and what we strive to achieve and be when we are clear-headed. Emotions are temporary and fleeting; but true love is a rational, credible commitment to your beloved’s well-being. In his dialogue the Phaedrus, the Greek philosopher Plato said that emotional love is a kind of madness – when things are going well, you are irrationally nice to the person out of proportion to what they deserve. When things are going badly, you are irrationally nasty to the person out of proportion to what they deserve. Women know that when you are irrationally nice to them you will eventually be irrationally shitty.”

This mentality is promoted to such an extreme that maintaining this frame is stated as requiring a rejection of reality, a man’s belief in himself and his goals should be so unshakable that not even objective facts can penetrate them. As the below excerpt makes clear, abundance mentality should rival religious faith in its strength of belief.

“Let’s do some logic. Women are attracted to confidence. Confidence is faith that you will succeed. Therefore, women are attracted to men who have faith they will succeed in fucking them. In other words, women want a guy to act like he already knows she will fuck him. Of course, you don’t actually know whether she will fuck you. But nevertheless, you must act as if you KNOW she will fuck you. You must bluff as if you know she will say yes. And even if you get rejected, you must move on to the next girl with the same confidence... you must see reality as governed by rationality and logic, and that all you need to do is use this rationality to achieve your goals. You must not see as reality as ‘out to get you.’”

TRP promotes what it refers to as the “Dark Triad” which are three traits women are instinctually attracted to, usually subconsciously, and that men should incorporate into their appearance and personality. These traits are narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Abundance mentality offers an easy approach to narcissism, psychopathy is rarely, if ever elaborated upon and was not apparent in this sample, but Machiavellianism, which TRP uses as a synonym for manipulation, is often brought up. Men should attempt to manipulate any situation or person into their favor however they can, from subtle body language or social cues to outright attempts at leveraging what they think are common psychological and neurological patterns to their purpose.

“So the final push to get this behaviour through to her limbic brain is to utilise a value which has already been "preapproved" by her unconscious as being important to her. This is a technique known as "tailgating". You take a value very close to another person's belief model, link it to the value/behaviour you wish to induce and the very association of the latter to the former stamps the signal approved for access to limbic brain to the package as a whole. Into her mind it goes to be unwrapped back into its two separate values once it's arrives. Machiavellian? Totally. Manipulative? Absolutely.”

All Women Are Like That

All Women Are Like That (AWALT) is a common refrain offered by users on TRP which is meant to encapsulate the fact that all women inherently share the same essence and basic traits which TRP ascribes to their gender. Often it is used as a reminder when users begin to see a woman in too positive of a light, that she is hypergamous, will manipulate, deceive, shit test, and hamster like every other woman has and will.

“You're better than her. (In every way except maybe taking care of a child) She's there for YOUR entertainment. (Treat her like a servant and ask her to do favors for you) She stopped maturing at 18. (Treat/tease her like a child.) She's a nasty dirty cumguzzling whore for the right guy. ALL girls are very sexual. (Don't fear sexual implication, you're a man, it's natural and masculine) You're more willing to walk away than her. Women need to feel that you do not need them. (Outcome Independence. This one is key. DO

NOT be more invested than her.) There's NOTHING that she can do to make you emotional and reactive. (Women should be literally incapable of getting under your skin. Nothing phases you. You've seen it all before and it's laughable when they try their mindfuck games)”

As a result, TRP looks at women with disdain, mistrust, and, often, outright hatred, always looking for a way to damage a man, his career, reputation, or life, if she thinks it might benefit her, in in the smallest of ways. Again, this presents a small disconnect, as women simultaneously are not capable of sustained logical thought, as previously mentioned, but also able to masterfully manipulate situations, even getting men convicted on false allegations of rape or swindling a man's assets out from under him in a divorce.

“But a simple cost/benefit analysis of the dating market reveals a whole lot of the former, significantly overshadowing the latter. Maybe you'll really hit the anti-lottery and get a false rape claim and have your life ruined. Maybe you'll play the long game, get married, and lose everything in a divorce. Or, even on a smaller scale, maybe you'll just discover that these fucking cunts aren't any fun to be around.”

Hypergamy is closely tied to the “alpha fucks/beta bucks” principle, as TRP sees women as constantly searching for a male of higher SMV, not necessarily seeking to marry, especially while in her younger years, riding what TRP calls the “cock carousel,” but more just seeking to fulfill her desire to have sex with as many alpha men as she can find.

“Refuse to Hone your Trinity and you might as well be invisible to her. Let your Trinity falter and she'll feel less secure in your protection and she will branch swing hypergamously until she finds a Man whose Trinity is unwavering. If she can't find one, she will opt to die alone if she doesn't need a man's finances, THAT is how strong the subconscious urge to pick masculine men is for women, because historically men that lacked this Trinity were killed and Women's offspring with these weak men were ripped away from them for slavery or food.”

Hamstering is an important piece of TRP's view of women and their psychology, and is closely tied to what they call “female solipsism,” which is the tendency for women (this is spoken of as exclusively a female trait) to couch everything they experience in term of their own lived experience and knowledge. Hamstering is the process of rationalizing any dissonance

between a woman's perspective and the outside world, which, as TRP terminology page says, "allows women to say one thing and do another."

"To be blunt: I've fucked an endless number of vocally feminist chicks, when I'm anything but. Of those that discovered it, not a single one was any less attracted, and all hamstered a reason for why my sexism was not the problem they would have sworn it'd be with anyone else. Lesson 4: women are all horny sluts who can't control themselves"

Women are also seen as inherently manipulative and deceitful by nature, wantonly lying to men to get what they want from them, toying with their emotions, and, when caught in a lie, slowly reveal the truth as the lie unravels in an attempt to hide as much as possible, TRP calls this 'trickle truth.'

"I maintained an emotionless and calm tone throughout the entire conversation. I'll spare you the drawn out trickle truth. It took 10 minutes to get the full story. There wasn't much to it: After our long weekend of sex, while texting me all day and night Monday, she had also messaged a friend to buy \$20 worth of weed. They smoked a bowl and had sex."

The deceptive nature of women easily becomes a justification for the deceptive tactics TRP employs when attempting to attract, have sex with women, and even to be in long-term relationships. Deception and manipulation are a part of the game of attraction and heterosexual relationships to TRP, and not making use of them puts any man at a disadvantage or else be a beta and a "chump," as the excerpt below states.

"See through the lies, the fakery and the image (mirage). Without getting bitter. It's not that women are evil for doing this. They're smart. And almost every chump falls for it and gets a sour deal. But you don't have to be one of them. This is good news for you, because you'll have little competition by being one of the few guys who 'get it.'"

Gendered Social Decline

To TRP the modern world is in decline and this is the direct result of society moving away from traditional gender norms and toward a breakdown of gendered differentiation and the promotion of novel, unnatural tendencies in both men and women, not to mention the rising

attention paid to people of other gender identities and sexual orientations. This perspective, as noted by Van Valkenburgh (2018), is very similar to the modern Conservative view in America, which blames all social ills on the abandonment of Judeo-Christian values and an overall secularization of the nation and its laws. Sometimes this language, as the below excerpt shows, is explicitly tied to religious conservatism by TRP.

“Faith was the glue that held conservative values together. There was a man in the sky watching over every woman's behavior. If she wanted to be in prime alpha selecting position she had to be a good, faith holding woman. Behavior swaying too far from the doctrine was condemned and shamed by society, no man would tolerate it... Without gods to judge us and direct our lives, humans become the gods of their own lives. What do gods do? Well, whatever they want. Add in a few wars, women entering the workplace, contraceptive pills, feminine law protection, globalization, the internet, cellphones, welfare and we have a society where woman are as free as they've ever been. And what does a free woman do? Well sample every Alpha penis that lands in her snatch of course.”

Feminism is mentioned as the primary source of the gender liberalization and resulting social decline, as it is seen as the primary, and most successful, social movement which has given women and men the social room within which to express their gender in divergent, novel ways. The most alarming characteristic of the social decline is the impact it has had on men and boys. To TRP most, if not all, problems modern men and boys have can be attributed to the movement away from, and social attitude toward, traditional masculinity.

“The rotten fruits of feminism have led to boys who are poorly equipped to deal with the world as men, and as such they escape from the difficulties of life by anaesthetizing themselves with video games and porn. People often attribute these things as reasons for the rise in male underachievement, however I believe this to be an inversion of cause and effect, and that these things are rather the coping mechanisms of choice for dealing with the difficulties that face the young blue pill beta male, not the cause of those difficulties.”

Biological Essentialism

Evolutionary psychology (EvoPsych) is a field which claims that modern human behavior can be explained by the lived conditions and experiences of our long dead ancestors through the same naturally selective processes which influence evolutionary biology (Buss, 1995). EvoPsych claims that certain psychological traits and behaviors would either be beneficial in survival or preferred by potential mating partners, and that others would not, and this selective pressure would cause some psychological traits and behaviors to become more common and for others to die out (Buss, 1995). Because of the nature of psychology there exists very little concrete evidence or record of ancestral psychology, and EvoPsych publications are often criticized and accused of misapplying and misinterpreting genetics, biology, and evolution to fit their models (Brinkmann, 2011; Lloyd & Feldman, 2002).

“Evolution has designed women to be very flexible in terms of who they’ll become attracted to. Women would rather fuck an ugly guy with a strong frame (i.e. a natural leader) than a handsome guy with a weak frame (cowardice, uncertainty). That’s because women who chose to fuck the latter ultimately had their genes rooted out of existence by the brutal conditions of ancestral life... Women want to submit to you. They want to submit to a strong man. But she can’t submit to you if your frame is weaker than hers. Physiologically, girls can’t even become wet for a guy who has a weaker frame than they do. It’s literally impossible.”

Much in this way, TRP believes men can be split into two main categories, alpha and beta, with alphas embodying the previously described extreme hegemonic masculinity, whereas betas are more socially considerate, open with their feelings, and generally less traditionally masculine (Coston & Kimmel, 2012; Ging, 2017). This divide is summarized by TRP with the phrase “Alpha fucks/Beta bucks,” which is shorthand to describe how alpha men get sex from women, and betas are used for their money by women.

“So, basically Alpha Fucks, on a long-term basis? Yes. My experience is that women don't really care about money as long as you are a stud, and, as I've said many times, the need for comfort is really way overstated on TRP. To be protected from the hard edges of life and to have fun is all women really want. If they want more, I really do not care.”

Pick Up Artistry

Pick Up, or Pick Up Artistry (PUP), is the strategic, calculated approach to, mostly, heterosexual dating, attraction, and sex, with the aim of maximizing the number of sexual partners of the highest perceived value. Many of the previous themes, such as frame, TRP's expression of masculinity, and their AWALT views of women, inform the ways in which TRP strategizes and views attempts at a “pick up.” For example, maintaining your frame is, as it is often, considered a keystone of getting a woman to have sex with you. A main pillar of PUP is that when attempting to attract a woman or beginning to engage in sex, a “no” or rejection from the woman does not mean “no” and often it is the role of the man to push past this resistance and persevere regardless.

“‘Rejection’ is not rejection... If she was attracted to me (which she later told me she was), why did she appear to “reject” me? Answering this question is the THE KEY to mastering all of game and social dynamics.”

This is used as a fallback justification for TRP view that most rape allegations are false, because even when a woman says no or rebuffs a man's advances, she doesn't actually mean it, so how exactly can a woman deny or withdraw consent when “rejection is not rejection?” As a result, most discussion of rape and sexual assault are firsthand experiences which are used as examples of false accusations, which give a framework of doubt and suspicious to be applied to any accusation, particularly when the accuser is a woman.

“Teenage girls who cry and make up stories to try and get themselves out of trouble grow up to be the kind of woman who will make false rape and abuse allegations in order to get back at men who make them angry. If there had not been hard physical evidence, witnesses, and documentation of what went on in my classroom today, it would have

been an issue of "he said, she said," with not only this position, but my entire career on the line. Nothing like a child abuse charge to have one's teaching credentials revoked."

Testimonial

One of the main reasons TRP exists, and the underlying purpose of most content in the community, is to help users become happier, healthier, and more successful in all aspects of their life. This is constantly expressed in their posts with users describing, at length, the ways in which adopting TRP philosophy and worldview has, sometimes drastically, improved their lives, internally and externally.

These testimonials typically have three parts, the first being an account of how miserable the individual was and the "beta" traits which they believe were the cause of their misery. The second is typically a description of a transitional period, in which they begin to have their eyes opened to TRP and they see marginal, slow improvements in their life and ability to attract women. The third and final stage is, usually, the assessment of how much their life has transformed, for the better, as a result of the adoption of TRP views, how many women they have had sex with and their associated sexual market values, and how much happier they are in general.

"My student was as beta as they come, he is a changed man. Complete 180. What happened? He's still the same person, he just learned how to be free. How to get in touch with his masculinity and do and say what HE wants to say. He had it all along the only problem was he was trying to be cool. He was overthinking every little thing. He was programmed as most of us are before discovering TRP that he had to act a certain way and couldn't act the way his inner beast wanted him to act. He would talk to me normal as day but in the presence of a female say some stupid shit that he thought up in his head for the last 15 minutes."

These testimonials serve the primary function of giving firsthand examples of how TRP can help a man become happier and more successful in his life, being a sort of marketing strategy for the forum, but they also serve as a mark of commitment, history, and authority for the person

making the post. as the below quote demonstrate, this isn't just about telling you how great TRP is and how much it will change your life, but also why you should listen to what this person has to say.

“I have been in the game or "red-pilled" for 8 years now. I was a virgin going into college and read "the game" and a ebook about college game on the internet. Forget the name. Anyways I got laid here and there but struggled with women throughout college and was generally awkward and socially unaware. I think the turning point for me was about a year after college, since then I've slept with over 100 women some were gorgeous and some were complete dogs and I don't say that lightly. Had a few relationships along the way as well.”

Linguistic Analysis

The analysis within the LIWC 2015 dictionary showed several unique characteristics of TRP posts compared to the LIWC averages. As shown in Table 1, despite TRP being concerned with basing their behaviors in science and reason, they make similar use of analytic language (~54%) compared to the LIWC average (~56%). TRP were significantly less authentic (~28.5%) compared to the LIWC average (~49.2%) and used words associated with clout significantly more (~79%) than the LIWC average (~58%).

Table 1

LIWC 2015 Dictionary Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics	M (%)	LIWC mean (%)	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Analytic	53.982	56.34	19.038	-1.240	<.001
Clout	79.023	57.95	15.435	13.653	<.001
Authentic	28.499	49.17	21.730	-9.513	<.001
Tone	36.380	54.22	25.645	-6.957	<.001
Positive Emotions	3.390	3.67	1.896	-2.34	0.01
Negative Emotions	3.110	1.84	1.446	8.786	<.001
Female Referent	3.282	0.98	2.124	10.841	<.001
Male Referent	2.050	1.65	1.993	2.008	0.024

The emotion dictionary provided a look at which emotion words are the most common in TRP posts. Compared to the mean emotion percentage, anger words were the most common at 1.16% of all words in the 100 posts, followed by thrill (0.89%), and pride (0.86%). The least common type of emotion words were guilt (0.06%), envy (0.04%) and jealousy (0.002%), representing only 0.102% of all words.

Table 2

LIWC Analysis of Emotion Words Compared to Mean Emotion Value (0.35%)

Descriptive Statistics	M (%)	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Anger	1.162	0.995	8.134	<.001
Anxiety	0.201	0.210	-7.208	<.001
Compassion	0.491	0.395	3.504	<.001
Disgust	0.593	0.451	5.340	<.001
Envy	0.041	0.139	-22.320	<.001
Fear	0.093	0.165	-15.720	<.001
Guilt	0.066	0.121	-23.610	<.001
Happiness	0.341	0.279	-0.406	0.34
Hope	0.695	0.466	7.349	<.001
Jealousy	0.002	0.010	-345.340	<.001
Love	0.568	0.498	4.329	<.001
Pride	0.864	0.497	10.296	<.001
Relief	0.203	0.184	-8.112	<.001
Sadness	0.344	0.336	-0.250	0.4
Shame	0.451	0.354	2.788	<.001
Thrill	0.889	0.538	9.966	<.001

DISCUSSION

The ways in which TRP conceptualizes masculinity and femininity, and their associated constructs, as this analysis has shown, are not entirely original, and largely pull from existing social tropes and narratives surrounding gender, sex, and sexuality. Men and masculinity are assumed to have purview over rationality, to be stoic, emotionless, and driven by success in all arenas. This is supported by the linguistic analysis which found that TRP uses words associated with clout at a much higher rate, reflecting their obsession with improving their status. While women and femininity are derided as consumed by emotions and irrationality, unable to control themselves, overly personalize every situation, and seek to abuse and use the success men fight for, be it physical, financial, or psychological. Overall, TRP is more concerned with discussing women than men, which is shown in their increased use of female referents compared to male ones.

These gender norms, to TRP, are not the result of centuries of social structures and traditions but arise from essential psychobiological traits which have evolved over millennia and are inherent in every person. This belief is supported by their adoption of Evo Psych and its associated principles surrounding the heritability of psychological traits, tendencies, and behaviors. They are consistently concerned with sourcing their beliefs from evidence, logic, and reason, as they believe these to be the only path to true understanding and knowledge. Interestingly, the linguistic analysis showed that TRP is no more analytic than the average sample of writing, despite their claims to focusing on supporting their discussions with logic and rationality.

To the men of TRP, a move away from these traditional, biologically sourced gender roles within the last 40 years has caused a large amount of social and personal strife for men and

boys as their inherent masculinity has become demonized and they lambast in a resulting depression, soothing themselves with pornography and videogames unable to attract women to have sex and relationships with them. This view of the world and their own situations is perhaps reflected in the results from the linguistic analysis which show they make use of negative emotion words at a much higher rate than the average text, and use positive emotion words less frequently.

At the heart of many of themes found within this study, lies deep contradictions, which TRP seems to either willfully ignore or be unaware of. For example, TRP believes in Evo Psych and the essential nature of gender roles, yet the entire enterprise of TRP is to help men change their gender expression from that of a beta to an alpha. If men and women inherit their psychology, and it has been passed down from our prehistoric ancestors, much in the same way that physical biological traits are, all the way to modern day, then why must men be taught them on an internet forum like TRP?

The views TRP has of gender promote behaviors and views toward sex and consent that promote sexual harassment and worse. TRP believes men should pursue women without unflappable confidence, that “rejection is not rejection,” and that women instinctually want to have sex with them, assuming they are alpha. This perspective quite clearly lays the groundwork for a man to violate a woman’s bodily integrity, because biologically she wants him and he must “maintain frame,” as giving up is what betas do, and being a beta is akin to death for users on TRP.

A disregard for the rights of women is supported by their views of women as inherently inferior to men. Women are commonly referred to as children, said to be incapable of rational thought, not worthy of the same respect a man pays to another man, and instinctually desiring to

be submissive and have sex with as high status a man as she can find. From this point of view, what right to bodily integrity does a woman have and why shouldn't a man give her what she wants deep down in her psyche? This then translates into disbelief and skepticism of almost any sexual harassment, assault, and rape allegations coming from women.

Overall, TRP, while packaging their beliefs in unique and creative phrases, does not present a novel view of gender, sex, and rape, so much as they present the traditional view of these topics taken to their extremes. TRP takes young, vulnerable men and boys who feel society has left them to suffer and gives them a guidebook on how to be happy, have sex, and achieve their goals, as well as a group of other men and boys who will offer a sense of community, support, knowledge and guidance along the way, a tempting offer to any lonely young person who has yet to find or lost their footing in the world.

Limitations

Forums like TRP are extremely large, with thousands of posts and many more comments made over the years they have been active, likely representing millions of words, this study represents but a tiny fraction of the data and information on TRP. Future larger studies, with both more resources and researchers, would benefit by collecting a larger sample and to have a team of coders in order to provide greater depth, context, and reliability and validity to the resulting themes and conclusions. I made use of grounded theory for the thematic analysis as it provides an approach which is designed to limit the influences of coder bias and preconceptions, which, when coding data in isolation, could be difficult to account for.

APPENDIX: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPTION



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

Memorandum

To: Walker Talton
From: UCF Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Date: July 6, 2020
Re: Request for IRB Determination

The IRB reviewed the information related to your thesis *SEX, GENDER, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND RAPE ON THE RED PILL: A THEMATIC AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS*.

As you know, the IRB cannot provide an official determination letter for your research because it was not submitted into our electronic submission system.

However, if you had completed a Huron submission, the IRB could make one of the following research determinations: "Not Human Subjects Research," "Exempt," "Expedited" or "Full Board".

Based on the information you provided, this study would have been issued an Exempt Category 4(i) determination outcome letter had a request for a formal determination been submitted to the UCF IRB through Huron IRB system.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB irb@ucf.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renea Carver".

Renea Carver
IRB Manager

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