

Shut your cake hole, you over-educated whore: The misogynistic weaponization of the PhD

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Abstract

The (higher) education of women is a pinball in the arcade game of contemporary masculinity. Andrew Tate, while proclaiming the irrelevance of university degrees, has deployed their nomenclature through his Facebook page, titled the Tate University. One of his 'courses' was described as a PhD (Pimpin' Hoes Degree). Why is the education of women discredited, yet the vocabulary of education appropriated and activated to build the 'alpha male'?

This article does not (only) investigate Andrew Tate, alpha culture or the black pill ideology. It explores why the higher education of women – and university-educated women – is a focus of sustained, brutalizing name calling and abuse in the manosphere.

Keywords

Andrew Tate, Manosphere, Alpha men, Incel, Doctor of Philosophy, Men's Studies, Feminism

Femininity is a marginal and marginalized identity in online environments. As the internet commercialized, women became visible as customers for the digital shopping centre. Women were unwelcome online visitors who had a right to shop, but did not speak and comment. With the growth of social media through the first quarter of the twenty-first century, other changes accompanied this rise. Women gained from the widening participation agenda that swept through national university systems through the 1980s and 1990s, often accompanied by an introduction or increase in fees to subsidize these degrees. By 2017, and for the first time in the United States, there were more women enrolled in doctoral programmes than men (Whiting, 2018). In 2022, and for the first time, the majority of PhD enrolments in Aotearoa / New Zealand were women (Education Counts, 2024). This trend has been repeated in many nations, with Australian doctoral programmes also dominated by women, sometimes composing two-thirds of enrolments.

Doctoral education matters. I have fulfilled the role of a dean of graduate studies and research for much of the last decade. Concurrently, I have delivered a weekly video for higher degree students and academic colleagues. Recording these vlogs has accompanied me on trips around the world, followed my transfer between jobs, and even the death of a husband, Professor Steve Redhead. Many of these sessions have emerged via requests from higher degree students. The topics vary from the instrumental – *how do I write a conclusion?* – to the practical – *what do examiners look for in a thesis?* – and the ontological – *what is theory?* I have been lucky. The feedback has been generous and gentle.

These weekly sessions have accompanied scholars on commutes, dropping their children at school, or as the soundtrack for a treadmill walk. My ageing process has been catalogued. Life's disappointments and traumas have been shared – including a pandemic, deaths of students, and grief – alongside the neoliberal vagaries of higher education.

Aggressive, confronting and trolling comments have been rare. In 2024, and for the first time, a troll offered comments on the videos that were written and disseminated for doctoral students. Because I filter all comments so I can guarantee a safe space for a diverse group of students, they were caught and seen before they could upset doctoral candidates. Here are some of the unusual comments.

Look at this muppet
 Look at these muppets
 Look at this little dog
 OMG there it is again.

The language was banal so that YouTube's language policies would not automatically discard the message as spam and / or offensive. Muppets, dogs and 'it' are denotatively neutral terms in most contexts. But as these comments continued to be offered and deleted, they increased in their weirdness and directness. I investigated the profile of the poster. Not using a real name and not posting any videos, or even listing and curating the videos of others, "Heartfelt Henry" joined YouTube in 2022. They created no content. They offered no shareable material or community-building videos. The person was – and is - a meat puppet, constructed to offer anonymous reviews without consequences. As these messages continued, I reported him. The meat puppet disappeared back to their freezer.

One of the more provocative Heartfelt Henry's comments before returning to the deep freeze was "Shut your cakehole, you overeducated whore." As an offensive statement, it has a brilliance to it. It captures the objectification of women's body parts (cakehole), the necessity for women to remain silent (shut your cakehole), and the sexualization of women in public (whore). Of most interest is the word 'overeducated.' How is the 'over' in education determined? As a mitigation to a noun that is an important and valued characteristic – education – the notion of being *overeducated* demands attention. It is relational. For one human to be overeducated, another must be undereducated. This word activates perception, rather than fact. To label another personal 'overeducated' is to log under confidence, brittleness, fear, and worry. As confirmed by Jaki et al, language matters to men and misogynistic communities, with automatic detection software catching up to their vocabulary, language patterns and attacks (2019).

Language is important to this paper. The imperative of my article is to explore why the language of higher education is used by Andrew Tate, the Incel, alt-right, manosphere and Trump-fuelled 'movements' while – concurrently – attacking universities, degrees and the women who work hard and graduate with qualifications. The interventions on my 2024 YouTube channel remain an entrée into the focus of this paper: how the doctorate is being weaponized and used as a tool of ridicule by misogynists. I first recognized the attacks on women holding doctorates with the treatment of Dr Jill Biden, academic and wife of the President of the United States. The mocking of her qualifications, research and career was odd. Peculiar. Nasty. These attacks emerged from men that neither matched nor held equivalent verifications. Therefore, the first section of this paper provides a first lens on the myopathy of misogyny.

Dr Biden, or 'kiddo'

A prequel is required to scaffold this argument. When Joe Biden was elected to the Presidency of the United States, replacing Donald Trump, the education of his wife enflamed social media. Dr Biden's Doctor of Education set off an array of misogynistic attacks. These were not simply attacks on a woman, but on a qualification dominated by women. The doctorate is a standard and level of degree. It is a volume of work. It is relationally defined, being above a masters and bachelor degree.

It is assessed by external examiners and must confirm a SOCK, a significant original contribution to knowledge. A medical doctor holds an MB BS, from the British tradition, acknowledging the achievement of a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery. A medical doctor does not hold a masters or a doctorate. Qualifications are ordered in levels that are – as an example - presented in the AQF, the Australian Quality Framework. In a scaffolding from one to ten, qualifications are placed into tiers. Each number is accorded particular graduate attributes and a volume of learning. A bachelor degree is an AQF 7. With honours it is an AQF 8. A Masters degree is an AQF 9. A doctorate is an AQF 10 (Australian Quality Framework Council, 2013).

Within this volume and standard of work, there are many types of doctorate. Doctorates are a genre of writing. The traditional thesis spans between 70,000 and 100,000 words. The artefact and exegetical thesis presents a series of research artefacts – creative writing, sonic, visual, or design based – and a 40,000 word exegesis, explaining the original research configured through the artefacts. A PhD by Prior Publication clusters an array of career publications on a particular area, completed before the enrolment. These are then aligned to confirm a SOCK in an integrating essay or contextual statement, spanning 20,000 to 40,000 words. Then there is the professional doctoral suite. These include the Doctor of Education, the Doctor of Creative Arts, the Doctor of Public Health, and the Doctor of Business Administration, to offer a few of the best known nomenclatures. Depending on the nation, one third of the degree is coursework and two-thirds is independent research. The dissertations are often shorter than the traditional doctorate because of the coursework component.

Dr Jill Biden holds a Doctor of Education, a professional doctorate. Upon her husband's election, she was attacked as an academic. The mocking of her qualifications, her research and career was disturbing. At the time of Joe Biden's presidential victory, I tweeted the importance of this moment, that Dr Biden was a career academic and doctorally qualified (Brabazon, 2020). The responses were immediate, intense, and weird. But these comments were productive in their oddity, and provided an indication of the fear, loathing and anger created through the education of women. The goal was to undermine, discredit, and create false equivalences. For example, Joseph Epstein, in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, combined an attack Dr Biden, feminism and doctorates, describing her as "kiddo" (2020) He attacked the use of the "Dr" for humanities and social science academics, and – particularly – ridiculed the discipline of education. He mocked her thesis topic, titled "Student Retention at the Community College: Meeting Student Needs" (Biden, 2007). This is an important area of research, as community colleges reveal a high attrition rate. However, the doctor of education – while demonstrating a volume of learning required by regulatory mandates such as the AQF 10 - differs from the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Differences can exist within the genre of a doctorate while maintaining standards. Natalie Wexler showed why Biden's use of the "Dr" captured a critique of the discipline in which it was achieved: education. There is a particular focus – and fixation – on the scientific method. Most disciplines do not use it. Rigour and transparency are proven and configured differently (Wexler, 2020). Credibility is carried on the scientific method. The experimental sciences – particularly physics – are the only disciplines still dominated by men.

This ridiculing of Dr Biden did not (only) emerge through the election of her husband. The weaponizing of the doctorate and research expertise, particularly when held by a woman, was only intensified through the pandemic. Through the 2020s, the proportion of women in doctoral programmes increased, now forming a majority of students in most national systems. Men are the minority. This inversion has startling consequences. The tipping point is coming where the most educated people in many nations will present a feminine face. This radical reshaping of the ideologies of success, merit and achievement is transformative of how education, qualifications, knowledge and learning are valued. This moment of historical pivot is crucial to the history of doctoral education, but also men, women, and those occupying different gender affirmations. Through such a transformation of credentialing and qualifications, it is necessary to undermine a woman's education, which was clearly revealed in responses to tweets about Biden's doctorate (Cahill, 2024).

Dr Jill Biden is an educated woman and an educator. As shown in social media appearances about love and relationships, she is reflective, intelligent and considered in her views (@meetcutesync,

2024). It is possible – and common – to be in a long-term relationship, a parent, an active member of the community, and a doctorally qualified academic. The woman scholar occupies an agitated and unsettled space both inside and outside the university. They complete the ‘housework’ of the university, servicing men who focus on the actions and behaviours to enable their profile, success and promotion (Macfarlane and Burg, 2019). Therefore, what is happening? Why are educated woman ‘a problem’ – and for whom? One answer is that women with an education have choices, including the ability to live outside of heteronormative relationships. Currently, a diversity of women, roles and possibilities are available through popular culture to visualize these alternatives. The remarkable and intense response to *The Barbie Movie* (Hinsliff, 2024) and the success of – and backlash towards – Taylor Swift are two examples. The often-cited line from the Barbie screenplay – “She’s everything, he’s just Ken” – confirms the different popular cultural narratives emerging for young men and women, and the diverse approaches to gender and sexuality. Hinsliff realized the consequence of such movements: “as young women become dramatically more liberal, young men are getting more conservative” (2024). Also confirming this difference, *The Economist* probed, “Why young men and women are drifting apart” (2024).

There is a reason for this separation. My research now moves to explore the ideologies of men and masculinity, while recognizing the powerful historical legacy of Men’s Studies (Kimmel, Hearn, Connell, 2004). Certainly when feminists have explored the topic of men, such as Barbara Ehrenreich’s *The hearts of men: American dreams and the flight from commitment* (1983), the results are ambivalent and intriguing. Ehrenreich, from the tail end of the second wave of feminism, explored why women marry men, and why men marry women. She recognized the “inequality of motivation” (1983, loc 58), with homophobia being used as a stick to coax men into marriage and validate few alternative positions or roles beyond the breadwinner. From this contextualization of marriage for men, political, economic and social contexts have transformed, with specific attention to the education of women. The anti-woman ideology is a gateway drug for the alt-right. What begins with misogyny moves into white supremacy (Romano, 2018). From this foundational complexity encircling a First Lady and her education, this article moves to the manosphere.

Blackpill Ideology

The manosphere is a reified but productive word that captures a return to traditional values (that never existed). Attended by phrases such as “toxic masculinity,” and “casino capitalism” (Manno, 2020), the manosphere is punctuated by attacks on homosexuality to shape a constricted rendering of heteronormativity. Women are reduced to bodies, and indeed orifices, for a penis to enter.

The best known part of the manosphere is the Incel ‘movement,’ which has gained recent and popular attention, mainly because of the violent words, imagery and action of its members. There is an outlier origin to the word, being formed in 1997 as Alana’s Involuntary Celibacy Project. This was a community of all genders and sexual orientations, composed of those who were lonely and not in a relationship. From this benevolent origin, a post-subculture (Redhead, 2016) appropriated the word and reconfigured it for the read write web in the 2010s, activating the commentaries, life and death of Elliot Rodger (Witt, 2020). The *r/incels* subreddit became the focus of digitized secondary socialization, where men blamed women for their lack of sexual relationships. This subreddit was banned in November 2017 (Bell, 2017).

This post-subculture is composed of mainly heterosexual white men. The trope that organizes the Incel community is the failure of these men to form or build romantic or – more specifically – sexual relationships with women. This is what Michael Halpin described as “weaponized subordination” (2022). The causes of this failure and subordination are displaced onto women, resulting in misogyny, sexualized entitlement, sexualized violence, the celebration of rape, objectification, and online abuse. Research from Grunau et al has shown that unwanted celibacy correlates with misogyny (Grunau, 2022). The Incel ‘movement’ has come under scrutiny from educational institutions, law and order

organizations and governments, as this online post-subculture has framed and enabled mass murders of women (Ohlheiser, 2018).

Angry men – aggrieved men – blame women for their sexual failures. A wider context exists that validates and codifies this extremism, through the alt-right, the manosphere, Men’s Rights groups, Fathers’ Rights groups, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) and Pick UP Artists (PUAs). The unifying trope of these diverse misogynistic ideologies is that women are objectified for their sexual use, and possess few rights. At its most extreme is Nathan Larson’s websites, that not only justified raping women, but offered strategies to rape. There is also a validation of paedophilia and sexual intercourse with minors (Kelly et al, 2022). Young women without experience and consciousness of alternative ways of life, living and decision making, are the target of this predatory behaviour and advice.

My article is not ‘about’ the Incel. Instead, I explore why such communities and ideologies are justified through the lexicon of education, research and intelligence, while also denying formal learning infrastructures and the education, research and intelligence of women. The manosphere mobilizes the words of scholars such as Jordan Peterson (Han and Yin, 2023; Brabazon, 2022a) and Brian Gilmartin (Daly and Reed, 2022; Bono, 2023). Reified biological determinism and evolutionary psychology are offered as evidence to justify injustice. Such irrationality is hooked through the narratives of popular culture because real humans and contexts do not fulfill the ideological brief. The red pill and blue pill from *The Matrix* series has been enlarged to include the black pill. Science fiction tropes, rather than peer reviewed research, has been deployed to validate present injustices. The black pill is an ideology held by the Incel that incorporates biological determinism, fatalism and defeatism for those configured as ‘unattractive.’ It is founded on misogyny and displacement, denying women’s liberation and movements for equality, and reifying women to the attractiveness of their face and the availability of their genitals. Within this flawed discourse, women will select the most physically attractive men, and the black pill ideology confirms that there is a group of men that will never be successful with women. Success is reified to having sex with women. From this perspective, women are cruel, shallow, and gold diggers. The nomenclature for women amongst the Incels is clear: Femoids (female humanoids or fooids) and roasties, which connotes that the labia minora of women look like roast beef after continual sexual use. Attractive women are ‘Staceys.’ Less attractive women are ‘Beckys.’ Sexually active men are ‘Chads.’ Those men who are neither Chads nor Incels are ‘Normies.’ This taxonomy of identity summons hopelessness and leads to destructive behaviours, such as suicide and violence towards others.

Studies have shown that Incels are predominately white men in their late teens and early twenties (Hoffman et al., 2020). There is violence in their words and, occasionally, actions. George Sodini, in August 2009, shot and killed women at the LA Fitness club in Pittsburg. Elliot Rodger killed six people, and injured fourteen, in Isla Vista in 2014. Both these men are hailed as role models in the Incel community. These brutal killings were continued through Chris Harper-Mercer in 2015, Sheldon Bentley in 2016, William Atchison in 2017, and Nikolas Cruz and Alek Minassias in 2018. All these men left online notes, diaries and posts, increasingly describing an Incel Rebellion or a Beta Uprising (Ware, 2021). As shown through Kennedy-Kollars monograph, these murders have continued through the 2020s, with online treatise justifying the rape and killing of women (2024).

The phrase ‘alpha male’ entered popular culture through the online and offline writing in and about the manosphere and Incels in particular (Ging, 2019). Alphas are sexually successful with women, wealthy, physically health, tall and strong. Neoliberalism matters to the construction and mobility of this ideology. How are men to understand and justify why they are not attractive to women? One strategy is to overfill the alphas with hyper-neoliberal characteristics: wealth, competitiveness, excessive consumption, affluence and ruthlessness. This is their “Blackpill science” (Burton, 2022), a way to justify a lack of sexual partners and shift the blame over to women.

The literature exploring the Incels and the manosphere is strong, built on fifty years of Men’s Studies and Masculinity Studies. Lisa Sugiura’s *The Incel Rebellion: the rise of the manosphere and the virtual war against women* (2021) enacted an online ethnographic study of what she described as a subculture. Noting the long literature in the theorizing and critiques of subculture and deviance,

alternative terms and divergent configurations of ontology, methodology and epistemology are possible. However, she provided the thick and rich description that is a characteristic of the most effective ethnographic research. She summoned the Chads and other alphas, and probed the function of women in Incel culture, being described as a 'hole.' That is, an object for men to use. Men have sex. Women submit and make their holes available.

Sugiura aligned the Incel movement with a "larger backlash against feminism" (2021, 28). Justified through black pill ideology and entrenched nihilism and alt-right fuelled libertarianism, hypergamy is validated through pseudoscience. Through these agitating ideologies, there is one unifying maxim: the Incel is populated by men that do not have sex with women. They are lonely and cluster into a community of shared grievance. As shown by Sykes and Matza's "technique of neutralization," once a marginal community is formed, these extreme views become more extreme (1957). There is then a break, rupture, or disconnection from consensus values and ideology. This breakage or snapping of connectivity starts to explain how and why the language of higher education is used in these communities. Sugiura, in her ethnography of Incels, added information to understand this paradox.

Incels overwhelmingly appear to be educated, often to degree level, this is information often volunteered on forums and through my direct interactions with them. It shows that they are keen to demonstrate intellectual ability, something which is undeniably positive and a major achievement, in opposition to the failure they otherwise present themselves as. But for incels, being smart cannot detract from being unattractive, looks will always trump intelligence (2021, 95).

It would have been beneficial for Sugiura to present more granular interpretations about the 'appearance' of being educated, and the nature of the degrees held by her respondents. Clearly, it is important for these men to affirm their intelligence. This is relevant in contrast, particularly when noting the frequency with which men such as Andrew Tate describe women as "stupid" or possessing a "low IQ" (Tate, 2024). Female empowerment is a problem, as it blocks men to gain access to women's bodies. The formal education of women subverts the logic of knowledge, degrees and universities being valuable, useful and important. The paradox is clear. The education of men is necessary to perform, share and value. The education of women must be undermined, belittled, and marginalized.

Misogyny is an easy word to use. But the hatred of women – the repulsion – requires more precision in its analysis. The repetitive use of words such as 'whore' and 'slut' is significant. It is the privilege of men to label women and have the resultant offences minimized through phrases and cliches like "boys will be boys," and "sowing his wild oats." Yet the consequences of this minimization, disrespect and disgust of the feminine is that girls grow up frightened of men (Pryor et al., 2024). This fear of men and their brutalizing violence is both deployed and mobilized by the manosphere. Feminism is blamed for men's suffering because it interferes in – and critiques – men's behaviour, language and actions. As Laura Bates confirms, "at its simplest, the argument goes like this: if women's sexual autonomy has given them wicked and tyrannical control over men's lives, then women's liberation is at the root of all male suffering" (2016, 27). For the Incel, young virginal women – or 'Jailbait' – are the focus of their attention because experienced women are dangerous. They are literate in men's incompetencies, weaknesses, and fears. Domestic violence is merely one example of everyday sexism to maintain control of women, as is internet trolling, and (pa)trolling the behaviours and expectations of women. The behaviours span from the Incels through to Jordan Peterson, who commenced his 'public intellectual' career critiquing trans citizens and their pronouns, but very quickly move to a management and framing of acceptable femininity (Brabazon, 2022a).

To describe the Incels as a subculture, as Sugiura has deployed in her ethnography, is minimizing their relationship with wider political organizations, such as the alt-right. This is not a small subculture. It bleeds through digitized platforms such as Twitter/X, TikTok and YouTube. Wider tropes entwine, of heteronormativity, patriarchy, misogyny, race and racism. This is populism. It fed – and feeds – Donald Trump and Donald Trump voters. For example, on October 2, 2018, Trump stated about the #metoo

movement that, “It’s a very scary time for young men in America, where you can be guilty of something you may not be guilty of ... women are doing great” (Diamond, 2018). The polarity of women’s success at the cost of man’s autonomy is also fed by evangelical Christianity, as seen through X profiles such as @beherleader (2024), that show why men should rule and discipline their wives.

Such vocabulary and behaviour is not limited to one man or a subculture. This is an andragogical movement, teaching men how to behave. From this framework emerges a series of ‘guides’ – odd interventions – from men to build a ‘successful’ woman. One, from Bryan Bruce is titled – memorably – *How to become a high quality woman*. The outcome of being a high-quality woman is that, “men of worth marry virtue” (2024, 3). Such books commence with the struggles of contemporary masculinity, confused by the rules of interpersonal relationships, or how to treat a woman. What is a man’s purpose in such a system? Bruce offers some answers.

He would be seeking a friend as well as a mother for his future children (2024, 7)

He knows that he is not adequate and fully grown and he expects that she makes him want to grow and be a better man (2024, 10)

He expects a caring and loving girl who is a bit like his own mother (2024, 10)

In order to make your man want you, you have to be gorgeous. Because, a gorgeous woman always steals the hearts of men and keep them under her magic (2024, 16)

Men want you to be faithful in a relationship; even though evolution has made fidelity much more difficult for your man than for you. (2024, 19)

The challenge for this particular version of heteronormativity is that if women do not play the role of a faithful, attractive carer, then the resultant bereft masculinity looks somewhat strange and strained.

The archetype of this strange and strained masculinity is found in Leo Black’s book, *Semen Retention Revolution*. While the title is – appropriately - strained, the subtitle is stunning in its confidence, and detail: “unlock alpha male confidence, attract women, status, and success, and overcome porn and masturbation addiction with sexual transmutation mastery” (2024). Part Monty Python, part January 6 Shamen, the book summons “ancient teachings on masculinity (2024, 1) to critique the way in which men “are almost constantly accosted by opportunities to make us softer, more vulnerable, and less able to fight back against our urges and whims” (2024, 1). The last phrase is particularly intricate. Urges and whims must be fought, but acknowledging vulnerability and a soft masculinity reduces the capacity to develop personal control. Such layered contradictions manifest through the imperative to “abstain from ejaculation”(2024,2) and create “a stronger you” (2024, 3). For Black, there is a “war on Masculinity” (2024, 6) that has resulted in the “feminization of men” (2024, 8). The shaping of this argument is resonant if repetitive. Reinforcing the strength of the binarized poles in terms of roles and positions creates a closed semiotic system that ignores history, context and change. Women exist to be of service to men.

The rising standards of beautiful feminine women should serve as even more of an incentive to improve and give yourself the best chance of attracting the best gal (or gals) for you. (Black, 2024, 66).

This goal of attracting ‘gals’ (noting the plural) is founded on men focusing on semen retention. Arbitrary pseudo-science is used to manage social changes that are challenging asymmetrical patriarchal relationships.

Noting the diversity of voices, views and ideologies in the manosphere, only unified through the disrespect, marginalization and disgust of the feminine, it is important to render these toxic masculinities plural. They must be discussed. They have a history. It is important to understand them, rather than recoil or marginalize their importance. The attention must be placed on how the most famous of these ‘manfluencers’ defines and mobilizes masculine ideologies (Ging, 2019), while also deploy higher education as a lexicon to make money, empower men and degrade women.

Andrew Tate and authentic inauthenticity.

The minstrel for this misogynistic tune is Andrew Tate. The oddity of masculinity in late capitalism is that a kickboxer has become the muse, sage and prisoner – in the many meanings of that noun – of this time. Yet what is significant is that he has appropriated the language of higher education, degrees and a university to sell his ‘products.’ He has rendered himself a libertarian and a liberator.

I offer no sugar-coated platitudes or soft comforts. Instead, I serve you the raw, unfiltered truths that society often overlooks (Tate, 2023, 2)

He writes books, including *Warrior Mindset: Top G's Inspirational Quotes for Living Authentically*. This is a 73-page ‘book’ with a single quote on each page. The statements on these pages include:

Success is always stressful (9).

Do the impossible and never doubt yourself again (15).

The internet is the new battleground of earth, the wild west, the place of truth and opportunity (22).

The harder you work, the more important you become (30).

Money will fix all your problems (47).

You are viewing yourself as a short man! Walk up and be THE man! (58).

Part Tony Robbins (2012), part Iron John (Bly, 2013), inspiration, determination and confidence create a chimera of success. But the brittleness of the achievement is clear. This is a world where 73 pages – each with a single line featured – is a ‘book.’ This is a world where a two-hour video is a PhD programme.

Andrew Tate was born in the United States in 1986 and deploys an array of acronyms, including Top G and King Cobra. A professional kickboxer, he entered British Big Brother and – significantly – was removed through publicity for sexist and homophobic tweets, alongside footage of him hitting a woman with a belt. While in the Big Brother house, he was also the subject of a sexual assault investigation. This Big Brother exposure and notoriety enabled entrepreneurship through operating – with his actual brother Tristan – a webcam business. Young women were lured, through personal and sexual relationships, to work for the Tate brothers. This process was revealed in a BBC documentary to socialize women into sex work and perpetuate violence against women (BBC, 2023). The Tate Brothers have a second cluster of businesses involving online courses. These titles and platforms included the PhD (Pimpin’ Hoes Degree) and Hustler’s University, which transformed into The Real World and, for higher fees, access to The War Room. His ‘training courses’ focus on two areas: gaining wealth and men’s relationships with women.

Sexual intercourse is Andrew Tate’s foundation, frame and punctuation. He is a man for the simulacrum. He lives in re-representations, offering a cartoon-like aggression fuelled by rapid fire threats. Andrew Tate is authentic in his inauthenticity. He encourages men to “make money” (Latmotivation, 2024) and “leave the matrix” (The Shark Band, 2023). In one of his short promotional videos, Tate stitched to the video of a disappointed and unnamed woman who had supposedly achieved two degrees and was being offered entry-level employment options. She expressed personal disappointment that her degree did not enable more senior roles (@andrewcobratate10, 2024). There are challenges with authenticating this video and the qualifications from the featured woman speaker. However, Tate attached her disclosure to his wide-ranging attack on degrees and universities. Education, supposedly, does not matter. Making money matters. While this straw woman was used to demonstrate – through a single data point – that university degrees create disappointment, he has been overt and clear in other videos that, “women are fucking stupid” (Tate, 2023). Such offensive statements are not unusual. His preference for young women is so that he can “make an imprint” on them (Trillionaire Mindset, 2023). If a woman accused him of having sex with multiple partners, he stated his response would be, “bang

out the machete, boom in her face and grip her by the neck. Shut up bitch” (Katz, 2023). He confirmed that women who are raped “bear some responsibility” for it (Katz, 2023). When asked if he was a rapist, he responded with, “I like the idea of just being able to do what I want. I like being free” (Katz, 2023). The cartoon violence may seem troubling, or even humorous. But the problem is that this violent masculinity has become a business model (Haque, 2022). These are not comedic slogans. They are dog whistles to make money from desperate and angry men who subscribe to his platform.

The legal difficulties in which the Tate brothers have been entangled occurred through the “*Loverboy method*” (Dahir, 2023), which describes the ensnaring of women to feel love for their exploiter, and then using them to make money. In the case of the Tates, the allegations encircle the use of the *Loverboy method* to lure women to perform in their webcam business. This method extended to alleged human trafficking. The challenge confronting the Tates in their defence of these charges is that they have developed a ‘course’ teaching men how to convince women to sleep with them, so that they can be exploited. Their ‘courses’ have proven the case for the prosecution. Indeed, the *Loverboy method* became the basis of his PhD ‘course’: *Pimpin’ Hoes Degree*. This particular PhD course has some foundational principles:

Women are impressed by men with money
 Women are biologically programmed to seek an alpha male
 Men must be opportunistic with women to be successful

While this course was part of the deplatforming of Tate from Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, the 120 minute video is available from multiple sources for downloading (@TheMilkBarTV, 2023; CourseHuge, 2024). The diversity of sources, platforms and locations of this content – and the extreme responses to this material – can be investigated by researchers, alongside the hundreds of thousands of views and comments.

The simulacrum masculinity colonizes the real, the true, and the diverse. The repetition of simple if brutalizing mantras creates certainty from confused misogynist ramblings. With reality colonized, education is similarly gated. Andrew Tate ran *Hustler’s University* (*Hustler’s University*, 2024). After the deplatforming, this migrated to a subscription service, where people paid US\$49.99 per month to receive information about how to make money. The goal was not professional development and improvement, but leveraging cryptocurrency and selling the services of webcam ‘models.’ It was also a pyramid scheme, as revealed by Paul Harrigan (Purtill, 2022). By deploying the more elegant nomenclature of ‘*affiliate marketing*,’ the outcome was the same: members received money for recruiting other members. In 2022, *Hustler’s University* reached new popularity as Tate asked his member to disseminate his videos on social media. Through this dissemination emerged increasing concerns about the content. A series of his accounts were suspended and banned on Twitter. Through the Musk-configured rendering of X, he returned in November 2022.

After this deplatforming, *Hustler’s University* changed its name to the appropriately Baudrillian title of *The Real World Portal* – with the subtitle of *Andrew Tate University* - in October 2022, and still maintains a subscription model (*The Real World*, 2024). Andrew Tate also constructed another service, titled *The War Room*. It was here that the PhD course was housed, instructing men how to isolate and manipulate women to naturalize sex work via webcams. The dehumanizing of women has had an impact and consequence. This is popular culture, but it is also populist dehumanizing of women. The next section of this article probes why the vocabulary of higher education is used to marginalize, ridicule and demean women at the very point that women are dominating many disciplines in our universities.

Andrew Tate's PhD: Pimpin' Hoes Degree (or why is Andrew Tate so focused on simulacrum higher education)

At this moment in history where women are enrolling in greater numbers of higher degrees than men, the response of libertarian masculine 'influencers' is intriguing. Instead of working hard, testing themselves and enrolling in a Doctor of Philosophy, a manfluencer writes his own version of a higher degree. The Pimpin' Hoes Degree (PhD) results from two and a half hours of watching an Andrew Tate video. In this video he smokes, orders a woman to complete menial tasks, and offers repetitive commentary about the laziness, the stupidity and foolishness of women.

Moving from subscription services, he also publishes books – or 'books' – including *Hustler's University* (2023). The title is significant and once more confirms a fixation on higher education. While dismissive of formal education as part of the 'matrix,' he relies on the tropes and vocabulary from universities. From this foundation, his project is clear.

Welcome to Hustlers' University, where you'll study all I know about creating money in business from the ground up. Traditional schooling, in my opinion, is a waste of time and a swindle. Universities do not teach valuable money-making skills, and conventional education brainwashes individuals into being worker drones. As an alternative to traditional education, I recommend learning from me and joining my war room (2024, 1)

There are multiple ideological slippages happening in this passage and book more generally. Firstly, a discrediting of universities emerges because academics are not 'teaching' money-making skills. Significantly – and absent from his ideology – is the verifiable outcome that those with a degree earn more money than those that do not. For Tate, paid employment is critiqued, summoning 'worker drones.' Finally, building on the discrediting of university qualifications, he commercializes his own (supposedly) educational business, The War Room.

The only valuable lesson to learn is "making money" (Tate, 2024, 1). Indeed, "Money comes first" (2024, 4). The fastest path to making money is to "get things online" (2024, 2). The next issue for Tate to address is the methodology for making money. His solution is predictable, if clear: "if you want to start a business my way, make a website, put some pictures on it, say you have a lot of stuff you don't have, and start getting money" (2024, 7). In other words, the way to make money is to commit fraud. The question is how credibility is carried through such a scheme. It is clearly ridiculous, irrational and illegal. However, credibility does not emerge with qualifications, verification or expertise. Instead, "there is a level of respect humans have for other humans who are a physical specimen" (2024, 9). Deploying his data set of one, he confirms, "if you command a physical presence, your words have more weight, and it helps in business across all things" (2024, 11). Using the ambiguous noun 'things' is the only available strategy to transform a strange opinion into the mantra of a manfluencer. The inversion is startling. It is Orwellian. This cascading of assumptions, falsehoods and lies results in the exploitation of women.

Everything I know, webcam girls is a very unusual business, and none of you have probably run webcam girls, but I learned a whole bunch about business running my webcam girls. In fact, I approached my webcam girl business the same as I approached every other business with the same tenants. I started it for cheap with a laptop I already had and the girlfriend I already had. I found out how to get the money in before I found out how to produce the videos. I had people sending me money for these feature-length porn videos I couldn't even produce them. I didn't have a camera. Money first. ... But the reason I could have so many girls listen to me is because I am me, and I'm me because I'm big and strong, I'm entertained (2024, 11).

This is the current state of the manosphere in late capitalism. Running 'webcam girls' is a model for both commerce and success. Yet because of his lack of skill in online development, "I'll hire a student to make my app" (2024, 18). Therefore, the actual capacity to build online infrastructure is beyond him. His content creation involves the exploitation of others. As he states, "even if you have no talent or good ideas, if you can get attention, you can become a millionaire" (2024, 34). This is the archetype of Andrew Manno's "Casino Capitalism" (2020). Credibility, knowledge and expertise are displaced for profile and attention. When discussing his "Warrior Mindset" (Tate, 2023), Tate emphasizes "inspiration" and "determination" (2023, 2). While focusing on working hard (2023, 5), the work is on the self and the exploitation of others. He states, "freedom will only come when you no longer trade your time for money" (2023, 10). The goal is a "bigger house and nicer car" (2023, 21). Hypercapitalism, selling anything for personal gain, is confirmed with the mantra, "money will fix all your problems" (47).

The manfluencer is damaging education and educators. A recent study of 30 women teachers revealed the consequences of Andrew Tate's masculine ideologies on students. Many had left the classroom (Wescott, Roberts and Zhao, 2024; Hermant and Yussuf, 2024). This manfluencer is lying to boys and young men and truncating the teaching careers of women. This is masculinity that exists to demean, marginalize and harass. The Wescott et al study specifically focused on educated women, whose profession is to teach others. The researchers log the abuse they are receiving. Andrew Tate was named as the font and cause of the name calling and disruption in the classroom.

Andrew Tate is teaching men how to treat women. Conceptualizations of consent, ethics, work and professional relationships are displaced. Obviously, this language and behaviour exists far before the profiling of the Incels or the recent rise of Tate. As Matthew Hall and Jeff Hearn have researched, *Revenge pornography* has a long history, of using sexually-triggered revenge as entertainment. Communication technologies are the carriers of sex and sexuality. Digitization enables the consumption – and production – of explicit material in the home. The sexualization of women and the loss of their autonomy when a photograph is taken by another person, creates the culture where descriptors such as 'whore' proliferates. Women exist for the use and entertainment of men. However, alternatives exist and are offering powerful critiques.

Men's Studies – a different way

Men's Studies and Masculinity Studies maintain an outstanding history and trajectory. Michael Kimmel has committed much of his career to deep thinking about men, both inside and outside feminism. He realized that the Global Financial Crisis was an example of "what can go wrong with uncontrolled corporate masculinity" (2010, loc 145). Yet post the Global Financial Crisis, zombie neoliberalism continues, a failed ideology that continues to shape the post-pandemic present (Brabazon, 2021; Brabazon, 2022b).

What Kimmel's work confirms is that heterosexuality has a history and it changes. Feminism ensured that women had choices, could be educated, maintain reproductive rights, and earn a living wage. But, as Kimmel argued, "just when women had found a voice through which they could finally speak about their experiences men declared themselves tired of listening, and then trooped off to the woods to be by themselves (2010, loc 3089). After Donald Trump's election, Kimmel explored the angry white man and found two causes: "entitlement and a sense of victimization" (2017, ix). Kimmel combines these causes into an important concept that is productive in its resonance: "aggrieved entitlement" (2017, ix). The anger is real. The consequences for this "aggrieved entitlement" is a blame culture activated on women who do not service men. Meritocracy, the American Dream and patriarchy have all failed these men. This is also tracked by Case and Deaton's *Deaths of Despair* (2021). Angry men gather to increase their anger, and their behaviour becomes more extreme. In the manosphere, life is a game of chess. If one group loses, another must gain.

Women gain life choices through educational opportunity. When women are educated, their employment opportunities increase, their salaries rise, as does their capacity to remain independent

outside of a breadwinner's household economy. This is an historical shift. Universities were places for men. As Kimmel confirmed,

Academia has long been a bastion of untrammelled, if genteel, masculinity. So manly, in fact, was the college classroom, the chemistry lab, the frat house, the locker room that women were excluded from its hallowed halls for centuries" (2017, 125).

Men taught men about men. The exclusion of women from universities required a series of illogical and unfounded arguments. The bible or biology were used to block access. Then women's inability to complete scholarship at the academic standard became the excuse. The challenge for ideologues of procreative heteronormative masculinity is that the higher the level of a woman's education, the fewer children she births (Martin, 1995). Women's higher education is directly connected to the procreative potential of men. The 4B movement, with its origins in South Korea, is one version of women's empowerment (Lee and Jeong, 2021). Women can remain alone while building friendships and financial security. They have choices about intimacy and partnership.

Importantly, and deploying many tropes from Men's Studies, men are turning on their mobile phones and answering back to Andrew Tate and the manosphere. Will Hutchens produces expansive content that summons humorous and accurate archetypes of "Whiteboard guy" and "a man with a microphone" (Hutchens, 2024a). Specifically, he attacks the notion that women's value is determined by physicality (Hutchens, 2024b). He also – repetitively – critiques men that assemble cultures of fear around women (Hutchens, 2024c) and critiques "broscience" (Hutchens, 2024d). Im6footseven validates a diversity of women in terms of race, size and shape. He responds to men abusing women's bodies with the phrase "you all don't like women" (im6footseven, 2024a). The behaviour of Incels – their language and ideological parameters – are also the font of comedy. The premises are so ludicrous – so ridiculous – that releasing the humour reveals the inversions and irrationality. When men laugh at other men, the power and potency is diffused. Josh Johnson logs the consistency of the Incels. He argued that they were right: no one wants to sleep with them (Johnson, 2024). These disintermediated and deterritorialized voices offer the drumbeat of critique. Men are answering back to men that restrict, reify and limit the capacity of women to be fully human. This is Men's Studies in action, confirming the plurality and diversity of men, beyond the Alpha.

Significantly, the #metoo movement and the #everydaysexism initiative, have enmeshed with the #notallmen and #noteveryman interventions. While there is a confusion between men, masculinity, patriarchy and misogyny, most men are not predators, abusers, perpetrators of domestic violence, or oppressors. But every man gains from misogyny. Every man gains from the patriarchy. The asymmetrical power relationships reinforce the power of the few. From the misogynistic abyss of digitized popular culture, some men are activating an important service. This masculine channel for change is built through humour, inversion and the potent stitching of clips from Andrew Tate and the manosphere, to 'answer back' in situ.

By way of conclusion

Patriarchy renders women small, frightened and exposed to attack. Bell hooks stated that, "male fantasy is seen as something that can create reality whereas female fantasy is seen as something used for escape" (2000). Misogyny enables the dreams, hopes and visions of men. It provides men with a microphone, whiteboard and camera to share these imaginings of men and women far beyond a pub or a sports bar. Or, indeed, the University.

This is a serious moment for women academics. This is a serious moment for educated women. After watching thousands of hours of 'courses' and short reels on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X and Facebook, I am permanently changed. The hatred of women is clear. The imperative to dominate, hurt and wound is profound. Laughter, lightness and irony have gone. Women cannot manage the scale

of this onslaught. In response to this relentless semiotic and performed violence, women in online spaces are claiming the right to be alone. They also recognize the horrific truth of daily life for women living and working in, around and through the manosphere. “They fucking hate us,” is the brutalizing and stunning response from @ashbabank (2024). It is a tough time to be a woman circulating in the world. It is a tough time to be a woman circulating in the contemporary workforce. It is a tough time to be a woman working in our universities. Intellectual papercuts fester. They become infected. They are wounds that do not heal, but are layered over other injuries. The imperative is to place women in a box of marginalization, minimization, and decay. We are less. Small. Confused. Torn. Damaged.

This article has probed a very simple question: why are particular members of the manosphere focused on ridiculing educated women while deploying the vocabulary and language of universities for their ‘courses’ and ‘degrees’? Harrison Butker’s speech to the graduating class at Benedictine College (2024), speaking directly to the “ladies” in the audience, confirmed the vocation of being a wife and mother. Students who have just graduated from a degree had to listen to a footballer telling them to prioritize the care of a man and children over other roles. Education provides women with a diversity of choices beyond the advice of men. Yet these men with microphones pretend that the world has not changed.

I argued in one of my early books, *Ladies who Lunge* (Brabazon, 2002), that disempowered groups use disempowered sites to renegotiate their social position. If women are to summon opposition to The War Room, Hustler University or Pimpin’ Hoes Degrees, then that renegotiation and critique will be initiated on the most banal of popular cultural platforms. For example, the April 2024 social media debates involved women making a decision about an inflated and imagined scenario. Women were walking on their own in the woods. What would women prefer came on their path: a man or a bear? Women’s overwhelming response of ‘bear’ created an inflammation of wounded masculinities. The reasoning and justifications expressed by women tapped into a fear of attack and rape, and the argument that they would not be believed if a man abused them (Hutchens, 2024e). These popular cultural interventions are shocking in their relentlessness. Women are frightened of men. Not all men. But men crossing their paths cannot be trusted. Confronting a bear is preferable to meeting an unknown man (@dillanmichaelwhite, 2024).

I commenced this article with comments from a troll who was very focused on ensuring that an educated woman did not speak and was reminded of her status as a “whore.” While writing this article, on March 17, 2024, a new troll appeared, offering a comment to my video titled, “How to make the corrections examiners ask of you and your thesis.” This vlog was not the most provocative and poignant of topics for the manosphere to critique. Feminism, femininity or women are not mentioned. However @addammadd offered in response: “POV: La Llorona is disappointed with your scholarship but sincerely wants to help.” La Llorona is a story with its folkloric origins in Mexico (Kearney, 1969). It is the story of a woman who drowned her children after discovering her unfaithful husband. As the tale progresses, anyone who hears her cries either dies or suffers failure throughout their lives. This is Medusa with a microphone.

Perusing his channel, viewers see a fixation on Zizek, which includes reading his chapters to camera, often with expletives attached (@addammadd, 2024). Intriguingly, for his videos, comments are not permitted. But once more, I was attacked, like so many educated women, not for my ideas or interpretation – but for the flaws in my femininity. My pathway through femininity has been different and defiant. Unlike La Llorona, I have birthed no children. This was the correct and intentional decision for me. I respect the reproductive choices of all citizens. I have also been fortunate to be married to two remarkable husbands, both inspirational scholars. Neither were nor are unfaithful. One died of pancreatic cancer. I was his sole carer and was with him at the moment of his death. The other is a remarkable physicist who builds pathways for women in STEM and the careers of Indigenous scholars in the experimental sciences.

I am one woman. But the lives of women – real women – are built from hope and despair and aspirations and efforts that transcend the Proppian patriarchal folktales that binds us to narratives not

of our choosing. The question returns. What is to be done with the well qualified, academic woman? Historic and sexualized tropes may be summoned. But emotions are not facts. Past injustices are not our future. Committing to higher education and enabling the future learning of generations of women will continue to change the world by enables choices and alternatives. We speak of diversity, of connection and community. We are more than the product of our orifices. We are more than the labels placed on us. The doctorate matters. It stands for the long-fought achievements of women in our diversity. We occupy this space. We listen. We speak. We summon a different future.

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