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Disciplinary Rhetoric

And the Language of Online Rape Culture

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Abstract

Much research has been done on toxicity and harassment online, and one aspect of the internet that few like to admit exists, is the pervasiveness of sexual assault threats as means to threaten, silence and intimidate fellow users on the internet, especially female users. It is the goal of this thesis to investigate what scholar Emma A. Jane dubs "Rapeglish", the phrase for the regularity of how all women experience sexual violence on the internet through unsolicited verbal contact. Combining the words "rape" and "English" to highlight just how common these threats have become on the internet. Almost like its own language. This thesis will be using screenshots of messages uploaded to multiple subreddits on the popular internet forum Reddit, in support and/or contrast to this phenomenon. Primarily subreddits working as support groups for people who have encountered harassers on the internet, as well as subreddits designed to ridicule these same harassers. Much work will be done on why men on the internet use the threat of sexual assault as a weapon when communicating online, what type of men does this, how they do it, what phrases they use, where these phrases originate, and the results they produce, intentional or not.

Keywords

Sammendrag

Mye forskning er gjort på giftig og trakasserende språkbruk på nettet, og et aspekt ved internettet som få liker å innrømme eksisterer, er utbredelsen av trusler om seksuelle overgrep som et middel til å true, tie og skremme andre brukere på internett, spesielt kvinnelige brukere. Det er målet med denne oppgaven å undersøke hva forsker Emma A. Jane kaller «Rapeglish», kallenavnet for hav hun mener er regelmessigheten av hvordan alle kvinner opplever seksuell vold på internett gjennom uønsket verbal kontakt. Ved å kombinere ordene "voldtekt" og "engelsk" for å markere hvor vanlige disse truslene har blitt på internett. Nesten som sitt eget språk. Denne oppgaven vil bruke skjermbilder av meldinger lastet opp på flere subreddits på det populære internettforumet Reddit, for å støtte og/eller stille kontrast til dette fenomenet. Primært subreddits som fungerer som støttegrupper for folk som har blitt utsatt for trakassering på internett, samt subreddits designet for å latterliggjøre de som trakasserer. Det skal jobbes mye med hvorfor menn på internett bruker trusselen om seksuelle overgrep som et våpen når de kommuniserer på nettet, hvilken type menn gjør dette, hvordan de gjør det, hvilke fraser de bruker, hvor disse frasene kommer fra, og resultatene de produsere – med vilje eller ikke.

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I could not have done any of this without all of you.

Thank you…

Contents

List of abbreviations

SJW	Social Justice Warrior, someone who is preoccupied woth social justice
MGTOW	Men Going Their Own Way, a men's rights movement
PUAs	Pick up artists, usually men who practice the "art" of seduction
Feminazi	Derogatory term combining the words "feminist" and "nazi"
r/	a subreddit on the website "Reddit"
White knight	Someone who comes to the rescue of others for selfish reasons
4chan	A website infamous for hosting hateful and toxic communities
8chan	An offshoot of 4chan, with even less regulations of permitted content
Alpha males;	The dominant male in a group.
Beta males	A subordinate man, usually contrasted to the Alpha-male
Sigma male	A dominant male who exists outside the traditional hierarchy
Incel	Involuntary celibate
Chad	A traditionally attractive man who is hypermasculine
Stacy	A traditionally attractive women who is hyperfeminine
Becky	A conventional mediocre woman who also rejects incels
NPC	A non-playable character
Snowflake	Someone who is easily offended
***Gate	A controversial incident, followed by the word "gate"
Fringe	Not part of something mainstream

1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is this for?

It is no secret that the power of anonymity encourages behavior that would otherwise shun the average inflammatory user. Sites like "Reddit" and "4chan" are often seen as the online de facto homes of inflammatory groups. But their rhetoric is found everywhere, from the fringes of the darkest corners of the internet, to your local newspaper, to your child gaming lobby. But all social media platforms are homes to comments that quickly get deleted, moderated, or censured to make these same sites more accessible to all potential users, no matter the age or other affiliation. Sites like Twitter, Reddit and 4chan vary in moderation, from very moderated to somewhat moderated, to virtually no moderation at all. The less restrictions on language online, the less restrictive the potential userbase is going to be to its fellow users. This was partly the basis for Emma A. Jane's research into the world of sexual assault threats on the internet.

It should be stated that when discussing men and women, the use of gender will be the referring to the societal construct, not the sex-based description referring to chromosomes sex-organs or hormones. For a long time, sex and gender was often used interchangeably, with little nuance for gender non-conforming people, non-binary people, or intersex individuals. When using words like "men" and "women", I will be referring to gender in the societal sense. After all, an individual who presents themselves as female, either through real life, or digitally with a female avatar/profile picture, is far more likely to experience sexual violence on the internet than male-presenting/identifying individuals. And that is what's being analyzed here. It should also be mentioned that despite this thesis focusing on the struggles of women, and the men who harass women, etc., when I discuss the challenges women face, it is a given that men of course face the same issues, only through different context and on a different scale. So, keep that in mind. I know this as a man who has had to read a lot of, let's say, harsh comments in the last year.

It should also be stated by several male dominated groups from both mainstream channels and fringe channels will be researched to establish the pervasiveness of rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance being defined as a decreased sympathy towards rape victims – male and female. And an increase in sympathy towards perpetrators of sexual assault. As well as discussions on the dehumanizing worldview towards certain people on the internet holds towards women, feminine behavior, and feminism as a whole. This thesis will

show how rape myth acceptance starts at an early age through popular media, spread on social media platforms, and manifest on the most irregulated forums on the internet. With black-pilled incels being the be-all end-all result of this.

There will also be a chapter on popular culture, as a reference to how movies, games and other types of entertainment bleeds into the mainstream, as we see a growing userbase of women actively engaging in areas that used to be much more male dominated. Because if we don't acknowledge the rage that is permeating male dominated arenas, how are we to understand them the way other people do? By other people I mean people like Steve Bannon, former Chief Strategist for President Donald Trump, who took notice of their ferocity and ability to band around populist and anti-feminist ideologies, especially in the wake of *Gamergate* in 2014. To quote the man directly: "*These guys, these rootles white males, had monster power*" – "*it was pre-reddit It's the same guys on Thottbot who were [later] on reddit*" (Green, 2017, p145-146). It is my hope that someone will read this and think "wow, there sure is a lot of filth on the internet, but perhaps we can catch it before it even exists?"

1.2 Methodology and data gathering

While I was researching Reddit in preparation for this very thesis, I posted a comment on r/IncelTears regarding help from a community dedicated to ridiculing so called "incels", and their bizarre, vitriolic and sometimes unintentionally funny rhetoric – gauging if people would be willing to share screenshots or stories of their online encounters with them incels. Unfortunately, despite thousands of views, only a handful of people responded to my post. But one of the commenters suggested that I instead just browse down the subreddit for examples of hostile and disciplinary rhetoric. So that is what I did. After excluding those who did not fit the definition of rape threats, I had collected precisely 66 screenshots from the subreddits r/IncelTears and r/CreepyPMs. I was then able to compare the messages to the examples used in Emma Jane's "rape generator". An online algorithm that produces a rape threat in various ways. I wanted to find out is Jane's hypothesis of the impersonal nature of rape threats matched those I found on Reddit, and the private messages that people have posted there.

Jane's theories regarding Rapeglish can be summed up as the following:

1. *The vile, sexualized, and aggressive language thrown at women on the internet feels deeply personal in its vivid descriptions of desire to harm, threaten and*

intimidate its recipients. This is done to make the receiver perceive the message as more personal than it actually is.

2. *The sexualized cyber-bullying put next to each other all become one blurry mess of idioms, nouns, adjectives, and phrases that are in fact, not personal at all, but randomly thrown together without much thought.*

3. *The primary reason for sexualized cyber-bullying, such as Rapeglish, is due to a hateful desire to silence and intimidate women from public discourse, due to ideological reasons.*

These theories form the basis of her book *Misogyny Online: A Short (and brutish) History* (Jane, 2017, a), which works as a companion piece to the *RRTG*, the previously mentioned "*Random Rape Threat Generator*". A now offline generator that produced sentences consisting of a random set of rape threats to mimic the a-typical sexualized threats that women receive on the internet. In other words, this thesis is part content analysis of the data gathered on Reddit to either support or disprove the theories of Emma A. Jane, as well as part literature review of Jane's work.

1.2.1 Emma A. Jane:
   o *Misogyny Online: A short (and brutish) history* (2017) (a).
   o *Systemic misogyny exposed: Translating Rapeglish from the Manosphere with a Random Rape Threat Generator* (2017) (b).
   o *What the Random Rape Threat Generator Tells Us About Online Misogyny* (2017) (c).

1.3 Research goal

It is the purpose of this thesis to research rape culture on the internet, specifically the language of sexual assault on the internet using the work of Emma Jane as a basis, in terms of what she calls "Rapeglish", as it consists of threatening and sexualized adjectives, nouns, phrases etc., aimed at women, often for the crime of merely existing. So, to summarize, my research questions are as follows:

1. *What type of language is "Rapeglish", and does it classify as its own language in the way Emma Jane describes, when compared to the Reddit data?*

2. *Are there traces of Rapeglish on other parts of the internet?*

3. *What are the solutions as presented by the various authors of this thesis?*

CW

A content warning is advisable, as this thesis delves into matters such as suicide, self-harm, sexual assault, harassment, and general fatalistic ideologies that might not be suitable for alle readers. Viewer discretion is advised.

2.0 Why are men?

"Misogyny has, in short, gone viral" – Emma A. Jane, in her book: Misogyny Online: A Short (and brutish) History (2017a).

2.1 Rape culture

Rape culture can be defined in multiple ways, from multiple perspectives. Martha R. Burt of the Urban Institute in Washinton DC, states that rape culture as a "pervasive ideology that effectively supports or excuses sexual assault" (Johnson & Johnson, 2021, 7). It is at the core of why sexual threats and harassment is excused and minimized, both in real life and on the internet. It exists to both justify the number of sexual assaults that happen by blaming the victims, while also undermining the responsibilities of the assailants. But before we continue to discuss rape culture on the internet, we need to define what rape culture is, and how it is a part of what feminist scholars have dubbed "the patriarchy". Rape culture as a theory originated in The United States around the 1980s and was expanded upon in the 1990s to explain the theory of rape acceptance (ibid, 70). Rape culture can, according to Johnson & Johnson (2021), be constant of five key components: *traditional gender roles, sexism, adversarial sexual beliefs, hostility towards women,* and *acceptance of violence*. All combined leads to a society with a high rate of sexual assault, and more importantly, a low number of rape reports. The ratio of unreported rape crimes compared to the number of rapes happening, and the unwillingness to investigate such crimes, can help define just how bad rape culture is. After all, most people would never claim to be pro-rape, or be an active supporter of rape culture. But some people do, and it is those people who are at the core of the data that is to be analyzed here. But first we should define each of the five previously mentioned components of rape culture (ibid, 72-75):

2.1.1 Traditional gender roles

Traditional gender roles can be defined as a societal assumption of duties, responsibilities, norms, and expectations that is aimed at men and women. Traditional gender roles currently do not include any similar expectations for anyone who fall outside the heteronormative male and female binary. Hens how LGBTQAI+ people are, along with women, the most negatively affected by traditional gender roles. But men are also victims, in their own way. In a society that includes strong emphasis on traditional gender roles, men are thought from birth to show masculine traits of strength, leadership, aggressive stoicism, and emotional

seclusion. This has the negative feature of both disallowing men to be in touch with their emotional sides, and present traits of strength as exclusively masculine. Hens, why feminine traits are portrayed as weak, submissive, modest, and emotional. To summarize, in a society consisting of strict, traditional gender roles, men are dominant, and women are submissive. This puts the power imbalance safely in the favor of the men who uphold it, in favor of staying in power. Which leads back to the concept of patriarchy. Patriarchy can be defined as "social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically—hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space" (Hunnicutt, 2009, 556).

2.1.2 Sexism

Sexism can be defined as having discriminatory views against people based on people's sex assigned at birth, stereotyping them to various degrees. Despite sexism being constant of multiple layers of societal constructs, Johnson & Johnson (2021) breaks sexism down into two important barriers when it comes to sexism towards women: benevolent sexism and hostile sexism. Benevolent sexism defines itself as the chivalrous need of men to protect "the fearer sex", not only form other men, but from themselves, robbing women of their agency. Which again leads to victim blaming and the control of women who experience sexual assault. Then there is hostile sexism, which is a more overtly form of negativity shown towards women compared to men, where rape culture is lives through the belief of superiority of one sex over another.

2.1.3 Adversarial sexual beliefs

Adversarial sexual beliefs are the belief that all sexual activity between two or more individuals is fundamentally transactional and exploitative. This belief has the fundamental views that men want sex and only sex, based on societal expectations of men's sexual prowess, while women are inherently shrewd and manipulative to the core. For example, if a woman is date-raped, one argument fitting this category could be that the women should have known that sex was to be expected when being around a man, therefore she only has herself to blame for the unwanted outcome. Research shows that people who endorse adversarial sexual behavior, men and women alike, are more likely to practice victim-blaming and excuse rape and sexual assault (ibid, 74).

2.1.4 Hostility toward women

Hostility toward women is inherently linked to adversarial sexual beliefs in the sense that if women are in fact as deceitful, conniving, and cold as some men belief, then it is only right for men to use their superior physical strength to dominate and protect themselves, as women cannot be trusted. This belief legitimizes violence towards women as an act of self-defense from the fairer sex. Research indicated that individuals holding more hostile views towards women are more likely to practice more coercive sexual behavior.

2.1.5 Acceptance of violence

Acceptance of violence. Finally, the last component of rape culture is one that affects all aspect of society. Acceptance of violence can refer to everything from corporal punishment of children, violence in war, penal code of violence, and more. However, in rape culture, acceptance of violence can refer to a convergence of violence and sex, like unwanted, rough acts during sexual intercourse to establish dominance, which is portrayed as stimulating in the porn industry at a rate that has shifted sexual behavior at the expense of women's safety and plesure.

2.2 So, in short…

To sum up, rape culture is the collimation of a variety of components that all work to minimize, justify, and even on some level even support sexual assault as a natural part of society and humanbiology, using historical president, pseudo-science, and more. Johnson & Johnson (2021) emphasize how rape culture must be viewed through a lens of socially shared values, and not just on an individual level. After all, most of us would hopefully never claim to be either perpetrators or supporters of rape directly.

The problem of rape culture also one of ignorance. What men and women counts as rape can vary. For example, in one study by the scientific journal *Violence and Gender* found that in a pool of 86 participants, all of whom were white heterosexual males in college, 31,7% of them, roughly one third, claimed they would force a woman to have sexual intercourse of in a consequence-free situation (Edwards et al, 2014). In other words, if there were absolutely no negative consequences to male interviewee, they would commit rape. What stands out in the study, besides the worrying numbers, is that of those 31,7% the numbers shrink to 13,6% when asked if they would rape a woman without consequences. Which might sound

confusing, as forcing sexual intercourse on someone and is precisely the same as raping them. Not according to the men who makes up the gap between these numbers. There seem to be a key understanding with the male participants separating the act of rape with what is traditional hypermasculine courtship. Hypermasculinity can be defined as "exaggerated machismo deriving from stereotypical images of men, including notions that men should be strong, dominant and though" (ibid.)

Natasha Tripathi, in a response to this research, argues that most men know that rape is reprehensible and wrong, but that many times, perpetrators would not define their own behaviors as rape (Tripathi, 2015). The cognitive dissonance between "rape is bad, but not when I do it" gives men a false sense of superiority to other more violent men. Or men who they perceive to be violent. The stereotypical rapist does not exist only in a fraternity of young men drinking beer at college. Or at least not in the minds of many men. Tripathi goes on to state that this research is consistent with other studies conducted at other male dominated spaces, such as colleges, fraternities, athletes, and the military. In other words, it is safe to conclude that these vague definitions of rape are as a big of a problem with male dominated spaces on the internet.

2.3 It's just a joke, and men get trash talked too!

One popular way to shield even the most vicious insults is the old "it's just a joke" claim. It signals that any insults given should not be taken seriously, and unfairly puts the burden of dealing with such rhetoric on the receiver. Failure to ignore the mental damage such comments does only works to further alienate the receiver as "sensitive", insinuating that such toxic comments are to be expected and respected in certain communities of naturally harsh language. It makes sexism and toxicity to be normalized and minimized in a matter that only hurts certain people in certain ways.

Previously in this thesis, we talked about multiple ways rape is normalized, socially and linguistically. Author Kristi Cole (2015) of the Minnesota State University researched the sexualized backlash to investigating, discussing, and talking about feminism publicly, and found that one of the most common responses from men that were negatively charged, were in fact rape threats. More importantly, a significant portion of these threats were labeled with acronyms like "LOL" (laughing out loud) and "lmao" (laughing my ass off). Or a laughing/smiling emoji to accompany lewd comments. Cole argues that the presence of

humor, when used, does not remove the act of threatening, but works to discipline the user to accept it as "just a joke". To quote her directly:

"*The use of humor by these trolls indicates a cultural logic that is normatively biased towards and comfortable with the violent discipline of women in order to keep them in their perceived place*" (Cole, 2015, p357).

Another way gendered discourse presents itself to normalize and minimize rape is how the word "rape" is used in everyday discourse. Especially in spaces made for young men, like gaming. Author Kishonna L. Gray writes in her book *Feminism in Play* (2018) about how the phrase "rape the boss" is more often used towards female game bosses (difficult enemies in games) in MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games), than on male bosses. And by primarily male gamers as well. One Brazilian study interviewed men and women to find their views on the phrase "rape the boss" while gaming – and found that 55% of men does not relate the phrase to non-consensual sex at all. And 60% of women interviewed relates the phrase to gender (Gray, 2018, 156-157). Gray points out how rape culture works differently in Brazil then it does in other countries, emphasizing how *machismo* plays a larger role in the cultural views on gender than outside South America, where the patriarchy persists in other ways under other names and phrases. Gray uses this data to point out many men's inability to even recognize the gendered rhetoric used in gaming. And women having their worries ignored leads to what Gray calls a "*naturalization of sexism in society as a way to avoid conflict and gender dispute in with the hegemonic public*" (ibid, 158). In other words, confronting one's own sexist bias and actually doing sometime about it is hard, and a part of a long and tedious process of reassessing what is and isn't acceptable in today's society.

The same can be said for what gamers commonly refer to as "ear rape", which happens when someone on the other side of the microphone increases their volume to a degree that hurts the receiver's ear (Laycock, 2022, 73). Such casual uses of such loaded words to describe mild inconveniences lessons the severity of the act itself. To summarize. Sexualized cyber bullying and gendered trash talk on the internet affects women disproportionately compared to men, despite the popular misconceptions.

The idea that vile rhetoric is used casually to throw others off guard is not a new one. Jean-Paul Sartre (1995) comments on weaponizing language in terms of how (neo)nazis in particular revels in their abrasive use of words they know their adversaries would not use,

playing load and loose with words in order to outshout the competition, or even better, bait your adversaries into adopting your language, losing the moral high-ground (Sartre, 1995, 20).

2.3 Digital hate and sexual assault

Scholar Emma A. Jane starts her book by asking a big question regarding the psychology of online harassment:

"Are these graphic articulations of misogynist vitriol an internet phenomenon, or are they the types of things men have always said or thought about women in private?" (Jane, 2017, (a) 2).

Jane states correctly that while cyber harassment is new, the belief that women should be reduced to either their heightened or lack of sexual prowess is an old one, stemming back to the birth of civilization itself. And rape to be a "lesson" to women being too promiscuous, or not being promiscuous enough, strongly predates the internet. So, while sexism itself it not on trial here, the increased use of sexualized threats as a way of communicating hatred, flirtatious emotions or even "jokes" as some see it, is. Because Rapeglish pops up in all these situations. There are of course several ways for regular harassment on the internet, not related to gender. There is the act of doxing someone, as in releasing someone's personal information in order to inflict a sense of fear on the recipient, usually in the form of publishing someone's home address, or even the address of their family's home. Another way of intimidation is swatting, as is in making a false police report claiming that someone with a gun is holding hostages, only to have SWAT units (Special Weapons and Tactics) and other police forces barge in guns blazing on unsuspecting victims. There have been several instances of this happening while the victim is live on a digital stream, usually on streaming platforms such as *Twitch* or *YouTube*. Finally, there is the criminal act of revenge porn. This act involves releasing intimate and explicit images of someone else, usually an ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend, as an act of revenge. Typically, women are the biggest victims of revenge porn. In fact, during the Gamer Gate controversy, several female scholars, journalists, and game developers were targeted with all of the harassment tool mentioned above. As well as rape online threats.

While it is of course impossible to know when the first rape threat was made online, Emma Jane points to certain dates when sexualized violence on the internet spikes with trend and

events happening at the time. With 2010 and 2014 in particular, as Gamergate started to brew. As that was when trolling and flaming took off in response to women media scholars and journalists being accused of "encroaching" on a mostly male-dominated industry. Which will be discussed in detail later in this thesis. The act of "trolling" is, according to ethnographer and scholar Whitney Phillips, not a catch all descriptive phrase for cyber bullying, but rather a term to describe a very spesific type of "subcultural trolling communities" found on web forums such as 4chan, around 2013 and onwards (Jane, 2017 (a), 6-7.) While flaming is as ambiguously used as trolling by many experts, the meanings behind both can be summed up as trolling to trigger inflammatory discourse on the internet, hence "flaming". And women are more often than not victims to flaming for merely existing on the internet.

There are several corners on the internet where women experience a disproportional amount of sexual violence. According to a study at the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), 73% of female journalists surveyed experienced online violence on the internet. Which is not in itself an outlier to male journalists experiencing harassment. After all, being a journalist is one of the most dangerous occupations one can have, depending on your region, subject matter, or background. But female journalists also experience sexual violence on the internet to a much higher degree, at 18% more (Posetti & Shabbir, 2022, 11). The survey points out how women are in an additional heightened risk of harassment, as the litany harassment journalists face in terms of racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and antisemitism often intersect with misogyny (ibid). This is one keyway to understanding the data that is to be analyzed later, as different bigoted ideologies cross over again and again.

2.4 Gamergate and gamer-hate

I previously mentioned male dominated industries and Gamergate. Gaming was through its infancy in the 80s and 90s advertised primarily towards young boys, such as with the handheld and portable gaming device the "Game Boy", released in 1989. Today, (at least in Norway) nine out of ten boys between the age og 9-18 play video games on a daily basis – with 6 out of 10 girls in that same age gap. That is 76% of all adolescents in Norway (Medietilsynet, 2022). This hasn't stopped the community from being scrutinized for a plethora of problems with inclusion, whether that be representation, employment, or general hostility to female players.

It should be stated that feminist critique of the gaming industry has increased in recent years, and so has the hostile backlash to set criticism (Chess & Shaw 2015, 209). Shira Chess and Adrienne Shaw documents numerous acts of targeted harassment towards women in the gaming industry, from 2007 to 2014 – with death threats and the threat of sexual violence being the most common.

Gamergate, a term coined by Hollywood actor Alec Balwin, started out in August 2014 with one very petty ex-boyfriend named Nathan Grayson, who claimed that his former girlfriend Zoe Quinn, the creator of a somewhat well-reviewed video game called Depression Quest, solicited sexual favors in exchange for good game reviews. Her and other female game developers subsequently started to get targeted by harassment campaigns, receiving rape and death threats, and later bomb and school shooting threats (Jane, 2017 (a), 31). Hence why the movement was first dubbed "Quinnspiracy" by online attackers. The threats were originating from the infamous web-based forum "4-chan", but the debate became mainstream when talk show host Steven Colbert interviewed Anita Sarkesian, a feminist activist who was one of the highest profiled victims of the harassment. They discussed the movement while mocking it on live TV. She and Colbert mocked the mostly young and male members of the Gamergate movement, who in turn argued that video games were being targeted by something worse than sexism. Feminism. Colbert and Sarkesian used rhetoric to describe the immature men who attacked her and her coworkers from the safety of their mom's basements, and how they were in fact pathetic. This rhetoric resonated differently with male gamers.

So that is the short version of what happened. But the longer version involves all of the rape threats and cyber bullying that women like Quinn and Sarkesian had to endure. Quinn alone received 16 gigabytes of abuse, and Sarkesian logged and screenshotted over 100 comments consisting of sexual abuse in less than two hours after her initial involvement in the gaming discourse (ibid, p3). This was in addition to the death and bomb threats that flooded their inboxes and planned events. But why were so many male gamers harassing women for questioning the pervasive sexism in the gaming industry? Or merely the presence of female gamers?

There are multiple studies on the number of female gamers, but most seem to agree that women make up nearly or exactly half of all gamers. In 2010, the ESA (Entertainment Software Association) gathered data on gamers, and found that 42% of them to be women, a number that has risen greatly in later years (Ensslin, 2011, 1). The same study also states that

the average game purchaser in is 40 years old. So not an adolescent as some might expect. Author and associate professor in Media Studies at the university of Temple University, Adrienna Shaw, states in her studies that the average gamers are their 30s, but this age bracket is in reference to the self-identification with the phrase "gamer", and not the purchasing frequency (Shaw, 2011, 34). So, there are different definitions for what qualifies as a gamer, but the data agrees mostly on age and gender gap.

So, we have established that gamers are adult, and men and women make up approximately the same halves. What has not been established is whether or not gaming can amplify violent tendencies. Since the first blood spatter was pixelated, the discussion of violent video games corelating with crime statistics has been an ongoing and unproductive one. As little to no correlation has been found. However, while researchers as the American Psychological Association (APA) have found no "causal" link between violent games and violent behavior, the multiple studies show that violent games can change someone's perception of violence (Schlegel, 2020, 5). And gaming has a very spesific perception of women, both in terms of character represented, and the player base itself.

2.5 Gaming and oversexualization

It is no secret that video game covers are infamous for checking off lists for: action, war, hypermasculinity, and sexualization of women. Despite waste improvements in the newest console generations[1], there is much work to be done. For example, in the 1980s, research showed that:

> "*Long term exposure to mainstream pornography (loosely defined as several hours over several weeks of watching sexually explicit films) resulted in a number of things. First, this exposure was related to peoples' increased tolerance for and interest in uncommon pornography (e.g., sadism). Second, people with long-term exposure also became less compassionate towards rape victims and women in general*" (Burgess et al, 2007, 428).

In other words, sexual interests and preferences became more and more violent and dehumanizing, the longer one absorbed pornography consistently over a prolonged time.

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[1] Console generations refer to stages of video game consoles. The first generation being that of the original console in the late 1970s. The newest generation being that of the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X/S, or the "ninth" generation (Gallagher & Park, 2002, 71).

Now, this study is from the 1980s, but studies from today show similar findings. The second observations that the study fins are more subliminal, as that same exposure leads to less compassion towards rape victims. But if women are overly sexualized in gaming, like in porn, then the question becomes: is prolonged exposure to hyper-sexualized female characters as bad as that of porn? After all, is mainstream pornography really that different from mainstream gaming? Arnt both just male power fantasies? And has this changed over time and console-generations?

A study by Burgess et al (ibid) wanted to find out how women were represented on gaming covers on the most popular gaming consoles at the time (the time being the best-selling games on various consoles up to summer 2005). After analyzing 225 covers on the X-Box, PlayStation 2 and Nintendo GameCube, and excluding covers without human characters, they found several things that stood out. For example, "*the proportion of female primary characters (13/30) who were presented with a male primary character was significantly higher than the proportion of male primary characters (18/140) who were presented with a female primary character*" (ibid, 425). Burgess et al openly makes the argument that female characters are almost only allowed to be in charge of their games if male characters are also present to accompany them. While male characters are allowed to be solo on the covers.

The scholar Tracy L. Dietz (1998) was one of the first people to map out the correlation between gender and violence in video games. She argued that two primary roles were offered to women in gaming: meek and in need of male help, or as a sexualized villain using her sex-appeal as a weapon (Burgess, 2007, 421). Burgess goes on to ask if there has been any positive change in gender representation since the 1980s and 1990s. Now, there has been a large increase in gender representation in gaming the last few years, but the seeds of objectification present in the 80s, 90s and 2000s could help to explain the drastic problem with male gamers today. That is definitely argued by Dietz's work, who states that adolescent boys glamorize sexualized aggression and violence with each other, after exposer to violence on tv and gaming (Dietz, 1998, 430). If sexual aggression and dominance is eroticized as key part of masculinity, and masculinity is viewed as strength as opposed to feminine weakness – coupled with the worldview that women should be subservient to men, leads to higher rates of rape acceptance and sexual aggression (ibid). This being one of the many ways media can subtly influence someone's ability to empathize with victims of rape. Another source confirming the rate of rape acceptance and hostility to rape victims is a study by Victoria S. Beck et al (2012), who did not find sufficient data on the correlation between violent

videogames and violence towards women, but did find that sexual objectification of women and violence against women in video games did contribute to an increase in the belief of rape myths acceptance with male participants (Beck et al, 2012, 3025).

The instant gratification often given by gaming is one of many reasons why some gamers feel entitled to the attention of women, according to Ewelin Prazmo (2020), who argues that incels have a hard time separating negative experiences in the virtual world with real life (Prazmo, 2020). She argues that the same gratification is given by porn, and when men spend an abnormal amount of time romancing female characters whose entire existence is being a potential love interest for the main character, combined pornography that offers that same instant gratification in terms of romantic interest, with little to no input needed from the male participant, it perpetuates entitled behavior that goes from online to offline realities (ibid).

2.6 Gamification and geekdom

Video games are an inherently competitive arena of gameplay, norms, and basic human interactions. Users in gaming have numbers next to their gamertags to illustrate their time spent on the game, the skills they have acquired, among other accolades. In other words, bragging rights. This competitive nature can be found in other spaces on the internet, such as online dating. Which is why it is important to talk about the gamification of online interactions. By "gamification", we mean the use of game design elements in a nongame context (Prince, 2013, 163). Primarily using technological tools to educate, communicate, and more. Now, the implications to people's attention span and the transition of gaming like behavior from digital spaces to real life is an interesting one, and one large enough for its own separate paper. Weather it is the streak of daily communication being rewarded on Snapchat, or the compulsive need to cross off every single notification on Facebook, the escalation of competitive behavior on online dating is what will be the focus of this part of the thesis.

One of the more natural consequences of Tinder being introduced to, in Tinder's infancy, primarily Greek fraternities on college campuses, before branching out to other user bases, was an increase in STDs (sexual transmitted diseases) and an increase in sexual assault reports (Buyukeren et al, 2023, p4). And research shows that online dating has somewhat reduced social anxiety for those who struggle to take the initiative in the real world. The flipside of this being that people who experience rejection in these online dating apps have a

higher chance of developing problematic behavior on the internet. Specifically for men spending more than 5 hours online on a daily basis (Maxwell et al, 2020, 1855). Could this need for instant gratification be found in, for example, Rapeglish? A type of language that skips all sorts of conventional hoops in order to go straight to rape?

2.7 Geeks and nerds, same or not?

As stated in the abstract of this thesis, labels such as "geek" and "nerd" are often used interchangeably, but I will be using the term "geek" to encompass the subcultures in question. But before we use these labels as a jumping pad for other more gendered labels, we must first establish what a geek is, and how it differentiates from "nerd".

While researching the labels, I was often met with near identical definitions – usually stating that both geeks and nerds are "people who are proficient in either science fiction and/or computer science". This is both too broad and inaccurate. While true, the word geek has come to encompass a certain specialty in a fictional matter, that being, for example, a fictional language, culture or even history. So, to summarize: A nerd might be a specialist in factual minerals, while a geek might be a specialist in fictional crystals. Jessica McCain et al. describes how "geek culture" encompasses more obscure media, from Japanese animation, comic books, video games, cosplay (the act of roleplaying with elaborate costumes) and media franchises (McCain et al, 2015). The genres of fantasy and science fiction are by far the two most popular. In other words, the more obscure the genre, the "geekier" one is considered.

The oxford dictionary best describes geeks as "depreciative. An overly diligent unsociable student: any unsociable person obsessively devoted to a particular pursuit" (Peters, 2016, 149). Benjamin Peters, in his book Digital Keywords, also describes how in the early 90s, the phrase geek was meant to study hard, with devotion (ibid). In other words, the amount of devotion one puts onto an otherwise useless endeavor, the geekier one would be considered.

Whether or not it is a derogative term, would depend on who is using it. It certainly started out as a derogatory term aimed at people (usually white men) who specialized in a at the time non-masculine and scientific profession. Calling someone a nerd or a geek was not only hinting to an above average skill with science and computers, but also a lack of masculinity and general sex-appeal. One might rightfully assume that women escaped this negative label, but they too were told that computer science was not a feminine profession, as women were

not considered intelligent enough for such complicated devices. This oxymoron of computer science being supposedly too feminine for men and too masculine for women was detrimental to both primary genders, leaving little to no accolades for people of any gender specializing in the field. Besides of course a safe route to a potentially lucrative occupation, as specialized expertise in computer science was and still is very sought after. Thankfully, we have come a long way from gendering these professions, but some still use it to spite people of high intelligence, not just in computers science, but any science.

The labels nerd and geek can be traced as far back as the 1950s, but it wasn't until the late 80s when computers became more common and necessary, that the label started to be used as a compliment (McCain et al 2015). One more way that geeks separate themselves from nerds is the level of engagement they have in the communities formed around the different medias. I will be using the word "fandoms" to describe these communities. Fandoms as in large collections of people who follow either a franchise or a genre. After all, can one even be a Harry Potter fan without finding out what house one belongs to on the official Wizarding World Website? Can you be a Marvel fan without watching multiple movies and TV-shows every year, in order to stay up to date on the ever-evolving continuity? Can you call yourself a "trekkie" if you have not watched the newest and oldest Star Trek series?

There are certain expectations of each fandom – rules, and norms to follow. These rules have sometimes tipped over to "gatekeeping". Gatekeeping is the use of restrictive rhetoric to dismay anyone new from engaging in a fandom. This is done to keep fandoms "pure" from casual fans who might bring the overall fandom down to a more mainstream level. This gatekeeping has often been more aggressively aimed at women who wishes to join certain male-dominated fandoms. Especially as knowledge in these highly obscure matters is often used as a form of intellectual currency, as a way to show "bragging rights". Similar gatekeeping has been subjected to people of color, wanting to partake in a mostly white fantasy setting, such as Lord of the Rings. This was highlighted in the vitriolic reaction to the TV-series Rings of Power (2022) on the streaming service Amazon Prime, where people of color were cast as fantasy figures often described as "fair skinned" in the source material. McCain et al, rightly points out the narcissistic need for superiority, as the individuals deeply imbedded in these communities have had to fight against toxic masculinity, bullying and social stigma in order to memorize otherwise useless knowledge (McCain et al, 2015, 2). So, to see others "mainstreaming" franchises without going through those same difficulties and trials can be used against new members. This obsessive possessiveness of certain genres is

often a result of a need for compensating for lacking socially. Women has often been asked to "prove" that they have had to overcome the same hardships in order to be accepted in set communities. One example of antifeminism restricting women's access to geeky subcultures is the hardship women has faced in gaming culture. One of the more recent and infamous examples from the twenty first century that still echoes to this day would be Gamergate.

3.0 The digital spheres

A new forum for misogyny – Sarah A. Dunne, 2017, at the Conference: Emerging Perspectives: English Graduate Studies Conference. University College Dublin.

3.1 The Manosphere

Key to this thesis is the online menace that is "The manosphere". The Manosphere a collection of online groups and ideologies who all promote anti-feminist and misogynistic beliefs. Many of those involved blames feminism for the crisis in masculinity that haunts men today. The refer to it as a "crisis of masculinity". Men falling behind women in education seem to be on of the bigger factors. Not to mention conflicting messages on what is and what isn't acceptable masculine behavior. Throw in a few self-proclaimed alpha males, and you got a lot of different perspectives on how men should behave. This crisis of masculinity is one of the reasons men go to online spaces for finding like-minded people. Parts of the manosphere can be attributed to the red-pill ideology, which is the belief that one need to "wake up" to the true state of the world in order to live a true life, and not be one of many inseparable "sheep" whose opinions and lives don't matter. The phrase originates from the 1999 movie *The Matrix*, directed by Lilly and Julie Wachowski. Two sisters who transitioned from male to female after the release of the Matrix Trilogy. This becomes relevant later.

Figure 1: Neo (Keanu Reeves) is offered a red pill or a blue pill by Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) in The Matrix, (Warner Bros).

We are going to have to talk about movies a for a bit, so bear with me. *The Matrix* has a main character named Mr. Anderon, who in the beginning feels stuck in a life-sucking 9 to 5 office job that is not fulfilling in any way, and after noticing things that don't make sense, he is slowly being revealed to the truth that his world is a fake one. Digitized to distract us from the scary truth. In one pivotal scene, Mr. Anderson is offered two pills. A red one and a blue one. Taking the blue pill will not change anything, and you continue life in blissful ignorance. But taking red pill reveals the truth, no matter how scary it might be. This is the translation that made it to the red-pill ideology. That most people live their lives in ignorance, with the select few taking the red pill to learn the truth. What truth this is depends on what part of the red-pill movement. One community that is a vocal part of the red-pill community is inceldom.

Another movie that can be easily misunderstood is David Fincher's cult classic Fight Club (1999) starring Brad Pitt and Edvard Norton. The plot surrounding a underground club of mostly middle aged white men who suffer from the crisis of masculinity, and spend their free time blowing off steam with violent fighting in their homemade headquarters. A basement. The movie uses ideologies like capitalism and consumerism as a basis for the masculine crisis. Of how the mundane corporate 9-5 work ethic emasculates men by denying them a more exiting lifestyle that include traits that would be considered toxic. Not being emotionally vulnerable, showing dominance through bravado and violence, as well as other traits. But why are we talking about another movie?

Klaire Cisco King (2009) writes about how Fight Club has become the definition of a movie that students and scholars like to write about, whether they profess to enjoy the film or not (ibid, p366). On the one hand the film can be critiqued for fetishizing bruised and bloodies male bodies. On the other hand, it could be argued that the hypermasculine toxicity featured in the film is supposed to be criticized and mocked. That is for the viewer to figure and, and different viewers often come to different conclusions. The narrator of the film, aka Tylor Durden played by Brad Pitt, talks about everything wrong with modern society and how it affects people in a negative way. The character of Durden is portrayed as that "cool friend who has all the answers", and some people identified with that character, despite the criminal actions he takes in the film. The way Durden organizes a group of men in a cult-like manner with slight fascist tendencies is referenced in the work of Andrew Hewitt:

"When the narrator of Fight Club tells us that he 'wanted to put a bullet through the eyes of every panda that wouldn't f**k to save its species,' the affinity of that eco-logic with murderous eugenicism becomes exaggeratedly apparent." – Andrew Hewitt in "Masochism and Terror: Fight Club and Neo-fascist Violence" p.119. Telos, number 136, 2006.

For the audience, Tylor Durden is the typical alpha male who sleeps with beautiful women and makes nicotine addiction look even cooler than usual a cowboy. One phrase that has become deeply embedded into the English language is the word "snowflake" to describe usually young people who are easily offended. The word is often thrown around on social media forums as a way of attacking those feeling hurt by the words used online. "Don't be a snowflake" is a common response to people wanting to police foul language. Tylor Durden war the first to use the words to describe how people view themselves as special individuals, when Durden's worldview becomes more hive-minded and utilitarian.

Figure 2: From left to right, Protagonist (Edward Norton) and Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt) in Fight Club. 20th Century Fox.

The last movie to inspire a very spesific behavior in the manosphere that must be discussed is American Psycho from 2000, starring Christian Bale as the newest male supremacy hero Patric Bateman. American Psycho, a thriller directed by is Mary Harron shows us how the elite of banking in Wall Street live and work. Or mostly live, as not a single scene shows these rich men working at all. Instead, the characters in question spend their office time bragging about getting a seat at an expensive and hard to get restaurant. Or showing off their nearly identical business cards of increasing increment quality. Because appearance is paramount to Bateman and his coworkers in the film. Very early on in the film, Bateman gives us a long and detailed montage on how he keeps his skin, clothes, and house clean. His appearance is his everything. His actual personality is one of a psychotic murderer who hates his colleges, his wife, and women in general. Especially female prostitutes, who he also brutely kills. Bateman has in recent memory been hailed by members of the manosphere as something known as a "Sigma Male". A sigma male is the same as an alpha male, only that that a sigma is outside the hierarchy of "males". A lone wolf to put it one way. Sigma males are above the need of social acceptance. But why are movies key to understanding the manosphere? The longer one studies the manosphere, the faster one picks up on the words and phrases adopted from popular culture. From "snowflake" from Fight Club to the catch-all

phrase of red-pilling from Matrix to the sigma male mindset that thanks to American psycho permeates online men's forums.

3.1.1 Incels

Incel, which is short for "involuntary celibate", sometimes referred to as "inceldom" is an abbreviation for people who consider themselves too genetically unlucky or socially awkward to have intimacy with the opposite sex. The incel community is mostly constant of straight, white heterosexual males. They hold the strong belief that their physical shortcomings, weather that be their height, skin color, muscles (or lack thereof) or insecurities tied to their sexual prowess is to blame for women not giving them a chance in the dating pool. The incel community exploded in infamy and numbers after several mass shootings, in which incels killing women as an act of "revenge" to society itself. In terms of the manosphere, incels are on the fringes of the men's rights movement, in terms of belief, rhetoric, tactics and world view.

They believe in an alternative worldview where women are on top in terms of status, quality of life, and especially in terms of sexual availability. This is what incels refer to "taking the black pill". While supporters of the red -pill ideology also supports a misogynistic conspiracy theory regarding gendered power imbalance, with the hopes of liberating men from the feminist domination that in their eyes perpetuates society, so-called black-pillers take it one step further with the belief that their (incels) physical attributes and abilities are the most important factor to a man's romantic success with the opposite gender. It is a darker and more hopeless version of the many "pills" available in the manosphere. Which again justifies behavior that is commonly unacceptable in today's society.

The term "incel" was coined by an anonymous Canadian national from Toronto who goes under the pseudonym "Alana" in her interview with the BBC, so that is what we will be referring to her as (Taylor, 2018). Alana was, in 1997, your ordinary women in her twenties, who like many of us struggled to find love with both women and men. Thus, she started an online website for likeminded individuals to vent their frustration on what she called "Alana's Involuntary Celibacy Project". Alana describes the space as a friendly one, with the occasional angry man venting a bit harder than others. But nothing out of the ordinary for an online forum aimed at lonely people. Alana describes the origins for the term incel as: "The

word [incel] used to mean anybody of any gender who was lonely, had never had sex or who hadn't had a relationship in a long time. But we can't call it that anymore" (ibid).

It is important to keep in mind that this was years before sites like MySpace, Facebook or Tinder. However, by 2000, Alana had moved on from the website in question, and was starting to enter the dating pool for the first time. Satisfied that the website she founded would live on without her, she remained blissfully ignorant until May 23rd, 2014, when Alana read about infamous mass shooter Elliot Roger, who killed six people in a shooting spree in Isla Vista, California (BBC, 2018). Roger also inspired another mass killing in Alanas hometown of Toronto, when Alek Minassian posted on Facebook: "The Incel Rebellion has already begun… All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!" Before driving a van down a crowded street, killing 10 people (Taylor, 2018).

That is the origins of the incel community, but how did it come to this? The low number of angry men mentioned by Alana must have certainly expanded for the movement to become synonymous with heterosexual men and their frustration towards women. When Reddit banned the controversial subreddit known as "r/incels" from their 51 million monthly active users (BBC, 2017), it had approximately 41 000 active members, functioning as a de facto support group for men unable to find any kind of meaningful intimacy with women. The subreddit was banned due to the large amount of violence that was encouraged on the site, as well as the rea life violence happening with previously mentioned mass killings in the name of the "incel rebellion".

Over time, as more men than women joined incel forums all over the internet, different classes of sexually active members of society were established. A sexual hierarchy of sorts. At the bottom of this hierarchy was the "incels" – the involuntary celibates. Those are the men that are not sexually successful with women for a multitude of reasons. Then you have "Chads" – men who are sexually successful with women. Chads are muscular, handsome and socially active. Glace et al describes a Chad as "a traditionally attractive man among the "elite" group of men to whom women are actually attracted" (Glace et al, 202021, p291). And women are referred to as multiple names, but usually Stacy's. Stacy is a "hyperfeminine, attractive, and unattainable and who only date Chads" (Jennings, 2018). Below is an overview of the most popular representations of men and women, according to inceldom:

Popular incel Memes (left to right): Virgin, Chad, Becky and Stacy. The 'Virgin' represents the incel, and is depicted with his head down, a thin stature and pale skin [20]. He is characterized as inferior to a 'Chad', who is brutish and unintelligent [20]. 'Becky' represents an undesirable woman, who is educated and outspoken [21]. Lastly, 'Stacy' is the female counterpart to Chad. She is represented as promiscuous and shallow [21].

Figure 3: Screenshot of popular incel memes, with description by author Kelly Caroline Gothard, 2021.

As described above, men and women are divided into subdivisions with various attributes, depending on where the memes are found. An endless number of versions exists, but the negativity towards "promiscuous women" is a staple among all of them. Below is further details on the categories:

Figure 4: Illustration of a "Becky" and a "Stacy". Jennings, 2018.

So ironically, the origins if the so-called "inceldom" started out with one bisexual woman who longed for intimacy, until the movement was slowly but steadily hijacked by men who

vented their frustration at societies equality towards women. And the rhetoric we see on incel forums today has their origins to the same angry men on Alana's website.

And while incels has gotten a reputation for being inherently violent, especially after several high-profile mass shooting in the name of an so-called "incel rebellion" (as the most hard core, black-pilled incels will call it), it is important to know that depending on where incels congregate, there is a variation of the degree violence is encouraged. Especially towards women. The *Radicalization Awareness Network*, with help from *Communication and Narratives* (both EU-institutions researching radicalization), mapped out the following degrees of violence in the incel community (RAN and C&N, 2021, p3):

- *Personal violence*: Aka, encouragement of self-harm, self-hatred/pity or similar negative emotions/acts directed at themselves. Discussions related to suicide is common on incel-forums, but so is advice for both self-help gurus and traditional mental health institutions.

- *Interpersonal violence*: Incels are frequently encouraged to "take others down with them" in their process of self-hatred. Sometimes via harassing women on the internet for being too outspoken, or by pretending to look like a stereotypical "chad" on a blind-date or dating site – ala catfishing[2] to pose as someone a women would "actually go out with". Because in the eyes of incels, they don't stand a chance in the dating marked. Incels calls this "chadfishing". They will also create dating profiles with text that deliberately contains extremely negative and toxic traits, while using a profile picture of a conventionally beautiful "chad", in order to prove that women are only interested in looks. See figure 5 below for example:

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[2] Catfishing is the practice of

Figure 5: Example of "chadfishing" onthe internet. RAN and C&N, 2021. Page 3

- *Societal violence*: This is the most infamous part of inceldom. The most extreme parts
  of incel-communities online encourage direct violent acts towards society itself, and
  especially its female inhabitants. Since 2014 multiple mass shooting has occurred in
  North America in the name of a so-called "incel rebellion". These mass shooters are
  often praised and idealized for both spreading the community in fame, and reducing
  the number of "Chads" and "Stacys". These mass shooter/killers include: Gerog
  Sordini, Elliot Roger, Christopher Harper-Mercer, and Scott Bierle, amongst others
  (Prazmo, 2020, p17).

On top of *incels*, there is the not so equally label of *femcel*, a female version of incels. Not
necessarily to be confused with what Alana went through, as the unfortunate founded of

inceldom. Femcels are a steadily growing part of the involuntary celibate movement that aims to be more inclusive, and possibly less destructive. Women dealing with issues of self-harm and suicide more often than not seek professional and familiar help. Combined with a higher rate of failed suicide attempts, women have a far lower rate of suicide than men overall. Femcels likewise have different coping techniques than male incels, which has led to an internal debate online if women can even be celibate. Especially as these coping techniques are not as nihilistic and gloomy as their male counterparts. While incels are participants of the red-pill ideology and sometimes black-pill ideology, femcels are partakers of the pink-pill (Wu, 2022). Again, acting as a *Matrix* reference. Femcels believe that conventionally unattractive women have become forgotten in todays discussion on loneliness and romantic failures. As much of the attention has been drawn to the crisis of masculinity. Both incel and femcel communities has been banned on Reddit in recent times, but some pink-pilled groups still persist online, such as the subreddit r/Vindicta. Here is how the subreddit describe themselves:

"Vindicta is a women-only community 100% dedicated to improving beauty, attractiveness, and allure. We weaponize beauty and make it work for us. Come for honest discussions, science, tips, and tricks to help you acquire your desired look. This is a ThePinkPill.co community" (https://www.reddit.com/r/Vindicta/).

The biggest difference here between the pink-cell rhetoric and red/black-pill rhetoric is the emphasis on self-improvement and advice to gain romantic partners. With its 61 000 members, r/Vindicta seem to have a main goal of escaping the dreary state of involuntary celibacy. While its male counterparts doom its users to certain failure. On the contrary, men tell other men to weaponize their physical strength in violent ways, advising each other on how to get away with rape and sexual exploitation, and other criminal acts. And there is little to no hate toward men and masculinity. Instead femcels express their frustration and modern beauty standards for women, and the financial blocker that stops women from getting all the right treatments, makeup, and other cosmetic tools needed to maintain an exhaustive standard. On the whole, women exhibit more internalized disorders (e.g., anxiety, depression) while men exhibit externalized disorders (e.g., impulsive disorders, substance abuse) (ibid). This has much to do with how boys and girls are raised. Girls are thought to be thoughtful and nurturing towards others, prioritizing others above themselves. Hence when asked why women attempts certain types of suicide instead of others, they answer that they don't want to "leave a mess for their loved ones", and try to avoid suicide attempts that are "messy". While

boys are raised to be dominant, as prioritize themselves. Which might explain why men more often choose tools for suicide that are more effective, but also are more destructive and messy (aka, guns) (source). As a result of this upbringing, girls feel sad instead of angry, when faced with sexual rejection. While femcels try to change themselves, incels try to change others. However, it is important to not glorify the origin of femcels, as once the most popular meetingpolace for femcels was the subreddit r/Truefemcels. This site was banned by Reddit for, amongst others tings, racism, homophobia, spreading alt-right conspiracy theories, and more (Schofield, 2021).

3.1.2 MGTOW

MGTOW, or Men Going Their Own Way, is a men's rights movement based the belief that feminism has negatively affected the male population, and that the answer to their problem is an abandonment of the progress women has attained in the last century or so. Unlike other antifeminism movements, MGTOWs are an exclusively male-only ideology. At their core they want men to live the way they "truly are" (Lin, 2017 p78). What this means can vary, but scholar Jie Liang Lin (2017) describes this as the nostalgic and individualistic desire for a step back to the Americas of the past, where rigid and strict gender roles placed the breadwinners, ala the men, on top, and women on the bottom. With hookup culture, selfie culture and more specifically women in positions of power, men have had their past privileges devalued to the point of women having the upper hand, both economically, academically, and intimately. Men part of this group have, according to Lin, have been rendered inconsequential in the dating marked, while women have their "narcissistic tendencies" rewarded. This imbalance of men and women finding intimacy is something that comes up a lot in anti-feminist movements.

3.1.3 Pick-up artists

Pic-up artists, or PUAs for short, are people who train other in the art of seduction, with the hopes of increasing one's probability to find a sexual partner. Initially, it might be strange to put this with openly misogynistic and violent ideologies. However, pick up artists financially and emotionally exploit the same men whose emotional insecurities are visible amongst the same groups. And the "help" part of these self-help guides is often treating women in an objectifying and demeaning way. Sometimes even violent. One of the more infamous Pick-

Up Artists is Daryush Valizadeh (aka Roosh V), who once suggested that the best way to lower rape statistics was to "*make it legal if done on private property*" (Jane, 2017 (b) p6). Though he claimed that his comments were only a thought experiment, his other comments of boasting about "cunts he wants to hate fuck" does not help on his supposed objectifying and violent view on women. What stands out in the PUA community is the pervasiveness of conspiracy-minded behavior towards women and feminism in particular (ibid). Like many other spiritual leaders in the manosphere community, Valizadeh has called feminism a "ear on men" warning that "those who do not pick up arms … will suffer the most" (ibid). Conspiracy-minded behavior comes up again and again, when it comes to the alleged power dynamics of women over men, socially, economically, educationally, and most importantly, sexually. Sady Doyle states: "The incel movement grew directly out of the PUA fad, a storm cloud of disillusioned students who were ready to try more violent means of accessing female bodies" (Bratich, 2019, 2).

Some of the techniques used by PUAs are as follows:

- *Peacocking*, as in wearing an unusual item, clothing or apparel to attract interest with women.
- *Nagging*, as in the practice of lowering another person's self-esteem with derogatory comments, so they are in more need of validation.
- *Gaslighting* is another psychological manipulation technique in which confusion is sown to make another individual self-doubt in their own abilities. This is often done to lower one's ability to listen to one's subconscious, who in fact notices the unnatural behavior of PUAs.

These are just some of the many psychological techniques (Bratich, 2019), but many researchers agree that most of the techniques are manipulative in their nature and does not view women as individuals with a potential for different reactions to set techniques. For example, when techniques fail, it is not because the men did something wrong. After all, they followed the expert's advice. The blame shifts to women who do not "play the game fairly" as in behavior not fitting of a submissive woman (ibid). In other words, similar to how black-pilled incels base their belief in human biology to support their theories, pick-up artists similarly use scientific language to confirm that they are right to treat their encounters as "hunts". With men as predator, and women as prey. Sofia Rudiger & Daria Dayter (2020) call this "*scientification of all things connected to the opposite sex*" (ibid, p17). This biological

and psychological justification of aggressive behavior towards women is threading ground with that of eugenics – race being swapped with gender. After all, for most of human history, women were not allowed withing scientific, political, educational or academic institutions based on the belief that women were irrational and emotional in their basic thinking, while men had the "intelligent burden" of being the rational ones.

3.2 Forums and subreddits

3.2.1 Reddit

The word *forum* has occurred a number of times in this thesis already, but that is it exactly? The word *forum* is linguistically derived from the Latin word *fores*, as in "what is out of doors" (Peters, 2016, p132). Author Hope Forsyth in the book *Digital Keywords: A Vocabulary of information Society & Culture* (ibid) gives us three key attributes for forums: gathering, action, and human-supporting infrastructure. But online forums does not necessarily support human-supporting infrastructures in the same way as, per say, a coffee shop. Where forums were once the literal translation of outdoor, social activity, it has now evolved to become almost completely synonymous with indoor activities.

Forums are not part of the public or private sector, but instead an in-between way for an exchange of thoughts and ideas. Architectural historian David Watin describes the Roman forums as the cornerstones of public speech, and the center for change in the Roman Republic (ibid). But it was more restrictive than say, an arena, where people were energized to witness and interact with action and conflict. So not a public spectator sport. Today, forums live on in online message boards. Hope Forsyth (ibid, p134) however, argues that the modern, digital forums resemble the average arena more than anything. Forsyth argues that with the possibility for passive spectating to direct communication, online forums have made flame wars and general hostility in the comment section as alluring as watching a car wreck in progress (ibid). That these forums are not about an exchange of ideas, but for an exchange of clashes and competitive behavior that permeates our definition of debates. In a modern debate, debates are "winnable" in a way that was not as visible as before the invention on online clout. It's all about having the last word, funnies comment, or most liked post.

It is then fitting that PhD-graduate Sarah Anne Dunne refers to the internet as "a new forum for misogyny" in her paper *Rape in Online Spaces: An Examination of Rape Culture on Twitter through the Steubenville Rape Case* (Dune, 2017). As women were likely not

permitted in the forums of ancient Greece or Rome, there is a misunderstanding of true equality online, as in offline. This can be partly blamed on cyber-optimism.

Rember 2011? Lots of totalitarian countries were protesting their governments in the name of democracy all over the Middle East, using Facebook, Twitter and other platforms as their main communicator and organizer. There was a general belief that the almost unlimited potential of the internet could liberate people from the shackles of ignorance, illiteracy, and misinformation. After all, everything can be found and distributed online. But after the Arabian Spring of 2011, more countries than not have decline din both living standards and most importantly, the democracy-index. And with the political earthquakes of Cambridge Analytica, NFTs, crypto scams, successful disinformation campaigns, Twitter-debacles, and much more, this belief has vanished greatly in the last ten years. And we have in the last few years learned how algorithms work to promote content for maximum engagement, to the detrement of the users. Like how controversial content on Reddit spreads faster and to more people than non-controversial content (Jasser et al, 2021, p112). Dunne blames this on a cyber-utopian mythology that grew in the 1990s. In other words, a strong belief in a "noncorporeal experience which could transcend sexist, racist and ablest discourses of the body" (Dunne, 2017). Some could argue this is all part of what feminist and anti-feminist scholars have dubbed *post-feminism*, which is very broadly explained as the theory that feminism has been acquired, and further progress either distracts from real issues, or even takes freedoms away from men entirely. Now, there ca be many ways people define themselves by *post-feminism*. The four most popular ways are to respond to the claim of "feminism is dead/outdated is, according to authors Elaine J. Hall and Marnie Salupo Rodriguez (2003):

1. Support for women progress has simply decreased since the 1980s and 1990s.

2. Antifeminism has increased too much in spesific groups of women.

3. Feminism has lost support due to its irrelevance.

4. A "no but…" response to the feminist label, in which people are afraid to associate themselves with the label as *feminist*, despite their values aligning neatly with it, for one reason or another.

The threat of the patriarchy has been replaced with the dangerous of PC-culture (aka, politically correctness), SJW-culture (social-justice warriors) and other potential political and cultural bogymen who some claim is ruining society instead. And there is strong evidence to support the claims that feminism is growing more and more unpopular. *HopeNotHate* is a UK based anti-fascist organization that measures the general public's attitude regarding race, gender, democracy, among other subjects. They interviewed 2,076 adults aged 16 to 24 during the early stages of Covid-19, to discover the hopes and fears of young people during those turbulent times. The interviews were conducted in May of 2020. *HopeNotHate* focuses primarily on the alt-right, who they view as a threat to a multicultural and multiracial Great Britain (Carter, 2020, p69). According to their report, nearly half of young men agreed with the statement that "feminism had gone too far", and one out of ten had negative views on LGBTQ people (ibid, p37).

Weather or not we live in a *post-feminist* society is subjective, but even as the number of anti-feminists are on the rise, so is the number of people who shun the label. According to

On a more positive side, online forums give way for millions of like-minded people to connect in ways they otherwise would not be able to. 1.6 billion users log on to Reddit on a monthly basis, according to Statista, a statistics-based website (Turner, 2013). If the number of users increases with the current rate, Reddit could have more than 3 billion unique users by 2025. This is of course a hypothetical, but it is the 19th most popular website on the internet by today's numbers.

Year	Monthly Users (in billion)
2025*	3.203
2024*	2.306
2023*	1.66
2022*	1.195
2021	0.861
2020	0.619
2019	0.43
2018	0.331
2017	0.25
2016	0.17
2015	0.12

Table 1: Screenshot taken April 26, 2023. Link: https://www.bankmycell.com/blog/number-of-reddit-users/

And if we look at the gender and age data for Reddit, we see that the userbase skew male and adult (Dixon, 2022):
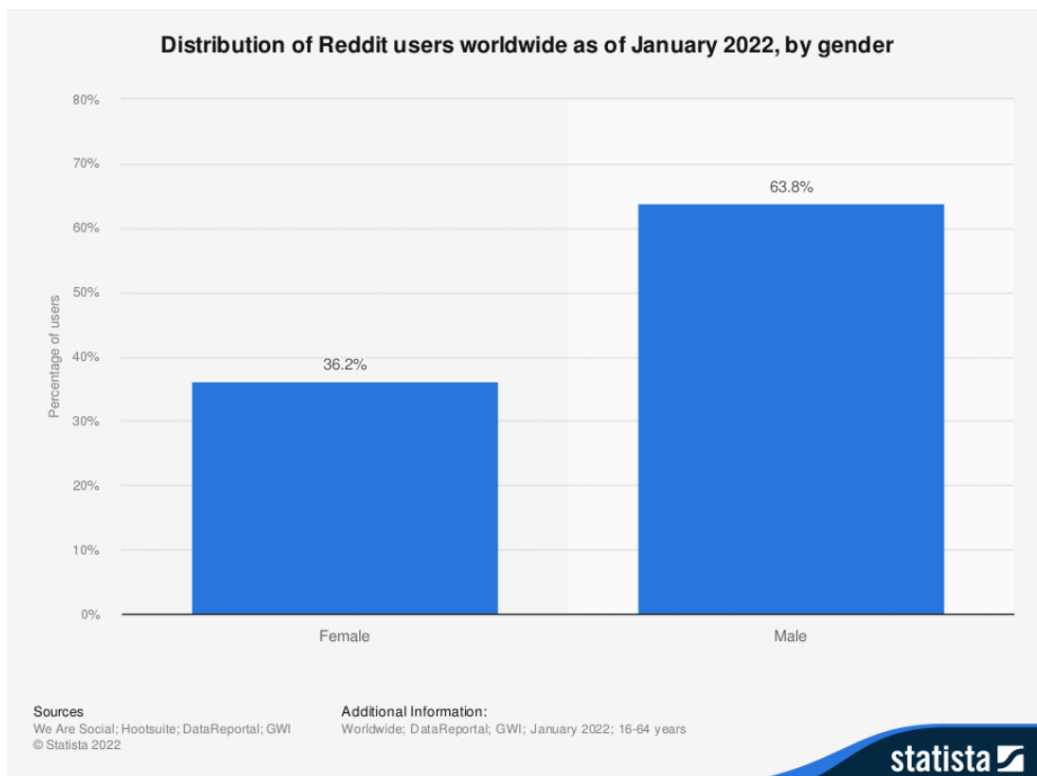

Figure 6: Screenshot taken April 26, 2023. Link: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1255182/distribution-of-users-on-reddit-worldwide-gender/

Statista also highlights the US. Bias the site has, with almost half the userbase originating in the United States (Bianchi, 2022).
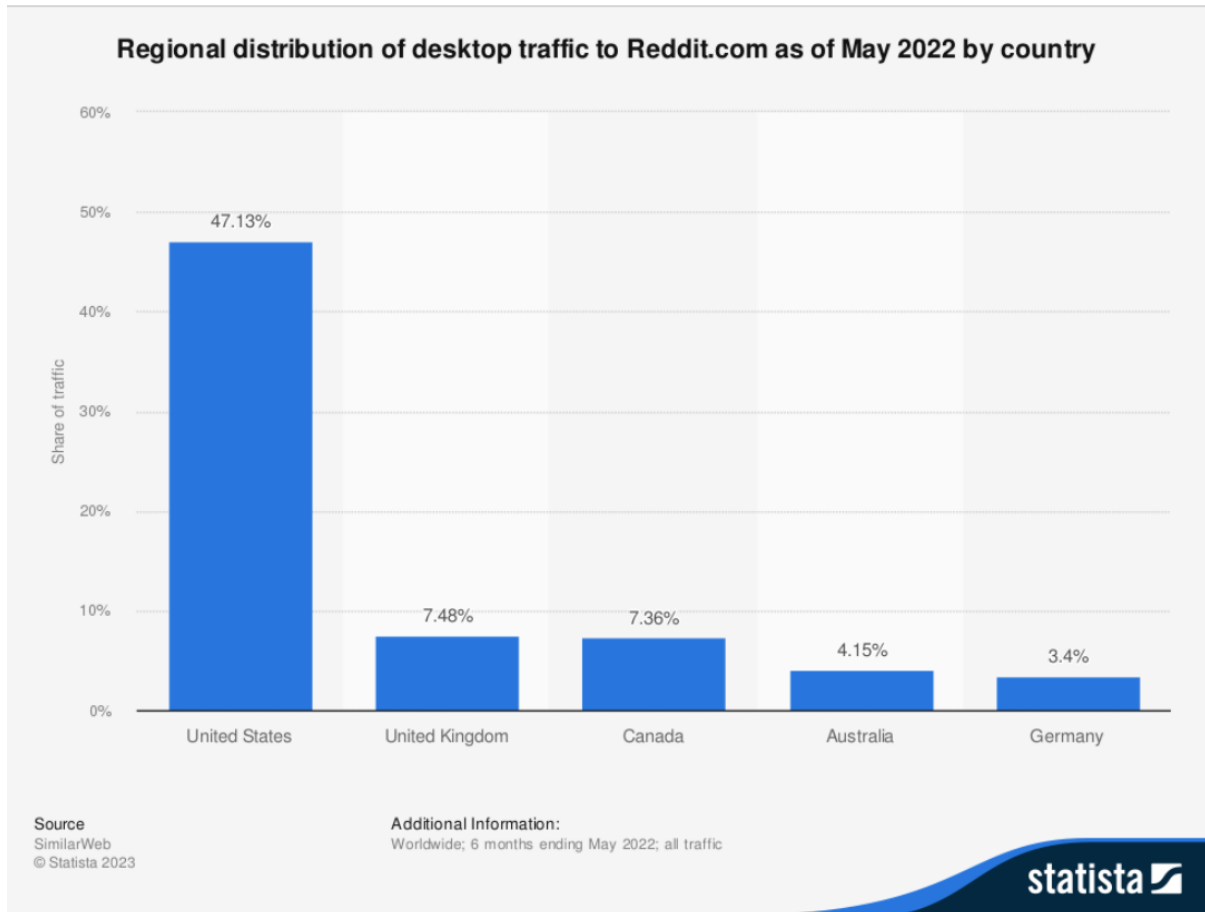

Figure 7: Screenshot taken April 26, 2023. Link: https://www.statista.com/statistics/325144/reddit-global-active-user-distribution/

So, in essence, we can confirm that Reddit, the biggest internet forum in the world, skews heavily male, with roughly two thirds of the userbase, and heavily American, with almost half of the userbase. In terms of age, the most common age group 18 to 29, with 30 to 49 coming in second (Turner, 2023).

3.2.2 IncelTear

"r/IncelTear" is a subreddit on the popular website Reddit that works as a support group for victims of vitriolic, hateful and sexist unwanted contact with so-called incels on the internet. A majority of the posts posted on the subreddit are screenshots of Incel-websites and Incel support-groups, with an emphasis on trying to understand, mock or analyze the behavior,

rhetoric and movement. I say so-called, as not all incels wear their label with a badge of honor, so differentiating between misogynists and incels can be hard. But there are a few key differences. The subreddits have the word "blackpilled" in its description to differentiate the lingo used. Blackpilled, as discussed earlier, has a certain type of misogyny that separates itself from standard what is common for traditional thinking. Blackpilled incels genuinely believe in a power imbalance that heavily favors women due to sex specifically, and feel themselves that they are destined to be lonely due to negative genetic traits. There is a stronger sense of self-hatred and entitlement to messages sent by incels to women, as they see themselves as the underdogs in every scenario. Which is why they have to justify more scenarios where women are not disproportionately more likely to be victims of sex crimes. Hence a high belief in rape myth acceptance.

Here are some facts, statistics and observations about the subreddit:

- Link: https://www.reddit.com/r/IncelTear/
- Number of members: 125 000.
- Number of active users on a day-to-day basis: between 200 and 300.
- Description: "*IncelTear is a subreddit for posting screenshots of hateful, misogynist, racist, violent, and often bizarre content created by hateful "incels" (involuntary celibates). We do not condone blanket hatred of virgins or the romantically unsuccessful. Blackpilled incels blame women, their genes, attractive men, and society at large for their inability to get dates or sex. Occasional meta discussion is also welcome. This is not a sub about k!lling incels.*"

3.2.3 Creepy PMs

"r/CreepyPMs" is a rather large subreddits where people share strange, bizarre and primarily creepy messages they have received. Most of the posts seem to be screenshots of private messages that starts with people (primarily women) receiving sexually explicit questions, statements and images. But considering the large userbase and ambiguous definition of the phrase "creepy", along with very little basic information in the bio, the page has a large assortment of a lot of different contexts related to the messages. In all honesty, a lot of the messages can be confused with poor attempt at flirtation that skip the "hello, how are you

part?" part and go straight to the "I want to have sex with you, why aren't you responding???"

Facts, statistics and observations about the subreddit:

- Link: https://www.reddit.com/r/creepyPMs/
- Number of members: 785 000.
- Number of active users on a day-to-day basis: Between 200 and 300.
- Description: "*A place for people to share the strange and disturbing PMs they get from all over the internet*."
- There are several posts from incels, usually asking for help with escaping the group.
- Aggressive posts from incels are frequently banned.
- All posts must protect the identity of both the messenger and the receiver. All names er censored/blurred.

3.2.3 4chan

Facts about 4chan:

There is a reason the primal source for information on 4chan in this thesis is called "Kill All Normies" (Nagle, 2017). "Normie" is a word used to describe the average person, often living blissfully ignorant, opposed to those who use the phrase. This type of rhetoric to pit the regular person as something lesser mimics itself with names such as

Bluepillers: people who has not taken the infamous "red pill" and has thus not woken up from the truth. Bluepillers are "the masses" that people on the fringe label as some who is capable of being like them, but has not yet reached this stage.

Chads/Stacys: Chads being the average, hypermasculine man, and Stacy being the average hyperfeminine woman. What people consider hypermasculine or hyperfeminine varies, but members of the manosphere also consider most people to be either a Chad or a Stacy.

Foids: A derogatory term used by incels to describe women. Short for "femoid". On most of the screenshots viewed on incel forums, the word "foid" is used far more than the word "women". Will be discussed at length later in this thesis.

Betas: A man who is not as dominant as he should be, according to his "true nature". As opposed to "Alphas" who are at the top of the gendered hierarchy.

NPCs: Non-Playable Characters. A term that originated in video games, to describe characters who have no agency, and only live to support a main character. People in the manosphere use it to describe regular people who go through life without much agency, unlike themselves.

These labels, slurs and nicknames are used to differentiate the special "us" versus the ignorant, boring, normal etc. "them". In the most extreme cases, such as with the incel community, it works to dehumanize an entire gender in a way that justifies vile behavior. The use of men calling other more feminine men "betas" also works to blame women for the lack of hypermasculinity in men, as rigid gender roles make way for discriminating both men and women, and everyone in between.

4.0 Data analysis and methodology

The beta revolt starts now!

I need pussy – Anonymous Reddit user (rape threat nr. 3 on data sheet).

4.1 Rapeglish and RRTG

In 2016, Author Emma A. Jane wanted to, in her own words, "*illustrate the formulaic, machine-like and impersonal nature of misogynistic discourse online*" (Jane, 2017 a, 1). By using fragments of real life Rapeglish to splice, stich and reshuffle the slurs, actions and phrases used by men on the internet, she was able to create a computer program could produce up to 80 billion unique rape threats, or 23 per woman on earth (ibid, p3). The data she collected was threats sent to her over 18 years, while she was holding public positions of journalistic influence in women's magazines, such as (find position and source).

We have already defined what Rapeglish is, but quote the author herself: "*An emerging yet increasingly dominant online dialect whose signal characteristic is graphic and sexually violent imagery. Often accompanied by: accusations that female recipients are overweight, unattractive, and acceptably promiscuous; all-caps demands for intimate images; and strident denials that there is any misogyny on the internet whatsoever. Routinely deployed on hook-up apps and online dating sites in response to women who decline suave male overtures*

such as sending unsolicited penis portraits or using pick-up lines such as 'If I flip a coin, what are the chances of me getting head?" (ibid, p2).

In other words, if a woman is too unattractive, she deserves rape threats. If she is too attractive, she is asking for it, despite her literal pleads to not get rape threats. So by that logic, women deserve to get raped either way. It is a way to justify not only why women should get raped, but more importantly why men should be allowed to rape. The reason for sending rape threats is not a major part of why male-identifying users send rape threats. It's more about their own views on women and society at large than the women receiving the threats. While will be discussed at length at the end of this thesis. Rapeglish builds on semiotician Yuri Lotman's work on framing of cultural changes in language, and the translation of these systems. In the case of Rapeglish, how it affects the male senders and female recipients. Using Lotman's work, Jane makes the argument that Rapeglish, aka the vitriolic way of sending rape threats online, has evolved into its own language. By using data collected over 18 years, she is able to draw upon the results to compare them to her own work. Her book uses the following way to organize the words used:

A – Salutation

B – Adjective

C – Noun

D – Punctuation (optional)

E – Transitional phrase

F – Outcome part one

G – Outcome part two

H – Rationale

One example of this would be:

(A) Fuck you, you (B) unrapable (C) cunt (D). (E) I hope you (F) die of pussy cancer (G) while your children watch (H) coz you're a stupid feminist asshole.

This example is the first one in Jane's book, Misogyny Online: A Short (and Brutish) History (2017 (a), 37-39).

Now that we have established what structure Rapeglish has, we can now use the data collected to compare. Does the data from Reddit typically use all of these parts? Why, and why not? The data has also been categorized into different types of threats. Ergo:

- Threats from failed flirting
- Threats spelled out as an attempt at silencing.
- Threats containing explicit images.
- Threats containing encouragements of self-harm and suicide.

4.2 Why Reddit? And why these subreddits?

When looking at the research found for this thesis, much data can be found on Twitter (Hopton & Langer, 2022), Facebook (Jane, 2017, d) and YouTube (). However, Reddit was chosen for this thesis due to several reasons:

- It has a large userbase.
- Responses to inquiries are rapid and in multitudes.
- There is a large pool of very spesific subreddits to research.
- It is considered a very open and mostly unregulated web-based forum, leading to less censored discussions. This was important to get the raw data needed for the analysis, as Rapeglish is a very offensive language for most internet browsers.

It was also important to choose more than one subreddit, as only gathering language data from, for example, only incel threads and subreddits would offer a singular perspective. Which is why r/CreepyPMs offer an insight into other groups of men.

One study by Tracie Farrel et al (2019) and the way the manosphere presents itself on Reddit argues that most of the research thus far has been conducted on Twitter, a platform where communities are not as well defined as on Reddit.

4.3 Data gathered

By browsing down the subreddits and downloading the published screenshots featuring examples of sexualized cyber-bullying, I was able to get 40 combined examples from both subreddits. After that I typed in the following keywords to go further back in time:

- Threat(s)

- Rape
- Rape threat(s)

The keywords mentioned added 25 more screenshots from 2016 to 2022. The remaining screenshots being from early 2023. While looking at the screenshots, I wanted to keep the following questions and hypotheses in mind, inspired by Emma Jane.

- The goal of these messages is to intimidate and silence.
- These messages are detailed in nature to spesific:
    o body parts
    o acts
    o locations
    o sexuality
    o race
    o gender
- These messages all blend together.
- The reason for sending these messages is laid out plainly and in detail.
- There is sometimes ambiguous wording to avoid breaking community guidelines, such as "hoping something negative happens", saying it would be a positive result for someone else if (insert rape threat) happened, or using other clever wording. Examples of clever wording could be "it would be a real shame is… (insert rape threat)" happened.

All of these points will be revisited later.

4.5 Results

With the screenshots collected from both subreddits we have 66 example of rape threats sendt by men on the internet. Primarily incels sending the messages to women, with few exceptions. The results are as follows:

	(A) Salutation	(B)Adjective	(C) Noun	(D) Pountiation	(E) Transitional	(F) Outcome part one	(G) Outcome part two	(H) Rationale
2	fuck you	sexy/lucky fuc	bitch	?		hold you down and	fuck the guts out of you	I'd show you, bu youdd have to reply
3	You fucking slut	you fucking whore				You need a good rape a	I will butcher your famil	I need pussy now/the beta revolt is starting
4		worthless	whore			you submit to me	id dominate you feminine whore	
5	Listen here		cunt/bitch			the next posting you do	will be on #metoo	If you don't stop trolling
6	If you lived in Wisconsin					I'd tie you up and	fuck all of your holes	
7	hello		whore	!	I want to	kill her		I prefer her dead than to be with another man
8	and yes	fuck	baby producing machines		I stand by	#rapeallwomen	#cagethepets	because feminists
9	send a pussy pic		whore					
10	ok, haha fuck yc	you vapid	slut					you're a skank
11	*kys	faggot			I hope	someone throws acid o	Id stab your fucking ass to death	
12			bitch/faggot		I hope	your stupid bith is rape	somebody throw acid at	no fucking wedding then
13	*kys	dumb	bitch		I hope	you get cought in the next crossfire in a mass sho	so I can add your photo to my victims
14	*kys		faggot		Id	take you limbs	make your life unbarable	
15	*good morning	ugly piece of	trash			I will have no pitty for y	by n*words	you have no pitty for incels
16	fuck your help	dumb	bitch		I hope your	ass gets taken advantag	get black eye from your	(jealousy)
17	*							
18	*lmaoo, kys	you in	faggot		I hope	a stray pitbull mauls your face off		
19	*kys		bitch		I hope	an acid serial killer thro	get mutalated and torured	
20		stupid	female		I hope	you wind up in a nursin	kill you bitch ass	
21	*kys	stupid	female		id	beat the shit out of you	I wanna choke your ass to death with my cock
22	you				id	rape your mouth	and rape your pussy	
23	stfu		fag/bitch		if I came to your	and punched you a lot	you wouldn't have intercourse woth me?	
24	females are	stupid	holes					
25	hitler did notting wrong		bitcher, jews, blacks and cripples (should be gassed)					hint for not getting harrased, respond
26		fucking	lezbo		hope you enjoy	high rape crimes	psyco men will kill you	
27			foidasaurus		i hope you	get graped		stop messing with incels
28	females are	stupid	holes		you will be one sorry bitch			
29	compliment	another	bitch	;		fuck me while	your kids watch	
30					or else	I'll send dick pic and	hack you	(flirt/harass)
31	your pfp ins't cu	cringy	faggot/bitch		do you look like a	show your fucking face		
32	haha		you need a wheelchair					(ableism)
33					you deserve to li	knowing any incel can rape you		
34								
35	I can go on for years		bitch			I'll rape tf out of you an	impregnant you	
36	lmao, you look lke a		fag		if I were you I wc	kill myself		
37	*lmao	adhd having	bitch/whore		I hope	your husband is killed	enjoy your oppressive life as a women	
38	hey baby, show	dumb/ugly	whore					
39	no man would e	fat ass	depressed cat lady					calling other people incels
40	I never understood why men	rape, until I saw you			I am fantasizing a	raping you now		be a good girl
41					I am coming to	amputate you and	put on ametal dildo with high voltage to fry your hole	
42	hello	jewish	curryfoid		apologise, or else...			(silence)
43	*kys	dumb ass/fat	bitch		I hope you have	terrible body images		
44					I hope you get	raped and killed		stop trolling
45	ok, listen up princess				or else..	you will be posting #me	let men talk	stop bullying incels
46	*I kill you tomorrow				I need to	engage in violence against women		
47	hmm nice chick	adorable	baby girl		I would love to	sneak in and	rape you	
48	*ew	stupid	slut		get that out	kys		
49	you are lucky the law protexts you			I want to	erape you and	beat you	females deserve to get raped
50			bitch		I will	find you	fuck the shit out of you	
51					hope you get	raped by	ugly short indians	incel gang?
52	*haha, you got a funny soundi		bitch		please get	raped and	acid attacked	kill yourself female
53	*kys		bitch		please get	raped and	mutilaed with acid	
54			cunt					I save my best for rape victims I am gonna ma
55	hey, are you enjoying your op	femoid, bitch, skank					
56		cracker ass	noodle		not after I	bang your mom and dad		
57	we are violent and hate		foids		women deserve	raped and	murdured	
58	*kys					get acid attacked	hang yourself	
59	you	fat	fuck		I want me and m	gang abuse you	use your hole	
60	you live in cleve	fakecell	cuck/sheboons		we will	make it look like	a bunch of blacks jumpe	you are an ape lover after all
61	give me five minutes alone wi	bitch		I will	find you and	fuck the shot out of you	
62		used	rag		no one could hea	screams for help	and disfigure you	
63	I don't blame any mass murde	foids						I support Alec (mass shooter)
64		fat	body/bitch		I hope you get	raped by	bbc	but I have the best dick for you
65			bitch		If I met you in re	fuck you		I never liked you anyway
66					I am going to	grab your hair without v	while you are begging m	(rape fantasy)
67					I am going to find	show my cock up your a	I want to hear you cry and beg while I fucking rape you

To fill out some blanks in the datasheet, the category of **Punctuation** (D) was too difficult to define for a number of reasons. The number of messages directed at someone is almost always more than one, with multiple punctuations used. And more often than not, the use of the punctuations were either grammatically incorrect, or not used at all. Hence why this section is sparse.

The final section (H) **Rationale** is also changed, with all text in parenthesis being my own comments with the attempt to add context, as so many of the messages were short and to the point, to say the least. As in lacking a detailed explanation for why someone would type, for example: "please get raped and acid attacked" (example nr. 52 on the sheet).

The color grading was also added to add context to the messages:

- <mark style="background-color:green">Green</mark>: all the green examples were messages sent out by users with similar usernames, such as "killallwomen", "killallatractivewomen" and similar sounding names. This made the analysis difficult for a number of reasons that are to be discussed later.
- <mark style="background-color:blue">Blue</mark>: all blue examples are messages that starts out as attempts at flirtation that quickly, for one reason or another, escalates into sexualized cyber-bullying.
- <mark style="background-color:yellow">Yellow</mark>: all blue examples are messages that explicitly demands silence, apologies or similar subordinate responses.
- *: finally, the asterisk symbol was added in the first column to mark all messages with explicit images in the form of porn, dick-pics, and similar content added with the texts.

4.6 Observations

This part of the thesis is a broad generalization of the data analyzed, the other messages, screenshots and posts surrounding the data gathered, and further content, as certain messages consist with statements previously mentioned in this thesis. This part will also feature bread observations from the subreddits as a whole.

4.6.1 r/IncelTear

The average post on r/IncelTear was, in order of popular occurrence:

- Most common: Screenshots taken from incel forums and websites, such as "www.incel.is" and incel friendly spaces on major social media platforms, with the occasional screenshot of incel-like behavior on mainstream platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. These screenshots consist of conversations, posts and more discussing mostly the arbitrary and legal "chains" of consent laws, age of consent laws, and general laws against harming women and spices alike. Few to no posts discuss relationship advice or requests for perspectives on relationships.

- Regularly posted: Screenshots of interactions with incels, in the form of private messages. The private messages vary in origin, but the waste majority are sendt via Reddit's private chat.

- Very rare: posts of women exhibiting incel behavior. Women complaining about their own physical attributes, conditions and delf-described deformities as reason for not finding a romantic partner. These posts are exceedingly rare, as they are often met with little to no sympathy, hammering in the fact that inceldom is in fact only welcoming to male participants.

4.6.2 r/CreepyPMs

The waste majority, if not all of the content published on r/CreepyPMs are screenshots of just that. Creepy private messages. I was unable to find many examples of other types of content. And the waste majority of the messages in question were all flirtatious in nature, at one point or another. Sometimes messages are only demands for contact, images or more. No hello or goodbye needed. Sometimes the messages escalate from friendly to hostile in short successions. Rarely were there any messages that seemed to be from a female-to-male receiver. After all, how is a man mistaken as a women supposed to respond to a question of "*have you tried to taste your own breastmilk*?" without any invitation to discuss such matter?

Any instances of rape-threats were rare, but not completely uncommon. On this particular subreddit, the messages usually started out as attempt at flirtation, but quickly escalated into either involuntary participation in rape-fantasies, or threats of sexual assault after having their advances denied.

5.0 Discussion

It speaks the unspeakable – Emma A. Jane. 2017 (c) from the article "What the Random Rape Threat Generator Tells Us About Online Misogyny".

5.1 How accurate is Rapeglish?

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, the meaning and purpose of Rapeglish can be summed up in these points:

- The goal of these messages is to intimidate and silence.
- These messages are detailed in nature to sisific:
  - body parts
  - acts
  - locations
  - sexuality
  - race
  - gender
- The motivation for sending these messages is laid out plainly and in detail.
- There is a presence of ambiguous wording to hide from moderators, regulations, etc.
- These messages all blend together, making them seem less personal.

We will now go through these five points as main theories of Rapeglish.

5.1.1 Quiet bitch

The first theory being: *The goal of these messages is to intimidate and silence*. Most of the users who post these screenshots often include some context for the conversations happening, in the comments or title of the post. Sometimes the context is as simple as "guy sent me this", or "This was the result of me rejecting him", or something similar. The posts have a variety of reasons to be posted, but some of the verbal abuses are responses to women posting in defense for sexual assault victims, or for attacking people who commit sexual assault. Or even men being accused of being "white knights" who abusers claim only show agreements

with assault victims in exchange for the potential for sexual favors. Context for posts include examples like the one from one Reddit user:

"I just got a rape threat in my DMs for challenging vaccine and covid misinformation on r/nonewnormal. Is this normal?!?"

The response was the following:

hey

le_leddit_armee · 1m

Listen here cunt. You're going to stop trolling /r/nonewnormal or I swear to Christ the next thing you'll be posting is \#MeToo. Now be a good little bitch and never post on reddit again.

Figure 8: Screenshot taken April 29, 2021.

This type of rhetoric also fits the ambiguous "wishful thinking" mentioned earlier. As this is an indirect rape threat, and not a stereotypical graphic one. Or not so graphic compared to most of the data collected.

Another example is one user posting about her experiences in a support group for sexual assault survivors, only to get this response:

If u lived in Wisconsin I'd tie u up and fuck u in all your holes and fill them up with cum even if ur not on bc. I would then leave u there tied up while I go do whatever I want and come back and fuck u again

Figure 9: Screenshot taken December 27, 2022.

This third example is another situation where someone is posting about their experiences with sexual assault, with the response being the following:
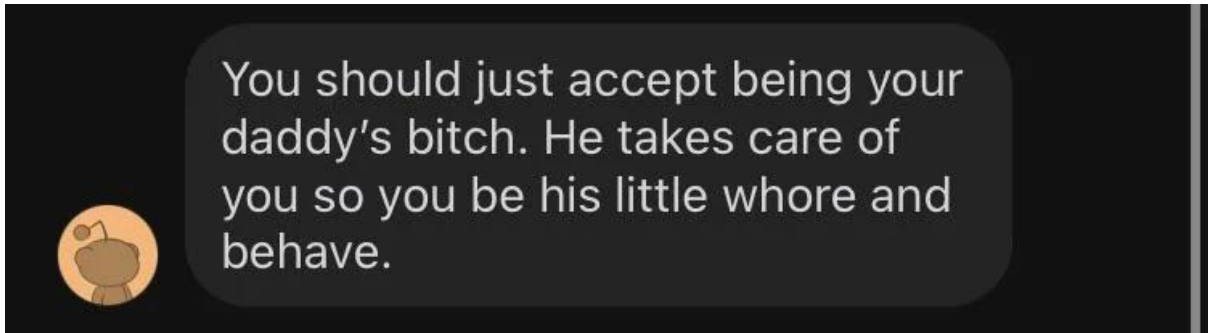
Figure 10: Screenshot taken March 14, 2016.

In 2016, one user posted the following: "Rape/death threat after calling out someone for saying sexist crap":
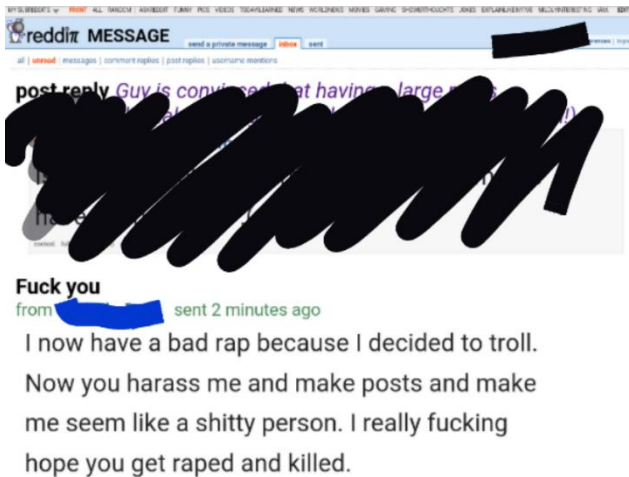

Figure 11: Screenshot taken October 13, 2022.

According to the data, 6 out of the 66 examples or rape threats include language directly hinting at a desire for the recipient to not post, comment or participate in any discourse related to incels, sexual assault or similar subjects. And as shown by the examples above, some comments that do not necessarily include direct demands for silence, do have context from the people taking the screenshots as a demand to be silent. Examples like this support the claim by Emma Jane that comments like these are made up primarily to intimidate and silence women from public debates on the subject of sexual assault, rape culture, incels and more.

5.1.2 Details and details

The second theory of Rapeglish is as follows: *these messages are detailed in nature to spesific*. This will be the shortest of the points to discuss, as all of the example of rape threats are constant of details of the following:

- body parts (33)
- acts (66)
- locations (3)
- sexuality (6)
- race (4)
- gender (29)

As the data collected are all rape threats to some degree, they all contain the description of "acts". By using the structure description of Emma Janes's book *Misogyny Online: A Short (and brutish) History* (2017, a ,p36), we can decipher how many of the examples are fitting what category. As mentioned previously, 6 of the examples chosen has homophobic slurs related to "sexuality", 4 has racist slurs, and one is ableist. The homophobic slurs seem on first glance not to be calculated towards people in the LGBTQIA+ community, with the exception of one comment that was openly made due to the recipient's sexuality (see figure 12 below), but instead tagged on top of other insults. As if the motive behind a woman rejecting a man must be because of their inherent lack of attraction to men themselves. Which again leads to a never-ending cycle of "if you don't want to have sex with me, you must have sex forced upon you", removing the male responsibility in the attempts at romantic endeavors.
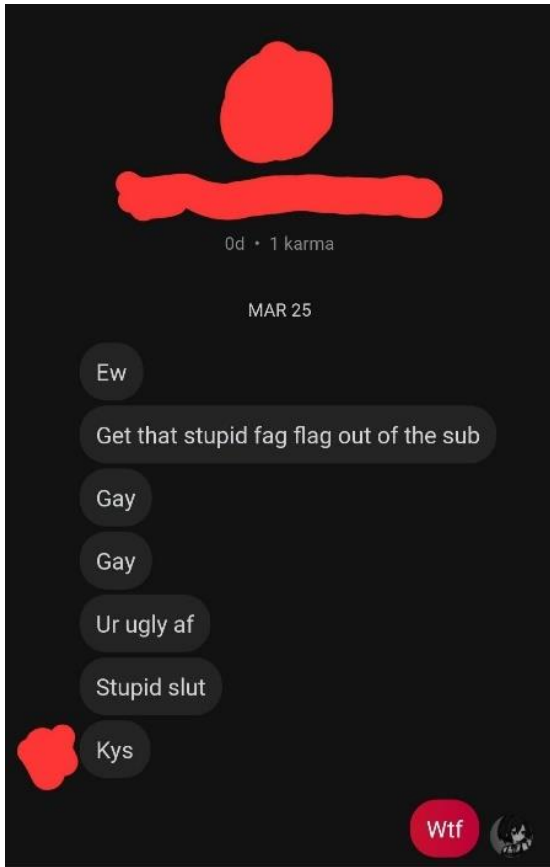
Figure 12: Screenshot taken March 25, 2023. Uploaded April 2 2023.

Now, we obviously cannot put all the content from all the examples in one sheet, as many of the threats contain several pages worth of insults. But after going through all the threats one by one and documenting the findings, the data shows that 33 of the examples included references to *body parts*, entire bodies, or mentions of removing underwear from bodies. So precisely half. One eerily observation was the number of messages with the words like "holes" used to describe women. This dehumanizing language will be discussed at length later in the thesis.

When it comes to gender, one finding sticks out. 17 of the threats originate form user with the username "killallwomen" "killallattractivewomen" or something related to violence against women. On top of that several of the threats include references to feminism and women as a whole. Combined, gender is at the center of 29 of the messages. I have chosen to not include the more "basic" gendered insults, such as "bitch" and "whore", as I wanted the "women" part of the insults to be highlighted. Threats with words such as "foid", "lezbo" and similar gendered incel language has been included, as this shows evidence of more spesific gendered motive behind the threats. And as for *location*, 3 of the examples include threats of going to someone's home state, city or address.

5.1.3 Motivation

In terms of clear and visible motivation, Emma's work points out that *the motivation for sending these messages is laid out plainly and in detail*. Like the other points. This is true at different degrees. While some threats only include desires to commit sexual assaults without contexts, the desire to commit sexual assault is motivation enough, meaning that all the threats classify as clear in their motivation. As previously stated, half the examples had gender strongly featured as a motivation for the threats. The two most common reason for this being either romantic rejection, and preexisting hatred towards women due to strong belief in red-pill ideology, as was explained in this thesis's chapter on *The Manosphere*.

5.1.4 What rape threats? I don't see any rape threats!

We now look at the statement: *There is a presence of ambiguous wording to hide from moderators, regulations, etc*, such as "hoping something negative happens", saying it would be a positive result for someone else if (insert rape threat) happened, or using other so-called "clever wording". Examples of clever wording could be "it would be a real shame is… (insert rape threat)" happened. Also, I mentioned ambiguous wording to avoid expulsion from online communities, by breaking community guidelines. One example of this is how Jane argues that there is evidence to suggest that users actually know about the various loopholes that enable people to harass others without serious consequences. Such as hate-speech in form of wishful thinking. For example: "*I hope you get raped with a chainsaw*" (Jane, 2017 (a) p36). In 2016, Australian media personality Waleed Aly, along with his wife, had been receiving racist death threats form a Twitter, calling them "*hijabi scumfuck floozie*" (ibid). However, there were no direct threats involved, so the police let the Twitter user off with a warning, only for the attacks to escalate in both seriousness and ambiguity. The police had even told the perpetrator that he knew "*where the line is*" and "*if you step over it again you'll be leaving in cuffs*". He did not take the words of the police, and the attacks got mor creative with "*I hope #WaleedAly ACCIDENTLY cuts his throat while shaving*" (ibid, p40).

Take the screenshot below. This screenshot is clearly a threat, yet has a final comment stating "This is not a threat" followed by laughing and clown-emojis. This does not change the fact that the message is threatening in nature, but contains very litte graphic decritions, making it less likely to get picked up by algorithms, moderators and other tools used to restrict

inflammatory content. Because even Reddit has some regulations on what can and cannot be written, depending on the subreddit.
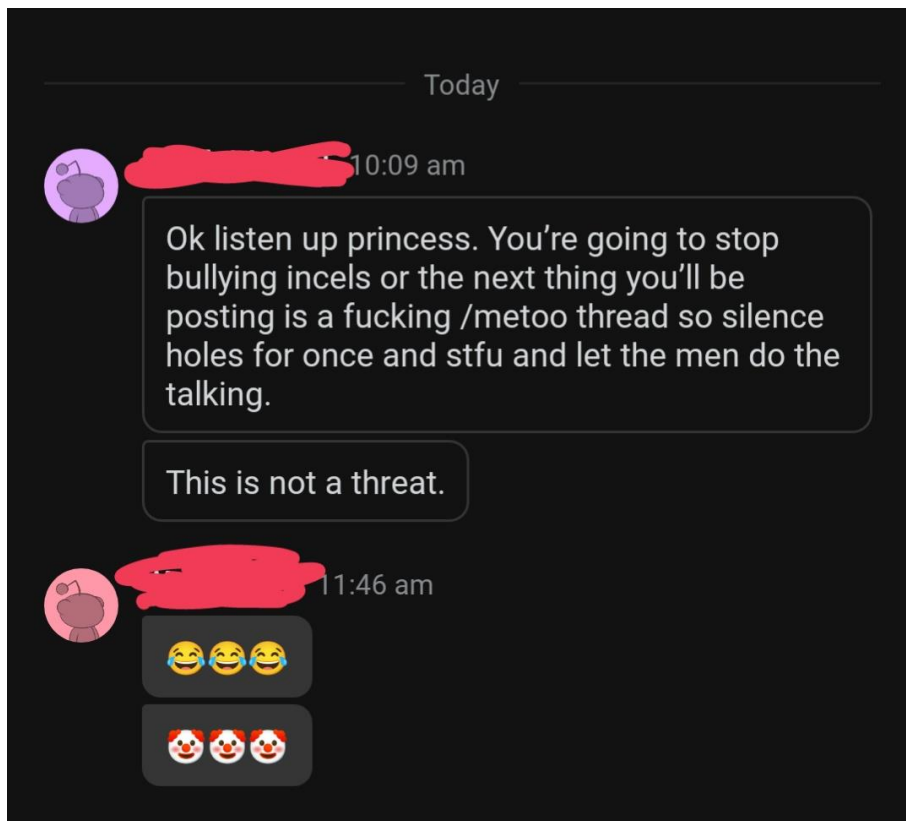

Figure 13: Screenshot uploaded to subreddit November 19, 2019. Uploaded?

Another observation is how important context was for understanding the intentions of the messages. In a vacuum it can be hard to interpret the threats and their motivation. If a user has, for example a username called "i_Rape_Foids_on_9_11", does that alone quantify as a rape threat when the message sent does not? See screenshot below for observation on this. The account names have not been blurred due to them no longer being active, in addition to the fact their name is the purpose og the question stated above:

Figure 14: Screenshot uploaded to Reddit July 9, 2020.

So, to conclude. There is evidence of ambiguous wording being present 2 of the screenshots, who has had references to #MeToo as a means of threats, demanding silence (examples number 20 and 60 in the data sheet). Though this number is lower than expected, the fact that the hashtag #MeToo is adopted in both examples says a lot about the willingness to turn a campaign for combating sexual assault into a vehicle for it.

5.1.5 So, is it random or not?

The final and perhaps most important statement of Rapeglish would be: *these messages all blend together, making them seem less personal*. As stated by the author of Rapeglish: These messages "give the impression that the senders know us, that they are aware of our particular weak spots and of what to say to hurt or frighten us the most. Yet take hundreds of individual

rape threats and line them up side by side, and they don't look personal at all. They look like they were generated by a machine" (Jane, 2017 ,(c). This was the basis for the creation for the RRTG (Random Rape Threat Generator). To highlight the impersonality and cold calculated nature of the barrage of rape threats women receive. For while some women receive the occasional threat on the internet and is rightly horrified by the vile and spesific language, author Emma Jane collects her large amount of data from her own personal inbox, which has slowly desensitized her into feeling less horrified when reading Rapeglish, and more passive in reaction. Not to say that the feeling of disgust or fear goes away completely, but after reading back-to-back sexualized cyberbullying fitting the description of Rapeglish, I have too, become more desensitized to the language.

At first, the messages were, naturally, horrifying, disgusting and provocative in every way. Several mental health breaks were needed to go through them all. After disqualifying regular "death threats" (feels strange to type that) I landed on 66 private messages that fit the description for rape threats. And after months of reading the messages (even memorizing some of them) the words that once make me gag, was suddenly mundane to my eyes.

Also, the line between flirting and pretending to flirt is a hard one. Some messages were rape fantasies forced upon people who were not consenting to set fantasies. Afterall, one commenter on Reddit posted about receiving a rape-fantasy message, with the title being "this weirdo wants to rape me so badly". But it is quite possible that the person who was sending the message did not interpret his advances as a rape-fantasy. It goes back to the tendencies for sadistic and violent sex that researchers argue becomes normalized through porn and other media. Some of the wording might be more ambiguous, like texting women on reddit about rape fantasies, but using consensual and nonconsensual language mixed. But forcing someone to participate in a verbal rape fantasy, even on the internet, can be mentally viewed as rape. The comments with rape fantasies usually does not contain the same amount of vitriolic slurs or hate-speech.

5.2 Evidence of homophobia

6 out of the 66 messages contained homophobic slurs, such as "fag", "faggot" and "lezbo". The only surprising element of this part of the data was the lack of more gendered slurs, as references to lesbianism was incredibly rare, and the word "faggot" being a favorite insult of used.

5.3 Evidence of racism/antisemitism

When analyzing incel rhetoric on Reddit, race came up far more often than expected. Which aligns with the findings of Farrel et al (2019) and their statement that "for incels, misogyny is coupled with racism well" (ibid, p91). In the data set, racial slurs are featured 4 times. They are not all listed in the data sheet, and the one that is, has been censored (example 15 on the data sheet). Sometimes, the presence of racist rhetoric combined with context makes clear the use of the words "like your ancestors" in example 21. This sentence, like many other sentences could not fit on the data sheet, but ads racist undertones to an already harsh threat. See figure 13 below for full overview:
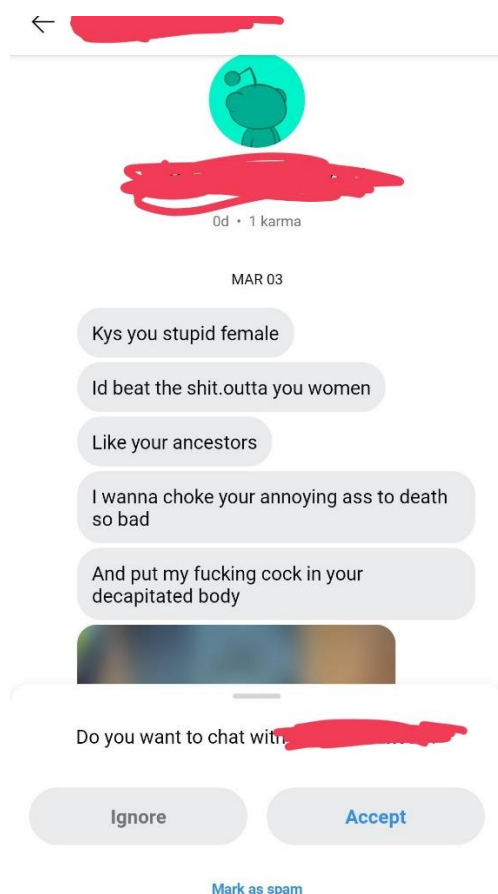

Figure 15: Screenshot uploaded to Reddit March 3, 2023.

5.4 Evidence of dehumanization

While comparing rape threats from incels to non-incels, certain phrases, beliefs and slurs stand out as clearly originating from inceldom. One of the most common slurs aimed at women (bot including bitch) is the word "foid". Out of all the examples listen in the sheet, 4 of them has variations of the word "foid". "Furryfoid" (1), "foidasaurus"(1) and "foids" (2) come up as insults that have a spesific origin and purpose. Foid is short for "female humanoid organism" and other uses of the word included "femoid", "feminoids" and "FHOs" (Prazmo, 2020, p22). See figure 16 below for example:

Figure 16: Screenshot uploaded to r/IncelTear, April 16, 2023.

The reason these slurs are being highlighted is due to it being a symptom of a bigger issue: dehumanization.

We previously mentioned that the word "holes" came up a lot. Four times in fact. This type of language reducing women, not only to body parts, but to even the simplest uses, is beyond regular dehumanizing that occurs on toxic forums. One of the most common ways to dehumanize women on the internet in "animalization", as in the way words are used to reduce people to animals. The more negative the association to the animal it is, the harsher the animal-metaphors. Animals like pigs, cattle, vipers, insects, pests and more (Prazmo, 2020, 22). I previously mentioned that racism occurs in, amongst at hoers, example *15* from the data sheet. What I did not mention was the large number of other texts that I could not fit into the data sheet- The words "ape lover" occurs once in part of a long tirade about people of color, in this threat-example. Reducing people of color to animals or using just using the word "blacks" (also occurs in that same tirade) is unfortunately a popular way for racists to dehumanize and animalize others. Ewelina Prazmo (2020) goes on to argue that uses of the word "foid" to make women seem like cold, robotic being, makes women "worse than animals" and "below insects" (ibid, p22). Prazmo highlights different ypes of dehumanizing language. Reducing women to animals, as previously stated, unfortunately popular. Alost as popular as reducing women to inanimate pieces of meat, such as the words "meat", "roasts", "flesh" etc. Then there is the subcategory that reduces women's genitalia to comodties, which was not unusual to find. Words like "holes", "containers", "cumbuckets" and "dumpsters" (ibid). So, to summarize. The most common ways people, especially incels, dehumanize women and people of color online is *animalization*, *objectification*, and *commodification*. With subcategories for all, ranging from robots to insects.

5.5 Traces of Rapeglish in the mainstream

5.5.1 So this Joker guy keeps showing up

Three of the threats gathered in the data sheet have references to the comic book character *The Joker*, who is most famous for being the fictional antagonist of the superhero character *Batman*. Which might in itself seem like a small observation at first, until more and more references to similar popular culture pop up. Posts like the one below (see screenshot 14 for reference) keep worshiping the clown-prince of crime, which again, is a Batman villain.

There seems to be actual love for a villainous character who, despite being famous for a lot of crime, membership in inceldom does not seem to be one of them. However, in the newest iteration of this character, The Joker seems to be down on his luck. Financially, emotionally, psychologically. And after a lot of pent-up rage unleashes itself in a destructive and lethal way on people that he personally deems lesser, he is rewarded by the masses for "standing up for himself" in a way. Hence what the user in the screenshot above means by the description of events, where The Joker is rescued from the police, only to inspire a city-wide riot. This version of The Joker is played by Joaquin Phoenix, and is a thin, mentally unstable (his words) man who is ignored by both society and family alike for reasons beyond his control. Hence why a growing number of incels identify themselves with him, despite gender never being relevant to the character, as he typically inflicts damage to men and women alike (Glace et al, 2021, 292). Speaking of riots, the late actor Heath Ledger also portrayed the Joker in the 2008 movie The Dark Knight, directed by Christopher Nolan. Here the classification of the character is one of militaristic anarchy. Which again, has nothing to with gender, but it does not stop viewers from drawing their own conclusions. Alyssa M. Glace et al argue that the worship of this spesific character adds violent illusions to an already hostile environment, where violent fantasies are realized on screen.
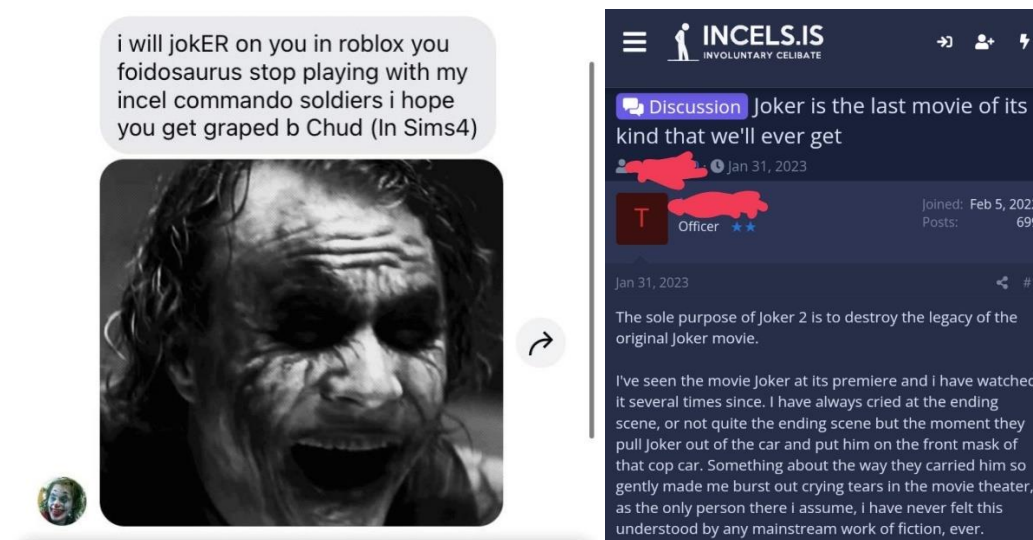

Figure 17: Screenshot uploaded to subreddit April 15, 2023.   Figure 18: Screenshot uploaded to subreddit March 8, 2023

Now, obviously it is not the responsibility of filmmakers to not make art featuring villains. When The Jokers views the world through a nihilistic "nothing matters so I should act on my worst impulses" kind of way, it is not the director's responsibility to have a sign saying:

"Please do not copy this character!" But these characters do give us an insight into why lonely men feel the way they feel. Which leads us to other characters.

5.5.2 Cultures bleeds into each other

There is evidence of online rape culture bleeding into other parts of mainstream society. Phrases like "feminoid" are more and more common on web forums and comment sections. One of the most popular anti-feminist uses of rhetoric is the phrase "*feminazi*", combining the words "feminist" and "nazi" (Glace et al, 2021, 22) in order to give readers the belief that feminists, or women in general:

a) Hold significantly more power than commonly believed.
b) Want even more power despite already achieving equality.
c) Desiring supremacy over men, not unlike how nazis wanted their own supremacy.

This phrase has become the go-to slang for any feminist that is perceived as militant, radical or even too outspoken. And anti-feminists who want to avoid the nazi-label for being too easy to denounce, use the less familiar phrase "*femifascist*" (ibid). The reason this rhetoric fits the "Rapeglish" definition is due to the choice of things to compare women to. For example, if someone claims that "*feminism is cancer*", how is someone who agrees supposed to respond? What does one do with cancer? You don't tolerate it. You don't negotiate with it. You remove it completely. Which is the extreme part.

5.6 Solutions?

5.6.1 Can we pay them? No Seriously!

So how do we get rid of Rapeglish, and the attitudes that persist to support it? Now, we obviously cannot expose every internet-surfing woman in the world to Rapeglish, in order to desensitize them to all but common practice of rape threats thrown their way. Neither is shutting down websites, servers and forums, as people always find other places on the internet to occupy.

The government of South Korea for example is paying young reclusive citizens up to $500 U.S dollars a month to socialize (Yeung & Bae, 2023). About 3.1% of South Koreans ages 19 to 39 are designated as "reclusive, lonely young people" who do not have their social or emotional needs met on a healthy level, with strong signs of long-term psychological issues

and emotional instability. The condition for the money is to "re-enter society". Japan also has similar problems, as 1,5 million people are designated as "reclusive and young" to a worrying degree. These people are referred to as *hikikomori* in Japanese, and government research points to Covid-19 as the newest factor in their reclusiveness (ibid).

As strange as it sound to pay someone to spend less time on the internet, and more time outside, the problem of *hikikomori* and their struggles is briefly covered in the EU's RAN-report on incels and inceldom from 2021 (RAN being short for Radicalization Awareness Network) argues that the problem of *hikikomori* is different for all nations, and that we can learn from Japan in a sense. According to research, 80% of all *hikikomori* are men, fueling the belief that men are in fact not in control of society, and feminism is a distraction from the real issues. And like *hikikomori*, incels spend far more time online than with other people in real life. And both suffer from similar societal and mental health problems (RAN, 2021, 4).

Now, paying everyone that spends too much time playing video games or, spend too much time online, to physically leave their homes is not exactly doable for everyone. But a established earlier there is truth to socializing people so they don't develop those same destructive disorders that has a tendency to affect those around the people who need it the most. Now according to this poll on r/IncelTear, there isn't much room for sympathy:
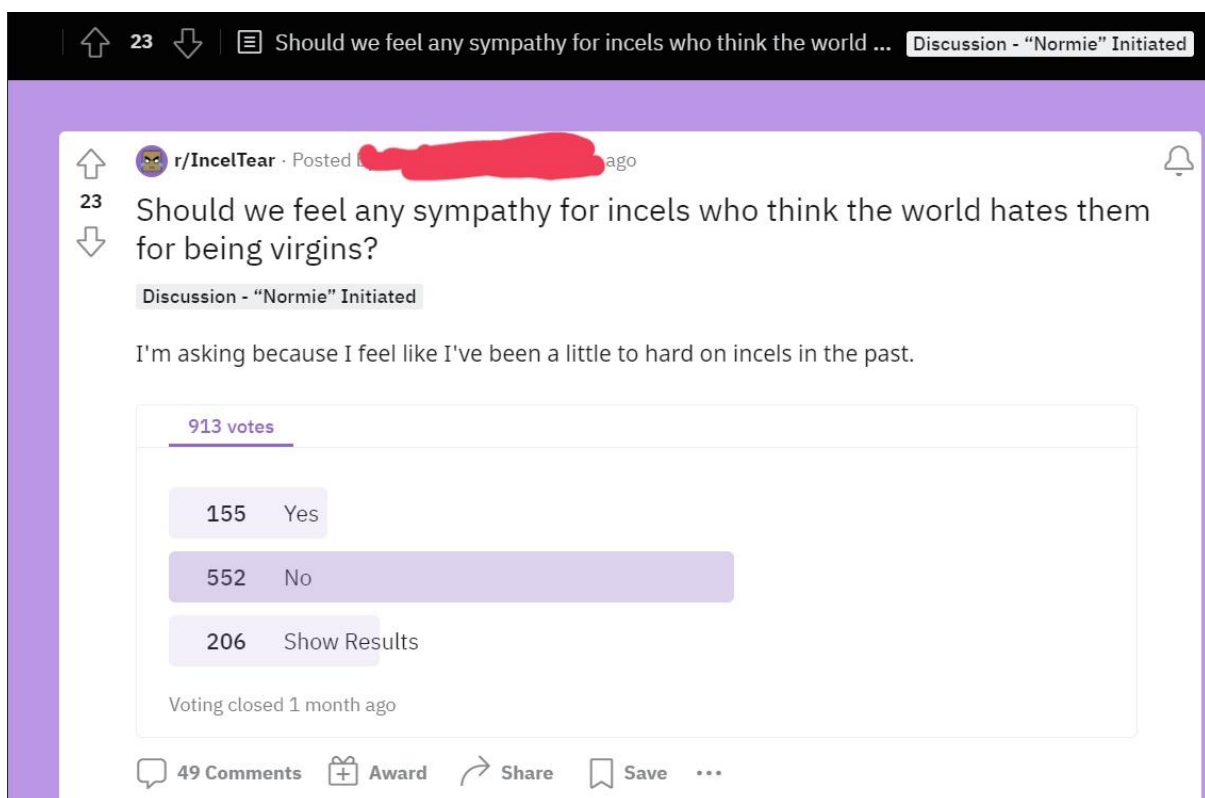

Figure 19: Screenshot taken 25. February, 2023.

With over 913 people voting, 552 of them do not feel sympathy towards incels. This could be due to many of the members experiencing harassment with incels earlier. It is important to remember that this poll was done after inceldom took off in infamy, after a string of high-profile terrorist attacks. Here the responsibility should not fall on victims to cue the perpetrators in any way. Which leads us to our next point.

5.6.2 Bystander intervention

Bystander intervention is the most effective tool we can deploy in real life. I say this as someone who was in the prime marked of recruitment during the Gamer Gate debacle of 2014. As a young and dumb teen with many difficult emotions, close friends and family directly stopped me from actively participating in the discourse that plagues my accounts on Reddit, Twitter and YouTube. Natasha Tripathi (2015) argues that sexual violence is a community problem, as a majority of sexual assaults happen with people we know, and the people who help us get out of these situations are again the people closest to us. As those are the people who can disprove misinformation regarding the falsely inflated numbers of false reports of sexual assault. As an American Association of University survey claims that 1 out of 4 women will be victims of sexual assault or misconduct (O'Donohue, 2019, 6).

Gamification. Humanization. At the core of inceldom is nihilism, fatalism, and unhealthy body standards.

5.6.3. Taking a page from the femcels?

We earlier discussed the concept of femcels, and how their rhetoric manifests in complete opposite to incels. Now, obviously we don't want anyone to idealize a lifestyle of loneliness and sexual frustration, but expressing that same frustration on a societal level, with a desire for some kind of self-improvement, is at the very least a step up from wanting to commit rape, self-harm, suicide, terrorism, and more. In addition to the fact that the rules laid out by the biggest pink-pilled subreddit, r/Vindicta, strictly forbids racism of any kind. On the other hand the subreddit does not openly allow male users, but not for the same reason women are not welcomed in incel-forums. The fact that r/Vindicta is still operating as of the writing of this thesis, without being quarantined, shows that they are adhering to the regulations that Reddit presents. The group is primarily for "ugly women", but states that all women are allowed on the group for the betterment of ugly and beautiful alike. This again is the

complete opposite of male, red-pilled support groups that clearly lays out a hierarchy, weather that be alphas and betas, or Chads and Stacys. This gatekeeping of "only men allowed" is not so dissimilar to the popular gatekeeping og gaming and other geeky activities, that some ment take for granted is welcoming only tomen.

5.7 Conclusion and closing remarks

5.7.1 So is Rapeglish its own language? And how accurate is Rapeglish?

In the beginning of this thesis, these four questions were asked regarding the language of internet rape culture:

1. *What type of language is "Rapeglish", and does it classify as its own language in the way Emma Jane describes, when compared to the Reddit data?*

2. *Are there traces of Rapeglish in other parts of the internet??*

3. *What are the solutions as presented by the various authors of this thesis*?

To answer the first question through the lens of the data collected and the sources analyzed, it is important to know that in the matter of online discourse, Rapeglish is definitely a separate way of initiating and continuing a debate, and not a language ow its own. If it was a language, it would be possible to use it in all sorts of daily uses, from negotiating, cooperating, and yes, insulting and demeaning others. However, Rapeglish only works one way, and is in fact dependent on the recipient to not respond in kind. It is more of a subcultural dialect that can only be used as a way of attacking people, primarily women, and only on the internet. And that is what separates it from other online "lingos". Emma A. Jane defines Rapeglish as

In order to understand the psyche behind the people use Rapeglish to communicate their feelings, it is important to see their worldview from a perspective of oxymorons. Women are both weak and lesser, yet also in great positions of power. Equality has been achieved (perhaps even too much), and the internet is a cyber-utopia where gender, race and class do not exist. Yet, women cannot be as good as men in digital and technological spaces. Women are not interested in men, yet when women do seek participation in inceldom (as femcels)

they are completely rejected. If a woman is too hot, she needs to get raped. If she is not hot enough, she does not deserve the honor of rape.

Figure 20: Screenshot taken March 16, 2023.

In order to use Rapeglish correctly, one has to belief that every single interaction with a woman is a potentially dangerous one, both for the man for making himself vulnerable, and for the women for, well, existing. And that is one of the things that separates Rapeglish from real life catcalling and harassment. In real life simply communicating these beliefs to someone else has dire consequences. The shield of anonymity that the internet offers enable men to spew sexualized bullying on an intimate level never-before seen. Emma Jane argues that Rapeglish only works in the digital sphere, and this is mostly correct. Sure, you can scream in intimate detail in real life how you would like to do x/y/z to someone, but the result would be much more dire in terms of consequences.

Now, in terms of linguistic description as compared to the data sheet, the word categories, (*that's salutations, adjectives, nouns, punctuation, transitional phrase, outcome one, outcome two and rationale*), these were fairly accurate to the results found, as most, if not all offered some kind of excuse/justification/ to rationale their hatred, weather that being rhetoric aligned with the manosphere, incels, or others. More concerning are the messages that start out with in a flirtatious way, as these men seem to be almost well adjusted in their initial way of communicating, only to slip into rhetoric that resembles people who view courting women a lost cause. Here is where Rapeglish can be used for future potential, which will be discussed at the end of this thesis. We previously discussed how humor desensitizes people to accept violent and gendered language as part of the acceptable norm. In the threats chosen, many of them features emojis, jokes, and phrases such as "just kidding" or "this is not a threat" (with lots of emojis) to soften to blow of literal death and rape threats. Here, Jane is correct in multiple ways users play around with different emotions to convey their messages in confusing and subtle ways.

Both the second and third question has been explored previously in this thesis, in detail, regarding the existence of Rapeglish in mainstream media, and potential solutions. It is safe to say that the problem of dangerous misogyny and violent, sexualized rhetoric starts with familiar and societal neglect, combined with a sense of community forming in primarily male dominated arenas and forums, that again gatekeep women, people of color, and others from diversifying the membership pool. Of course, if the MGTOWs, PUAs, incels and red-pillers did diversify with non-white non-males, the entire ideology crumbles. Rapeglish can be a force for good, is used correctly and not abused. It could at best highlight the varying degrees of toxicity, bigotry, and where the scale goes from mild troll to outright incel terrorist.

5.7.2 Limitations

The first limitation was of course going through the large amount of disturbing rhetoric that the internet produces in so many colorful ways. As several mental health breaks were needed to not be too taken in by the darkness of the worldview presented by trolls, incels, and other perpetually online deviants who find it acceptable to message someone in detail how and why they would like to do the most heinous crimes imaginable. After becoming numb to the phrases, slurs and casual bigotry, I was able to categorize it in an orderly fashion. Which was good, as the first attempt at gathering data was through posting for help on numerous reddit channels. Asking if people would be willing to share experiences with incels and their language. However, very few were willing to share their experiences, as one commenter even suggested that there is no such thing as "a language for rape" and that "feminists are just making things up". So, a fruitless effort. But as stated in the introduction of this thesis, on commenter suggested browsing down the subreddits to view plentiful examples listed. So that is what I did. Despite the fact that Reddit was sometimes deleting posts in real time while I was attempting to read them, due to either the posts breaking the community guidelines, like not censoring the usernames good enough, or showing too much hostility towards the incel-community, as some level of decorum is expected to avoid clashed between subreddits, or the posts were just too vile even for this subreddit.

However, as viewed in the data sheet, 18 out of the 66 rape threats gathered were sendt from someone with the username "killallwomen", killallattractivewomen", and similar names. Usually with a random set of numbers at the end, meaning that someone was creating multiple duplicate-accounts. Now, some members of the r/IncelTear subreddit theorized that this could be multiple people, as in a targeted event. Some theorize that this was all one person's doing, making it his life-long mission to harass and threaten women posting on the subreddits. This overlay between subreddits could be a thesis on its own, as it shows combative hostility between opposing groups on Reddit. The positive side of this overlap is the clear and factual evidence of a targeted campaign to women specifically members of support groups. Support groups for women (and sometimes men) who have had negative interactions with incels and others who display incel-like behavior.

Despite this thesis's heavy emphasis on gender, many of the sources used are from around 2010 to 2017, and onwards. However, they do not have adequate numbers on gender non-

conforming, gender fluid or non-binary users and players, as the data included focuses specifically on cyberbullying towards women. Hence why the research is aimed at women-presenting individuals only. In addition to a heteronormative bias, as the messages are between mostly heterosexual men and women, there is also an American bias to the United States, as a majority of Reddit users are U.S. Americans, and there is a lot of potential for studies in inceldom and Rapeglish in other languages and nationalities.

On the technical side, not all the messages could fit neatly into the parameters set up for analyzing them. As some messages are pages long with rants and random images/memes sent to overwhelm the recipients. Like example nr 40 on the data sheet, that starts out innocently with "what bring you to tindertown then 😊?". To "I support the nationalist socialist party", with pages and pages about how "Hitler did nothing wrong" and "women are holes for breeding". And more and more… What does one include? The "rapy" parts? And how many slurs? Language containing incel rhetoric was prioritized, as well as putting in as many slurs as possible, without necessarily all the text surrounding it. And should categorization be given to all rape threats, or just the ones that stand out? In the end, the white columns are rape threats that does not contain any of the categorizations previously mentioned. Those being: yellow for demanding silence/expulsion, blue for attempts at flirting, and green for messages sent from the same similar usernames. In terms of expected data, the initial attempts at data were finding rape threats from only one or two months, like March to April 2023, from only on subreddit, to point to Rapeglish as a phenomenon happening on regular intervals. However, too few examples from this short time span were to be found – ergo why screenshots from previous years were added. On a more positive side, it shows Rapeglish as a constant throughout the last few years with little to no change in the way it is written.

6.7.3 Potential for future research

At the writing of this thesis, the RRTG (Random Rape Threat Generator) was offline. Possibly due to how easy it would have been for anyone to simply copy-paste the results produced by it, only to spread it in a way unintended for it audience. Or possibly server funding and issues. Nevertheless, data showing the perverseness of something that so serious and damaging – that up to 73% of female users go through, according to UN numbers (Jane, 2016) – is something to be discussed.

A lot of people rightly connects the rise of incel-lingo with 4chan and other now banned subreddits, such as:

- r/Braincells
    - o 16 900 members before deletion.
- r/TheRedPill
    - o This site is only "quarantined" as members can still view the site, but it does not show in the search bar automatically.
- r/MGTOW
    - o Also "only" quarantined.
- r/incels
    - o All time numbers: 40 000 members

But it is important to remember that 9 out of ten young boys partake in online spaces long before they can access message boards. For my generation, before the advent of online mobile devices with unlimited data and endless social media platforms, it was video games. And according to the data, it still is. For low culture is also gendered, as well as high culture. And gaming has yet to achieve the status of high culture, except when it features masculine traits.

During the 19th century, when Norway was attempting to finds its own cultural identity, local museum exhibits became divided into two categories: low culture and high culture. Low culture refers to the everyday routine of the lower working class. This museum was aimed at the higher class of patrons that wanted a look into the daily life of the common folk. While high culture exhibited what one would normally consider a modern museum exhibit, like art, sculptures, important documents, and other immaculate objects to be viewed, also primarily by the ruling class. I would argue that that same divide still exists today, not in terms of class, but in terms of gender. And not in high art, but in pop culture. Yes, both genders have access to a wide array of artistic entertainment, but the one aimed at a predominantly male audience has for a long time had the luxury of being treated as art, while franchises that a predominantly female audience connected with was often treated less so, even to this day. We see this in the attention that follows franchises such as Myst (1993). A puzzle/adventure game based on slow and methodical gameplay. Myst was especially popular with female players in the mid-90s, yet if one was to research gaming culture around that time, the one game that was discussed in the media the most was DOOM (1993). DOOM being released

the same year and being popular with primarily young men gives us a good way to analyze the cultural attention to male and female media. Myst outsold DOOM by 2/1 (Gray, Voorhees & Vossen, 2018, 86?), a large difference in sales numbers. Yet it was DOOM that captured the attention of the media due to its grotesque and (at the time) realistic graphics, that depicted blood and gore in details not yet explored in three dimensions. The main narrative being how video games as a sub-par culture was corrupting youth with imagery that made the players violent. The opposing narrative of Myst turning children into exploring puzzle solvers was not a reality. Why?

Other gaming franchises popular with female players, like *Sims* (2000–present) and its subsequent sequels have sold close to 200 million copies worldwide. Numbers that compete with the *Call of Duty franchise* (2003–present) and *Grand Theft Auto's* newest release, *GTAV* (2013). Just like we know that a majority of these hyper masculine game's player base is male, we know that a majority of player who enjoy *Myst* and *Sims* are female (Walker, 2006 & Gray, 2018, p86). Despite the enormous success of games geared to a female audience, gaming consoles are still built around the game philosophy of hyper masculine games (ibid). The debate around violence and video games was at its highest in the 90s and early 2000s, but because the games that were discussed were primarily aimed at a male audience, female players were ignored in the debate in terms of the positive effects it had on its player base.

This happens with professional movie culture as well. When James Cameron's film Titanic (1997) was finally released to theaters, it became the, at the time, highest grossing movie of all time (not adjusting for inflation). Senior fellow Peter Kramer argues that critical reception to the nr. 1 film of all time was driven by skepticism to female driven films. Most tabloids and reviewers calling it a "chick flick" aimed at a mostly female audience. For the notion of romance being targeted towards men was not the norm at the time. At the time, the following nine movies in the top ten highest grossing list were all lacking in any romance, with the exception of *Forrest Gump* (1994), which includes a romantic subplot (Kramer, 1998, p612).

We simply must not be scared to confront bigotry and general hostility to everything feminine in media aimed at young and old, men and women, from the moment they pick up a gaming controller, to the moment they press "publish" on a rather controversial hot take they feel could boost their viewership online. But there has been a large uptick in research into what was previously thought of as juvenile or even "shitposting". Which isa step in the right direction.

As far as Rapeglish goes, the pool of messages could be widened to include spesific forums, websites, subcultures and more, to be more concreate on how spesific groups of people use Rapeglish to exclude others from participating in online spaces. For example, I previously mentioned how some men from the data sheet starts out conversations in a flirtatious way, only to backpedal into rants about women's rejection of them. Here Rapeglish could be used to analyze the human transition from "somewhat socially isolated" and "somewhat having misogynistic views", to full on hatred for themselves and women/feminism. Emma Jane collected her data from her inbox over many years as a feminist scholar. How can this research be applied to the dating market? God knows women (and men of course) get hateful messages after not responding fast enough. Can we differentiate Rapeglish from people who hate themselves, with people who hate women? Or both? Can Rapeglish be used to cure Rapeglish? That seem to have been the original idea, as Emma Jane describes.

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7.0 Websites available for data extraction

7.1 Reddit/Subreddits (in order of most data gathered to least data gathered)

Reddit. Link: https://www.reddit.com/

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