Young Boys in the Manosphere: How Are the Effects of the Dissemination of Misogyny Online Manifesting Themselves in UK Primary Schools?

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Dedications

To my housemates, Annabel and Darcy, for keeping me sane and happy (most of the time).

Ethics Approval

I declare that this research contained herein was granted approval by the SPAIS Ethics Working Group.

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Content Warning:

This dissertation contains references to explicit misogynistic language used in online spaces. Such language may be offensive or disturbing. Its inclusion is intended to accurately represent the severity of online misogyny. Reader discretion is advised.

ABSTRACT

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The dissemination of misogyny online is a growing societal concern and is gaining much attention in the UK. The potential impacts that this will have on young people's gendered attitudes are severe and deserve much research and attention. My dissertation therefore investigates how the effects of this dissemination of misogyny online are manifesting themselves in UK primary school children's behaviours. To answer this question, data was collected through the use of surveys distributed to female primary school teachers across the UK and then analysed thematically to find evidence of misogynistic ideals espoused within online misogynistic discourses being echoed in primary school children's behaviours and attitudes. My findings display evidence of three fundamental principles of online misogyny (male superiority, devaluation of women, and male victimhood) being echoed in primary school-aged children's behaviour, according to female primary school teachers.

Word Count: 9997

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- MRA = Men's Rights Activist

- PUA = Pick-Up Artist

- Incel(s) = Involuntary Celibate(s)

- MGTOW = Men Going Their Own Way

- NASUWT = National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

INTRODUCTION

In September 2024, research conducted by UK Feminista and the NEU showed that sexist language and gender stereotyping was widespread in UK primary schools. They found that 34% of primary school teachers were witnessing gender stereotyping in their schools at least weekly (UK Feminista and National Education Union, 2023). Additionally, the Girls' Attitudes Survey 2024, conducted by Girlguiding, found that 77% of girls and women aged 7-21 have experienced online harm in the year before the survey was conducted (Girlguiding, 2024). The murders committed by Kyle Clifford in July of 2024, who was found to have been watching misogynistic video content online prior to the attack, have underscored the urgent need to understand how misogynistic content spreads and radicalises vulnerable young boys (Sinmaz, 2025; Adams, 2025; Petter, 2025). While these extreme cases are still rare, they emerge from broader patterns of desensitisation and attitude shifts that often begin in the early stages of childhood.

The Netflix series *Adolescence* that was released in March 2025, added to this growing conversation, portraying how boys as young as 13 are being shaped by harmful online subcultures. The show, souring to the No.1 spot on Netflix's streaming chart, has brought the discussion of the dangers of online radicalisation of young boys to the forefront of political debate. The show is centred on a 13-year-old boy who is arrested for the murder of his female classmate. The four episodes immerse viewers in the psychological and emotional complexities of the characters, delving into themes such as toxic masculinity, online radicalisation, and the challenges of parenting in the digital age. This show has sparked discussions worldwide about the influence of online misogyny on young people; especially young boys (Hinsliff, 2025; Waxman, 2025; Youngs, 2025). The creators of the show are now pushing for it to be shown in educational settings to raise awareness of the dangers of the spread of misogynistic content online (Youngs, 2025a). Although the show is fictional, writers of the show have said that it is inspired by the very real epidemic of young boys being involved in knife crime in the UK, and the repeated incidents of young boys stabbing girls (Kinane, 2025). Undoubtedly, this is a serious concern, and my research aims

to contribute to answering the question of how the effects of online misogyny are manifesting in the offline world.

My dissertation asks: How are the effects of the dissemination of misogyny online manifesting themselves in UK primary schools? It focuses on the experiences of female teachers, as teachers are often the first to notice shifts in classroom behaviour and attitudes (Pianta & Hamre, 2009). My study draws on survey data from female primary school teachers across the UK to explore the perceived impact of online misogyny on primary school children's behaviours. I specifically look at *female* primary school teachers as they may possess deeper insights into the manifestations of misogyny in the classroom. As potential first-hand targets of misogynistic attitudes, female teachers may be more aware of gendered dynamics among pupils and be more likely to recognise subtle behaviours that reflect wider cultural narratives in relation to gender roles. Their observations can offer valuable insights into how online misogyny may be being reproduced by young children in school settings, an area of study that has received little attention. Much of the literature that looks at women's experiences with misogynistic hate online is restricted to social media analysis (e.g., Daly et al., 2022; Jones et al., 2019; Aiston, 2024); and not much research has been done into the offline manifestations of online misogyny. My research aims to partially fill that gap.

To frame this issue of online misogyny in primary schools, my dissertation draws on the concept of popular misogyny, as defined by Sarah Banet-Weiser (2018). In her work, Banet-Weiser examines the intertwined relationship between popular feminism and popular misogyny. She explains how, 'the manifestations of popular feminism are numerous, from hashtag activism to corporate campaigns from Dove about body positivity' (2018, p.9), and this has resulted in a reactive 'popular misogyny' that believes that 'every space or place, every exercise of power that women deploy is understood as taking power *away* from men' (2018, p.5). This highlights how popular feminism's emphasis on visibility and empowerment has inadvertently provoked a misogynistic backlash, as seen in online spaces. This concept describes how misogynistic narratives are circulated and normalised through mainstream and digital media, often appearing under the guise of humour and self-improvement, making them especially insidious and appealing to younger audiences

through social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram. Banet-Weiser's framework is particularly useful in explaining how seemingly benign or 'popular' content can introduce and reinforce harmful gender attitudes in young boys.

In parallel, my study also engages with Connell's (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (2005, p.77). This definition emphasises that hegemonic masculinity is not merely about societal expectations or individual identities but is constituted through actions that sustain male dominance over women, highlighting how everyday practices contribute to the maintenance of gender hierarchies. This concept provides a sociological lens through which to understand how online misogynistic narratives work to reinforce dominant gender norms amongst children. When young boys internalise ideals of male dominance or entitlement, these ideals can translate into behaviour that disadvantages or marginalises their female peers. Together, these two frameworks: popular misogyny and hegemonic masculinity, enable a deeper exploration of how online misogyny is actively reproduced and enacted in offline educational spaces.

My dissertation is structured into three main sections. Section 1 establishes why it is essential to investigate the effects of online misogyny at the primary school level specifically, examining the institutional, developmental, and social factors that make this age group particularly important. Section 2 explores the online 'Manosphere', the digital space where online misogynistic ideologies are produced and circulated, to gain an understanding of the exact groups and ideas that young boys are being exposed to and therefore accurately assess their offline effects. Section 3 outlines the methods I employed to gather insights from UK female primary school teachers and presents the findings of my research, showing how misogynistic attitudes appear to be manifesting in young boys at the primary school level, and how these behaviours could be linked to Manosphere ideologies.

SECTION 1

The Significance of Primary Schools

Understanding the role of primary schools is essential to my research, which investigates how the effects of online misogyny are manifesting within these settings. Primary schools are crucial environments for children's broader cognitive, emotional, and social development; therefore, they have significant implications for the whole of society. This section is divided into three subsections to establish why primary schools and their students are particularly significant when determining the effects of the dissemination of misogyny online. Subsection 1.1 examines how primary schools, as an institution, contribute to child development and provide foundations for identity formation. Subsection 1.2 focuses on emotional and social development, looking at biological and sociological discussions of how primary school years are especially formative. Finally, Subsection 1.3 explores how primary school-aged children begin to conceptualise gender specifically, and how these conceptualisations are shaped and potentially distorted by the interplay between school environments and exposure to online content.

1.1. The Role of Primary Schools in Child Development

Throughout childhood, the school environment is where children spend a significant amount of their time, meaning primary schools matter in shaping values, identity and behaviour in the early stages of human life. The concept of the school can be described as a secondary socialising agent, after the family (Parsons, 1959). Parsons (1959) argues that primary schools bridge the gap between the values of the family and the universalistic standards of wider society as the first stage of independence in the child's life after leaving the home. Schools have a distinct function as 'an agency through which individual personalities are trained to be motivationally and technically adequate to the performance of adult roles' (1959, p.130), ultimately preparing children for their future by socialising them into systems of norms and values. In this sense, the classroom operates as a microcosm of society.

The Cambridge Primary Review (Alexander, 2010) stresses the importance of primary schools as they are responsible not only for academic instruction but for nurturing children's emotional, moral, and social development. Alexander states that a primary school 'is a community in its own right' and that it 'can be a wonderful source of social cohesion' (2010, p.38). The Review lists what it calls the 'Eight Domains,' which refer to the eight areas of learning and development that it recommends for a broad and balanced primary curriculum. The two domains: 'citizenship and ethics' and 'place and time' are particularly crucial in children's social development. 'Citizenship and ethics' teaches students about moral development, social responsibility, diversity, inclusion and human rights, and 'place and time' focuses on children's understanding of the world and their context through humanities subjects such as history and geography. The Review's emphasis that these domains are of equal importance as teaching traditional academic subjects in primary education highlights its position that educational spaces are broadly developmental and should support emotional, ethical and social growth, and to embed certain values. This aligns with the need to tackle harmful gender norms early, especially as children increasingly encounter problematic content online.

In addition to schools playing an active role in instilling certain morals and values into students, children have a natural instinct to imitate what they see from their surroundings. Brofenbrenner (2006) explains how 'active engagement in, or even mere exposure to, what others are doing often inspires the other person to undertake similar activities on her own' (2006, p.8). This further stresses the importance of a child's school environment in the early stages of their development; namely, their primary school environment. As well as their role of formal and informal instruction, primary schools are important as they expose children to a complex web of new social relationships, of particular significance is peer-on-peer interactions. These shape how they understand and navigate the social world and future relationships. The role of these interactions on children's development will be explored further in the following subsection.

1.2. Emotional and Social Development in the Primary School Years

Extensive research has gone into showing the importance of primary schools on children's development. Sylva (1994), in her work 'School Influences on Children's Development', stresses how schooling not only affects children's academic prospects, but also their 'social cognitions and feelings' which 'may be just as powerful in predicting later outcomes as intelligence or school curriculum' (1994, p.135). She states that primary school has a greater effect on children than secondary school due to the fact that 'the pupil self concept forms between 5 and 8' (1994, p.163), underpinning the argument that primary schools are of critical importance when influencing children as these are their most formative years.

Del Giudice (2018) in his work analysing middle childhood through an evolutionary-developmental lens, supports this position. Middle childhood (approximately 6-12 years of age) is a crucial phase for humans due to the 'cognitive, behavioral, and hormonal processes that characterise this life stage' (2018, n.p.). Drawing on cross-disciplinary evidence, Del Giudice points out how, in this stage of life, children develop many new functions and change dramatically. Additionally, he points out how middle childhood is a period of 'heightened sensitivity to the environment' (Del Giudice, 2018, n.p.), meaning that children become especially attuned to social hierarchies and gender roles. This has significant implications for understanding how children process and adopt certain cultural messages, making it particularly relevant when examining the influence of misogynistic online content on young minds.

An additional important feature of middle childhood is the role of social relationships between children that are largely formed within school settings. Pellegrini et al. (2000) recognise that 'children's social lives in schools [are] both very important and very understudied' (2000, p.1). They explain the impact that schools have on children as this 'is where children… learn to interact and form relationships with each other' (2000, p.18). Crucially, schools are where children get a chance to establish friendships and can therefore act as echo chambers as 'children socialize each other and thus become more similar over time' (2000, p.54), allowing for certain ideas to proliferate, such as those adopted from online sources. Not only do peer-on-peer relationships mean that children get socialised by their friends, but the social positions that children achieve in school act as a springboard for adolescence and adulthood, as 'popularity… within the peer network put a child at a

considerable advantage' (Del Giudice, 2018, n.p.) in developing their social competence for the future. Furthermore, power dynamics within social groups, including those tied to gender, often emerge in subtle ways in children's play, and can reinforce social scripts and behavioural norms. Pellegrini et al. (2000) highlight the playground, in particular, as being a unique space for informal peer interaction where children rehearse gender roles. This makes the primary school environment especially formative for the internalisation and reinforcement of gender performances.

1.3. Formation of Gender Roles and Identities

Developmental theory also uncovers the importance of the fact that children's understanding of gender in the early years has significant societal implications. Children's gender formation begins at an early age and is reinforced through various socialising agents, including the family, school environments, and the media (Del Giudice, 2018; Brown, 2004; Skelton et al., 2009). During these stages, misogyny encountered online can build harmful ideas with regards to gender perceptions, as exposure to online misogynistic narratives feeds into the development of gender identity, especially when not challenged. Primary schools therefore play an active role in either reinforcing or challenging gender stereotypes. If they fail to critically engage with gendered assumptions that children may form from their surroundings, they can become spaces where online misogyny is echoed or normalised.

Skelton et al. (2009) in their research on gender perceptions in primary school students and teachers look at the question of whether gender "matters" to both groups. They observe children aged seven or eight and find that they 'were not interested or invested in the gender of their teachers but did manifest a concern with their own gender identities (2009, p.188). This supports the idea that children begin to understand and enact gender performances at this young age. They explain that 'one of the reasons for choosing to focus on the 7-8 year-old pupils was that this age group is particularly likely to attend to gender boundaries' (2009, p.193) making them more susceptible and vulnerable to certain gender stereotyping (or misogynistic gender roles) becoming embedded, and unsurprisingly they find that both the male and female students in their interviews draw on dominant societal constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Parsons (1959) brings attention to this by recognising how 'sex segregation of latency period peer groups may be regarded as a process of reinforcement of sex-role identification' (1959, p.12). As previously stated, peer relationships are central to children's identity development. Those peer relationships often involve a certain level of gender policing. Significantly, Parsons (1959) found that, in addition to the school actively enforcing sex segregation, 'to a striking degree this is enforced by the children themselves' (1959, p.139). This means that the gender perceptions that some children may have can influence the social scripts that children enact with one another. Supporting this idea, Brown (2004), in challenging the dominant theory of mother-child attachment, explains how 'children are not presented with unambiguous messages about gender that they can swallow whole; they are active participants in creating their personal ideas about gender' that they amalgamate from different encounters, such as those with their peers (2004, p.12).

1.4. Conclusion

Together, these three subsections demonstrate three main reasons as to why primary schools are important settings for feminist studies as primary school-aged children may be especially vulnerable to the dissemination of misogyny online. They should be understood as key sites for both the manifestation and potential mitigation of online misogynistic influences, therefore explaining the importance of this research.

SECTION 2

The Manosphere: Groups and Discourses of Online Misogyny

To understand how online misogyny may be influencing the attitudes and behaviours of children, it is crucial to examine the digital spaces in which such narratives are cultivated and being circulated. This space has been termed by academics as the 'Manosphere', defined by Farrell et al. (2019) as 'a group of loosely incorporated websites and social media communities where men's perspectives, needs, gripes, frustrations and desires are explicitly explored' (2019, p.87) and where misogyny fosters. Here, I define misogyny according to Farrell et al.'s (2019) definition: not only as 'behaviour that objectifies, reduces, or degrades women, but also as the exclusion of women, manifesting itself in discrimination, physical and sexual violence, as well as hostile attitudes towards women' (2019, p.88). This section briefly explores the origins, groups, and ideological underpinnings of the Manosphere. Since the aim of my research is to demonstrate how this reproduction of gender hierarchies within online communities is affecting young people's behaviours offline, this section deserves much attention.

Academics theorising the Manosphere have debated whether focus should be put on exploring the individual subcultures of the Manosphere (e.g., Bates, 2020; Han & Yin, 2022; Ging, 2017; Johanssen, 2021), or whether it is of greater relevance to envision it as a whole and acknowledge the complex intersections between the groups and their discourses (e.g., Ribeiro et al., 2021; Zuckerberg, 2018; Lilly, 2016). As aptly summarised by Marwick & Caplan (2018), 'the manosphere is an aggregate of diverse communities brought together by a common language that orients them in opposition to the discourse and rhetoric of feminism' (2018, p.553). In accordance with this statement, in this section I look at both the individual groups, to understand the heterogeneity of the different strands of online misogyny; and the overall ideals that make up the fundamental ideology of the Manosphere.

2.1. The Origins of the Manosphere: How Did We Get Here?

Despite anti-feminist opposition, such as the formation of the National League for Opposing Women's Suffrage in the UK in 1910 that saw voting not as a right but a duty that would be imposed on women in addition to their domestic roles (Ging & Siapera, 2019, p.3), the 1970s saw significant gains attributed to second-wave feminism. This, however, gave rise to a more subtle and culturally embedded reaction from anti-feminists, 'manifesting itself in a range of cautionary narratives… about the threats that sexually autonomous women posed to masculinity and the nuclear family' (Ging & Siapera, 2019, p.3). Men's Rights Movements, concerned with 'family law, child contact and maintenance arrangements, inferior social security provisions, and men's exclusion from education, training and healthcare' (Ging & Siapera, 2019, p.5), started to claim that feminism had institutionally eroded men's rights, a foundational principle of online misogyny, today.

Since then, feminism has become "popularised". Banet-Weiser (2018) explains how, 'the manifestations of popular feminism are numerous… [and] seen by far more viewers than critical commentary on sexual violence towards women of color' (2018, p.9) and that this has resulted in a subsequent and reactive 'popular misogyny'. She states that 'for popular misogynies, every space or place, every exercise of power that women deploy is understood as taking that power *away* from men' (2018, p.5). She recognises the normalisation and commodification of anti-feminist attitudes in mainstream culture, and we are seeing how the Manosphere draws on and amplifies this mainstream misogyny by acting as an echo chamber, resulting in more extreme and aggressive attitudes (KhosraniNik & Esposito, 2018).

2.2. The Groups of the Manosphere

From the literature, I identified four prominent groups that make up the Manosphere: Men's Rights Activists (MRAs), Pick-Up Artists (PUAs), Incels (Involuntary Celibates), and Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) (Bates, 2020; Jones et al., 2019; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Lilly, 2016; Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022). In this subsection, I briefly explain the distinctive viewpoints of these groups individually. This is important due to the subcultures differing on 'the issues they choose to focus on, the language they use, and even some of the positions they take' (Lilly, 2016, p.43), therefore only after identifying these nuances can we attain a

comprehensive understanding of the Manosphere. In addition to the four main groups, I have added a final section on the 'Manfluencers' who also play a significant role within the Manosphere. I have included this group in response to the sizeable number of survey responses I gathered that explicitly reference Andrew Tate and other influential figures. The prevalence of these mentions emphasises the need to address misogynistic influencers as their own group in order to fully grasp the digital space that shapes the gendered attitudes of young students.

2.2.1. MRAs

Bates (2020) identifies MRAs as 'Men Who Blame Women'. This is the online manifestation of the Men's Rights Activists Movement of the 1970s, as previously outlined, that was initially led by a genuine interest in positive change and a support for feminist progress. This movement, however, is now unrecognisable. The MRAs that we see online today cling to outdated gender stereotypes, using 'sweeping, misogynistic generalisations about women' (Bates, 2020, n.p.) and weaponising real issues, such as men's mental health, against feminism. They believe that that there is a 'feminist conspiracy [that] has created a world stacked against men' and that, because of this, 'men are the true victims of inequality and abuse' (Bates, 2020, n.p.). This group has seen a decrease in popularity since the rise of newer, and more radical, communities, such as Incels (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

2.2.2. PUAs

PUA's are distinct from MRAs in that their emphasis is on male entitlement to sex and the constant pursuit of women as sexual objects. Bates (2020) fittingly categorises PUAs as 'Men Who Prey on Women'. Much of the jargon used by PUAs has become somewhat popularised; one example is the term "game", which refers to the pursuit of women through 'techniques, strategies, and mindsets that help men pick up women' and often 'involves objectifying women and promoting harassment techniques' (Ribeiro et al., 2021, p.197). PUAs have a very public presence, with 'a booming international industry that has repeatedly been valued… at an estimated $100 million' (Bates, 2020, n.p.) with so-called "gurus" giving followers advice on how to "pick-up" women; the problem is that their advice

is routed in deeply misogynistic worldviews. Although similar to the belief system held by Incels, for example sharing the idea that there exists a clear hierarchical separation of men (as dominant) and women (as subordinate), PUAs distinctly believe it is possible to trick women into giving men what they want, and "rightfully deserve" (Bates, 2020). In this sense, they differ considerably to Incels who hold the belief that women have all of the power over society.

PUAs have largely been ignored as an issue due to the way popular culture has portrayed them, however even though on the surface they are dismissed as seeming less harmful than the other Manosphere subcultures, they act as a gateway for young boys to be introduced to the more extreme groups (Ribeiro et al., 2021, p.203).

2.2.3. Incels

Similar to PUAs, Incels' primary focus is on sex; however, unlike PUAs, they 'lament that the "sexual marketplace" is brutally hierarchical, with women completely in control' (Bates, 2020, n.p.), and their anger stems from being denied their male right to sex by women and feminists. To them, all women consider them undesirable because of their looks and therefore women, due to this superficiality, are to blame for their lack of sexual fulfilment. Bates (2020) therefore categorises Incels as 'Men Who Hate Women'. They are also universally considered the most violent subculture of the Manosphere and have become infamous for the many instances of gender-based violence (including murders) done in the name of Incel revenge. The two most high-profile incidents are the Isla Vista killings in 2014, perpetrated by Elliot Rodger, and the Toronto van attack, perpetrated by Alek Minassian (Jones et al., 2019). Most troublingly, the Incel community has seen consistent increases in their membership in recent years, and this trend persists (Ribeiro et al., 2021, p.200).

2.2.4. MGTOW

The final group, MGTOW, is categorised by Bates (2020) as 'Men Who Avoid Women'. This group is unique in its proposed solution to the "gynocracy", defined as 'a clever system designed to keep men (the true victims of oppression) in their subordinate place' (Bates,

2020, n.p.). In order to escape this oppressive society, they support isolationism and choose to eschew relationships with women completely. This is motivated by the hostility and distrust towards women, and feminists in particular, due to the "epidemic" of false rape and domestic violence allegations that aim to damage men socially (Bates, 2020; Lilly, 2016). Due to MGTOW's internal 'focus on self-development and preservation' (Jones et al., 2019, n.p.), this group has been perceived as harmless and has therefore flown under the radar. However, their ideology is founded on 'a wider notion of women as irreversibly toxic and dangerous' (Bates, 2020, n.p.), reinforcing a narrative equally as harmful as the other, more overt, groups of the Manosphere. Additionally, MGTOW is 'the largest community, in terms of contributions and also the one that has been active for longer' (Farrell et al., 2019, p.92), making it especially influential.

2.3.5. The 'Manfluencers'

Within the literature examining the Manosphere, little attention has been given to the misogynistic influencers (the 'Manfluencers') who 'are cultural intermediaries that shape trends, public conversations and cultural narratives' (Roberts et al., 2025, p.20). However, in the past two years we have recurrently seen the name Andrew Tate, the most prominent figure of the Manosphere (Roberts et al., 2025), displayed across media headlines in light of his many recent controversies and legal battles (Granville, 2025, Kenyon, 2023). This has led to scholars beginning to analyse his content in greater detail as well as the extent of his influence over young boys (Roberts et al., 2025; Haslop et al., 2024; Thomas-Parr & Gilroy-Ware, 2025; Westcott et al., 2023).

One of the main ideas that Tate speaks on, in addition to those that he shares with the other groups of the Manosphere, such as men being "naturally" dominant; women being "naturally" subservient; and the concept of male victimhood (Haslop et el., 2024), is the importance of wealth. Tate speaks about wealth and power in tandem and Roberts et al. (2025) find, through analysis of Tate's written communications, that the words 'money' and 'rich' were two of his most used keywords (Roberts et al., 2025, p.11). This clearly demonstrates the emphasis that Tate puts on wealth being central to masculinity. Thomas-Parr & Gilroy-Ware (2025) also discovered that, of the videos of Tate that they analysed, the

main topic of conversation was not explicit misogyny and sexism as was expected (with only 21.8% of the videos), but rather 'money, achievement, material gain, the body, individualism and self-discipline' (2025, p.239). Here, he also objectifies women by stating that they function as a prize for the accumulation of such wealth (Roberts et al., 2025).

Another notion specific to Tate's ideology is that of the 'body aesthetic' (Roberts et al., 2025, p.13). He promotes a muscular, dominant physique as a symbol of power as 'becoming combat-ready is framed as crucial preparation for a supposedly inevitable violent encounter with another man as a desirable rite of passage' (Roberts et al., 2025, p.13). Not only does this promote the strive towards physical strength as an aesthetic aspiration, but it also encourages and reinforces the naturalisation of male violence. Gilroy-Ware & Thomas-Parr (2025) accurately summarise how 'Tate symbolises a means by which boys and men can demonstrate their individual capacities via the same means visible in popular feminism: empowerment and self-esteem constructed through consumerism, "working" on the body, and entrepreneurial upward mobility' (2025, n.p.).

2.3. The Ideals of the Manosphere

Although there are distinct subcultures within the Manosphere, there are certain ideals that are almost universally held. Banet-Weiser & Miltner (2015) state that in order to 'truly understand – and combat – popular misogyny in its networked forms, we need to look at it as a whole' (2016, p.173). This is central to recognising how children's misogynistic attitudes and behaviours manifesting offline in schools can be traced back to online content.

From the literature, I determined four main principles that are almost unanimously upheld by the Manosphere as a collective, although to varying degrees. It is widely recognised that the adherence to 'Red Pill' philosophy, adopted from the film *The Matrix*, is what generally unites the groups of the Manosphere (Bates, 2020; Lilly, 2016; Ging, 2017). This philosophy 'purports to awaken men to feminism's misandry and brainwashing' (Ging, 2017, p.640) much like the Red Pill in *The Matrix* awakens Neo to the truth about reality. The four underlying principles outlined in this subsection follow from this starting point.

2.3.1. The Masculine Ideal: "Alpha" Males

In general, the way that the Manosphere presents what the "ideal" man should be aligns with traditional, classical male characteristics. Lilly (2016) summarises how the ideal man is perceived as 'the master of his domain'; 'a man of honour'; and 'like a warrior of old'. These all reinforce a toxic form of masculinity where 'the need to be dominant and controlling, not showing or admitting weakness or dependency, and devaluing both women and feminine attributes in men' (Jones et al., 2019, n.p.) are traits that are hailed. Toxic masculinity, a term that emerged in the 1990s, refers to the specific aspects of hegemonic masculinity that are specifically seen as destructive to society and it champions hypermasculine traits 'to the point that they become the idealised and desirable masculine identity' (Jones et al., 2019, n.p.). The discourse within the Manosphere champions this form of masculinity by putting an emphasis on control and entitlement and also by putting a clear visual of the ideal man as 'beautiful, healthy, normal, fit, competent, and intelligent' (Lilly, 2016, p.27). This paints a picture of masculinity that is completely unattainable, leading to young boys feeling inadequate and worthless.

Much emphasis is also put on the necessity for violence. Violence is seen as inherent to male nature (Lilly, 2016, p.79) and is therefore supported in online misogynistic spaces. In the Manosphere, violence is framed as 'restorative of masculinity' (Lilly, 2016, p.16) which is an especially dangerous position to endorse considering how this can be perceived by young boys as justifying violent acts, especially against girls and women. Connell (2005) explains how, by affirming violent behaviours, the Manosphere is systematically linked to the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity in young boys as 'it is, overwhelmingly, the dominant gender who hold and use the means of violence' (2005, p.83). It becomes honourable to be feared and assert control by resorting to violence against women as a means of asserting their place in the gender hierarchy. Violence is especially supported by Incel culture, as established by their praising of Elliot Rodger as a "martyr" (Bates, 2020, n.p.), and also by Andrew Tate who puts a strong emphasis on acquiring strength to prepare for the 'inevitable violent encounter with another man' which he states is 'a desirable rite of passage' (Roberts et al., 2025, p.13).

The "ideal" masculine traits upheld by the Manosphere all determine whether one is considered an "alpha" or a "beta" male. "Alpha" men are admired for being 'attractive, powerful, and sexually successful' whereas "beta" men are ridiculed for being 'too unattractive to achieve sexual success' (Vallerga & Zurbriggen, 2022, p.602) and are therefore condemned.

2.3.2. The Masculinity Crisis: "Beta" Males

In contrast to the "alpha" male, the portrayal of the "beta" male is another core part of Manosphere rhetoric (Farrell et al., 2019). The term "beta" is used in a derogatory manner to shame men who don't conform to the previously outlined "ideal" masculine traits. These tend to be men who embrace inclusive masculinity and support non-traditional gender norms who, therefore, are 'allegedly subjugated in the gynocentric structure of society' (Han & Yin, 2022, p.1936). This corresponds to the Blue Pill in the *Matrix* metaphor, meaning these men have not been awakened to reality. Many within the Manosphere, including Andrew Tate, believe that not many men will be able to achieve "alpha" status (Roberts et al., 2025, p.17), and this is due to what has been termed the 'feminization of society' (Lilly, 2016), whereby 'the masculine nature of society is being undermined and disrupted by feminizing forced' (Lilly, 2016, p.83), reiterating their ant-feminist stance by condemning advancements towards gender equality. By vilifying these men who exhibit "feminine" traits like emotional openness and vulnerability, the Manosphere reasserts traditional hierarchies and toxic models of manhood.

However, this belittling of men who do not fit into the masculine ideal portrayed by some of the groups within the Manosphere has caused many men to feel unseen in this space; these men are generally termed "geeks" or "gamers". Since these men do not necessarily embody the championed form of hegemonic masculinity, they self-identify as "beta" men (Jones et al., 2019) and actually 'rail against rather than aspire to the alpha males' (Bates, 2020, n.p.). It is this failure to fulfil the expectations of 'the narrow definition upheld by hegemonic masculinity that propels these "beta" men to idealise an identity constructed from the principles of toxic masculinity' (Jones et al., 2019, n.p.), as the subcultures where members

collectively self-identify as "beta" men tend to be especially vindictive and violently misogynistic, notably Incels.

2.3.3. The Feminine Depiction

The feminine depiction of the "beta" male clearly demonstrates the misogynistic position within the Manosphere that woman are inherently inferior to men. Their ideal construction of masculinity excludes any and all qualities of femininity. It is evident in all of the subcultures of the Manosphere that they believe that 'women ought to submit to the authority of men' (Lilly, 2016, p.54). The feminine "ideal" works alongside the masculine "ideal" as women's roles are almost always defined in relation to men, as wives or sexual objects, and that the ideal man is deserving of the ideal woman. In parallel to the argument that the "feminisation" of society has led to the downfall of traditional, "real" men, the discourses within the Manosphere correspondingly push for the return to "traditional" women and therefore advocate for a return to the past, where women did not have the rights that they do now. This clearly confirms their anti-feminist stance.

Lilly (2016) finds that women are spoken about in a positive light in only 14 percent of cases from her dataset and that 'these representations emphasise a sort of traditional femininity… based upon commitment to family, pleasantness, loyalty, selflessness, and beauty' (Lilly, 2016, p.52). The feminine ideal is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms where women are valued for conforming to a submissive, domestic and hyper-feminine role in society. In contrast, the Manosphere disparages the women of today who do not fit into this "ideal" feminine model. Lilly (2016) finds that women are overwhelmingly represented negatively in MRA and PUA communities (79.6 percent of cases) (2016, p.56). This undoubtedly positions the Manosphere as being anti-woman. In summary, "liberated" women are characterised as being irrational, unintelligent, attention-seeking, entitled and manipulative (Lilly, 2016). Another way that women are disparaged is in the objectification of women as only being useful for sexual needs, however here there exists a notable contradiction as women are told that they should be sexually pure and virginial whilst simultaneously abhorred for rejecting men's sexual advances.

2.3.4. Anti-Feminist Sentiment

The representations of femininity in the Manosphere, both the ideal and disparaging depictions, function as a cultural backlash against feminism and gender equality. The most universally held ideal of the Manosphere is its stance against feminism. Lilly's (2016) research highlights how feminism is a pressing issue that is spoken of in the Manosphere, being mentioned in 72.9 percent of all MRA cases in her dataset (2016, p.89). Feminism is considered to be at the core of every male grievance and is regarded as a hostile force that has oppressed men in order to empower women. It is also regarded as being 'unnecessary, going too far, or being responsible for the unhappiness of men and women' (Lilly, 2016, p.27). Han & Yin (2022) define one of two branches of the Manosphere as an antifeminist countermovement that fights 'against the progress of feminism in anti-rape policies, the #MeToo movement, progressive gender norms, and consent standards' (2022, p.1930), emphasising the prominence of this issue in online misogynistic discourse.

Anti-feminism has led to a reversal of victimhood by men in the Manosphere, whereby it is deemed that men are the *real* victims of contemporary society. They believe in a feminist conspiracy that has fabricated the myth of male privilege as a tool to manipulate society into thinking that the patriarchy exists, when in reality we live in a "gynocracy", a society that is run by women (Bates, 2020). Bates (2020) quotes an MRA blog that summarises this position; it states that 'from a feminist perspective "gender equality" has come to mean female domination, and male subjugation' (2020, n.p.). This has led to harmful attacks on feminists, in particular, using techniques such as 'mass filing of fake rape reports, hacking women's websites and Wikipedia pages, doxing (retrieval and online broadcasting of personally identifiable information), …, using graphic porn as a weapon against women, and manipulating images' (Ging, 2017, p.646). There is also a wide range of derogatory terms that are used to describe feminists, such as "feminazi" and "cunts" (Ging, 2017, p.645-646).

2.4. Conclusion

The ideals espoused by the Manosphere indisputably reinforce hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005) in that it supports the position that, inherently, men are dominant, and women subordinate and that this should therefore be reflected in society. By valorising the traits outlined in the section, Manosphere communities not only uphold hegemonic masculinity, but position it as being under threat due to feminist progress. This dynamic helps to explain the Manosphere's appeal to young boys who may be navigating questions of identity, status, and belonging. Gaining this understanding of the intricacies of online misogyny being disseminated through the Manosphere gives us the tools to identify if these attitudes are being adopted by young boys, through observing their behaviours, and the effects of this in the real world. This will be explored in the following section.

SECTION 3

Evidence of the Effects of Online Misogyny on Young Boys

In this section, I will explain how the findings from my data provide some evidence to suggest that the dissemination of misogyny online is manifesting in primary school children's behaviours in multiple ways. This section starts with an outline of the methodology used to collect my data and the subsequent analysis of it; it then provides some summary statistics before presenting the themes that emerged from the data that corroborate the theory that the effects of misogynistic online discourses are manifesting themselves in young boys' behaviours.

3.1. Methodology

My thesis seeks to determine how misogynistic discourses being spread online, through the Manosphere, are being adopted by primary-school aged children, especially boys, and how the adoption of these ideas are manifesting in their behaviours offline in school settings. I employ a mixed methods research design to investigate this phenomenon. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data, with a primary focus on the latter, allows for a rich and nuanced understanding of this issue. Quantitative analysis offers a summary and overview of any trends within the data, while qualitative insights allow for deeper exploration of individual experiences and perceptions of patterns of behaviour amongst children.

The data was collected through an online survey distributed to female UK primary school teachers, with the assistance of UK-based teachers' unions for the recruitment of respondents (namely, the NASUWT, the Chartered College of Teaching and the National Education Union). The survey was designed to capture both closed- and open-ended responses, enabling the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data (De Vaus, 2013). The questions focused on teachers' experiences with misogyny both directed *at* them and witnessed *by* them amongst students; observed changes in students' gender-related behaviour and attitudes in recent years; and perceived influences of online content. All

respondents have been anonymised and have an assigned unique ID number (R1 through to R45) to ensure confidentiality and facilitate organisation during data analysis.

The qualitative responses from the survey were collected and then examined through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Reflexive thematic analysis allows for the active interpretation of data which generated three key themes from the survey responses that reflect how the core ideals of the manosphere, as described in Section 2, are echoed in primary school teachers' observations of their students' behaviours in school.

3.2. Summarising the Data

I was able to gather 45 responses from female UK primary school teachers. These respondents range widely in age groups and geographical regions. From the 45 respondents, fourteen worked in rural areas, twenty-eight in urban areas, and three worked in online schools. Nineteen respondents were from the south of England; eleven were from the north of England; seven were from the midlands of England; and there were two respondents each from Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland; as well as two that did not state where they were from as they worked in online schools. There was a relatively well-balanced distribution of respondents across age groups: seven respondents were between the ages of 18-25; ten between the ages of 26-35; eight between the ages of 36-45; another eight between the ages of 46-55; and twelve between the ages of 56-65. This means that no single age group was significantly overrepresented and ensures that one age group's perspectives were not disproportionately given attention to. Finally, the respondents vary considerably in their number of years in teaching (ranging between 1 year of experience up to 40 years). The mean number of years is 18 years of teaching, meaning that the majority of respondents are qualified to comment on if they have observed changes in student behaviours and attitudes. Finally, 42 of the respondents worked in co-educational schools, one worked in an all-boys school and two worked in all-girls schools. Unsurprisingly, the two respondents from all-girls schools did not report any observations of misogynistic behaviour from their students.

Table 1 provides a summary of the main quantitative discoveries from the survey responses. Most notably, I found that there was an overwhelming majority of respondents who have observed misogynistic behaviour from their students (78%) and, simultaneously, 64% of respondents reported witnessing misogynistic behaviour that they believe to have been influenced by online content. This provides an important basis for looking at the qualitative responses alongside this discovery to further analyse the behaviours observed to determine whether they do in fact echo the misogyny espoused by the Manosphere. Another noteworthy statistic from the data is that, of the respondents that reported a change in boys' behaviour, the majority stated that the change was either negative (56%) or very negative (19%).

Survey Question	Respondents Who Answered 'Yes' (%)
Observed Misogynistic Behaviour in Students	78
Observed Concerning Comments about Gender Roles	53
Observed Use of Gender-Based Insults	76
Girls Reporting Feeling Excluded	48
Experiencing Misogyny Directed at Them	44
Noticing a Change in Boys' Behaviours	53
Observed Influence of Misogynistic Online Content	64
Overheard Use of Language from Online Content	36
Observed Use of Misogynistic Online Trends	62

Table 1: Summary Statistics (numbers rounded to 2 significant figures)

Due to the number of responses being relatively small in comparison to the population of UK female primary school teachers, broad generalisations cannot be made from the data. However, some of the statistics being as large as they are hints towards a wider phenomenon of online misogynistic content reaching young boys and affecting their behaviours.

3.3. Survey Responses: A Thematic Analysis

3.3.1. Performing Superiority: 'Manosphere' Masculinity Among Boys

One theme that repeatedly occurs within teacher's responses is that of boys' belief in male superiority. This echoes the fundamental philosophy of all of the subcultures of the Manosphere that there is a natural gender hierarchy with men at the top, and women below (Farrell et al., 2019; Haslop et al., 2024; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015). I coded a total of 29 responses from teachers giving evidence of behaviours from male students that was belittling to their female peers or displayed a sense of male dominance. Some respondents explicitly identified this kind of behaviour:

'I definitely have noticed that some boys see girls as below them. I notice a hierarchy.' (R27)

'Some of my male students feel more entitled to things over the girls. For example, one boy in a lesson felt like he should be able to sit at the back of the class over the girls. When I asked why he thought [that] he should have this privilege, he simply said that he was a boy. This was a worrying experience.' (R28)

'A feeling of superiority – of feeling stronger, especially in sports. That female participation in activities such as dance, gymnastics, debating, school council [is] not as valued.' (R9)

Others have reported observing certain behaviours and mannerisms from boys that subtly point to this feeling of superiority. Much of these behaviours stem from a feeling that anything "feminine" is inferior, an idea that is frequently discussed within online misogynistic dialogues with regards to the "ideal" masculine construct that 'excludes femininity and feminine traits' (Lilly, 2016, p.27). For example:

'Calling things "girly" in a belittling way. They don't want to be associated with things that are seen as feminine.' (R15)

'[Using] comments such as "that's so girl" in a derogatory manner to a boy.' (R9)

Similar to the belief of male superiority being seen as natural to human nature, teachers have also reported students holding very traditional and stereotypical perceptions of gender roles more generally. These gender stereotypes are also disconcertingly similar to those espoused by Manosphere discourses. A teacher explains one experience she had whilst teaching that directly echoes the traditional family dynamic that is admired by those within the Manosphere, where 'women are represented as naturally maternal and caring, which in effect naturalizes the traditional feminine role in the family of caregiver' (Lilly, 2016, p.55) and where 'manhood is represented as being about providing for the family' (Lilly, 2016, p.75):

'I teach languages, and when talking about the family and parental roles, generally, children will describe a very traditional family dynamic of the mother's job being to stay at home and cook and clean whilst the father works to earn money and should be taken care of.' (R31)

Other respondents describe similar experiences with students' gender stereotypical views and presenting women as inferior to men:

'[Boys have said that] women belong in the kitchen.' (R5)

'Certain jobs are made for certain genders. Women should be nurses, men should be doctors, for example.' (R33)

'[The] newly appointed headteacher is a woman and replaced a man. One boy implied that a woman should not be in such a position of power.' (R36)

It is evident from these responses that teachers have noticed boys feeling and acting superior to their girl peers. Of particular interest, however, was the fact that many respondents had observed misogynistic behaviours that they deemed to stem from online content, directly proving that ideas espoused by the Manosphere are affecting young boys' attitudes. In total, there were seven instances of teachers explicitly linking boys' attitudes towards masculinity to online content and a further five reporting the use of language

adopted from online content, also concerning masculinity. Some of the most noteworthy examples are as follows:

'There was a disturbing moment where a few boys were laughing about a video where a man talked about how to 'control women'. They seemed to think it was cool.' (R35)

'In a tutor session discussing what characteristics a good role model should have and examples of good role models, a male student mentioned Andrew Tate.' (R3)

Another significant finding is that Andrew Tate was overwhelmingly mentioned by respondents (29 times by every respondent that answered 'yes' to the question of whether they had heard students discussing online content, influencers, or social media personalities). This heavily suggests that young boys are being exposed to Andrew Tate's content, or at least that they are aware of his persona. Tate's influence is also present in the way that young boys speak about and have a desire for money and wealth. Tate flaunts his lavish lifestyle on social media and declares that it 'a man's role to attain wealth, power and status' (Roberts et al., 2025, p.16). One response provides clear evidence of this idea being adopted by male students:

'I have noticed boys discuss how they want to be rich and have money and material things like Andrew Tate. They see him as someone that has an enviable lifestyle.' (R11)

Additionally, academics have found that, especially in Tate's content, 'jokes, humor, and ridicule' has long been used 'as an excuse to mobilize or be complicit in sexism and misogyny' (Haslop et al., 2024, p.8). This idea emerges as a subtheme within the data, where some respondents reported on how boys will act out misogyny under the guise of humour; what is termed as "banter":

'Saying sexist jokes and calling it "banter". Jokes involving women being "bad drivers" or "only good for cleaning". This may be something repeated from home.' (R32)

'Several students watch streamers who use sexist jokes or language, and they repeat them in school without context or awareness.' (R37)

This provides further evidence to suggest that online misogynistic culture is being adopted and normalised by young boys.

Another significant finding from responses is that 24% of respondents mentioned that the terms 'alpha', 'beta', or 'sigma' were being used by their students. This signals the extent to which Manosphere culture is penetrating youth dialogue. It is unclear from the data whether these terms are being repeated mindlessly, mimicking online slang without any true meaning. However, one respondent provides background for when this language is being used, stating:

'Alpha is often used when a boy does something well.' (R44)

This observation indicates that these terms are being applied in context, implying some degree of understanding. This fact is important as it suggests that online misogynistic content is being internalised by young boys, and that this is manifesting in ways that promote the Manosphere's toxic masculinity.

3.3.2. Devaluation of Women and Girls

The second main theme that emerges from the teachers' survey responses is boys' devaluation of women and girls. This also makes up a significant part of online misogynistic discourse, as previously outlined in Section 2. The main way that women and girls are being devalued by young boys in primary schools, from the responses I gathered, is through the use of objectifying language. Some examples provided by female teachers are:

'Sexual comments or advances, including catcalling, stalking, staring, touching, taking pictures without consent.' (R22)

'I overheard a group of boys talking about what girls "should" be like. They were talking about the physically "ideal" girl. They listed things such as thin, pretty, having long hair.' (R27)

'Rating a girl by her looks on a scale of 1-10.' (R24)

'I've had to mediate situations where girls are excluded or mocked for their clothing or appearance in gendered ways.' (R41)

This type of behaviour is commonplace within the Manosphere, particularly within the PUA community, whereby the use of "game" 'involves reducing women to sexual targets' and 'rating their attractiveness on a scale of 1-10' (Lilly, 2016, p.48), two actions that are clearly demonstrated in these responses. Lilly (2016) also directly quotes from a PUA blog that they believe that women 'ought to be "attractive, thin, [and] pleasant"' (Lilly, 2016, p.52), attributes that have also been explicitly stated.

Not only do the respondents report objectification of female peers by young boys, but there are also five instances of teachers reporting objectification directed at them, even as women in positions of power:

'I have felt objectified by some of my male students when they talk about my appearance to me.' (R14)

'Boy students will often comment on my appearance. Not negatively, but it's definitely inappropriate and makes me feel uncomfortable.' (R44)

'When I was younger, I used to experience students make sexual comments towards me. I once has a year 7 student question why I wasn't married, implying that there must be something wrong with me if a man did not want to marry me.' (R23)

Interestingly, from the dataset I discovered that teachers in the youngest two age groups (teachers between the ages of 18 and 35) were more likely to have reported experiencing

misogyny directed at them by their students in the survey. 71% of the younger teachers answered 'yes' to having experienced misogyny directed at them, compared to only 29% of the older teachers in the dataset. This trend is interesting and may point to the fact that young boys have adopted the Manosphere's tendency to target younger women (Krendel, 2020) due to them being considered more "liberated". Along similar lines, young male students also devalue female teachers through challenging their authority, the data indicates:

'Male students behave much worse in my classes than my male colleagues' classes. They talk back to me and refuse to take instructions.' (R11)

'Lack of respect through bad behaviour in the lesson and a condescending way of speaking to me.' (R3)

'One time, it was stated that I couldn't teach as good as Mr. [male teacher's surname]. I assured the boys I was highly qualified.' (R22)

'I often feel like boys won't listen to me because they don't see me as an authoritative figure, like they see my male colleagues.' (R27)

The multiple comparisons made to the respondents' male colleagues having a better experience with boy students reinforces the idea espoused by the Manosphere that women should not be in positions of power and that they naturally lack authority (Roberts et al., 2025). The fact that young boys are acting this out in school settings suggests that online misogyny is something that is manifesting in young boys' behaviours. The theory that boys are adopting misogynistic ideals from online content is explicitly supported through respondents' responses to the questions regarding online influences on boys' behaviour. Two respondents directly quote boys' derogatory language against women (specifically, 'slut' and 'slag') used in the Manosphere (Lilly, 2016). Also, when asked about behaviours that have been influenced by online content, several responded with their observations:

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'Boys rate girls' appearance on a scale of 1-10, copying language from TikTok and YouTube content creators who review women, calling them "mid".' (R33)

'I have noticed an increase in young boys talking about physical appearances. Both when talking about girls and when talking about themselves. This stems from misogynistic content creators that put an emphasis on looks.' (R42)

From these experiences, it is clear that young boys in primary schools are showing signs of misogyny that echo the ideas that are seen in the Manosphere.

3.3.3. Male Victimhood and Anti-Feminism

The final theme that was seen within female teachers' survey responses was that of young boys showing signs of victimhood. This, again, is an underlying belief across all Manosphere communities. The idea that men are the true victims of society is also largely linked to the anti-feminist sentiment. The men of the Manosphere blame the feminist "conspiracy" for men's issues in society, stating that 'our recent societal focus on equality… [is] a criticism of all men' (Bates, 2020, n.p.). The answers provided by teachers who filled out the survey show significant signs of boys feeling victimised in primary schools by implying that girls are treated better because of their gender:

'I had a male [student] once say that I was only telling him off because he was a boy and that I only told boys off.' (R11)

'I've noticed a sense of boys thinking that girls have it easier than them. I've overheard things like "if I was a girl, I wouldn't be in trouble" etc.' (R30)

'I have overheard conversations between boys mentioning how they believe that girls have it easier than them and that they get targeted just because they are boys. I believe that this is something that has been adopted [from] online content.' (R28)

'When a girl won a class competition, a boy muttered, "She probably cheated or got help from the teacher." I believe that this attitude comes from misogyny spread online.' (R40)

Respondents also reported more explicit language pertaining to antifeminist discourse within the Manosphere. This mainly includes feelings of there being a masculinity "crisis" as masculinity is coming under threat from feminizing forces in society (Lilly, 2016; Bates, 2020; Ging & Siapera, 2019). This idea is described by Thomas-Parr & Gilroy-Ware (2025) as 'imaginary victimhood' (2025, p.233), which they speak of in relation to Andrew Tate's discourse. Examples of this idea being echoed by young male students include:

'Mentioning that masculinity is under threat.' (R3)

'The sense of men being let down by society and women having power over men.' (R30)

'I think the fact that boys are feeling victimised, as if the girls are treated better than them, comes from online trends. I overheard a group of boys talking about misandry which struck me at the time.' (R36)

The term 'misandry', used by this respondent, is directly linked to language used in the Manosphere (Bates, 2020; Lilly, 2016; Marwick & Caplan, 2018). Marwick & Caplan (2018) comment that the term was, until recently, almost *exclusively* used within the Manosphere (2018, p.553), proving its direct link to online misogynistic content. They explain that it is used 'to denigrate those seeking to overcome structural sexism by denying its existence' (2018, p.554). Another antifeminist term that originates from the Manosphere is 'feminazi' (Ging, 2017; Bates, 2020), which one respondent (R37) reported had been used by a student of hers, too. This term is mainly used to vilify feminists by implying that they are fascists (Aiston, 2024, p.705). This, again, provides compelling evidence to suggest that young, primary school-aged, boys are adopting misogynistic attitudes from online content, and this is having effects on their behaviours offline as observed by their teachers.

CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have provided evidence to suggest that the dissemination online misogyny is affecting primary school-aged boys' attitudes and behaviours in schools. Through the use of thematic analysis of 45 survey responses from female UK primary school teachers asking questions about misogyny that they have witnessed or experienced from their students and the perceived effects of online content that has led to this, three core ideals from the Manosphere were identified as being echoed by pupils' behaviours in schools: the idea of male superiority; the devaluating of women and girls; and the attitude of male victimhood.

My findings raise significant concerns about the extent to which the Manosphere is successfully reaching young boys and how the misogynistic philosophy that it espouses is being internalised and acted out by them in the offline world. This is having substantial negative effects on society, especially on young girls and women. It is particularly important to catch these effects at a young age as this is a key developmental period, hence the focus of my research being on primary schools. Ging & Siapera (2019) accurately state that 'the current moment is a moment of crisis, whose outcomes are as yet undetermined' (2019, p.11) which is why the issue of misogyny online should be at the forefront of future research.

Additionally, literature theorising the misogyny espoused by the Manosphere frequently mentions the strong links that it has to white supremacy (Marwick & Caplan, 2018; Bates, 2020; Farrell et al., 2019; Lilly, 2016; Ging, 2017; Banet-Weiser & Miltner, 2015). This is an angle that is not explored in this dissertation. This suggests that further research should be conducted using a more intersectional approach to how the effect of the dissemination of misogyny online are manifesting in young boys in their behaviours offline, and the nonlinearity of these effects on women from different races and ethnicities.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet and Survey Questions
The following appendix includes the full list of survey questions distributed to respondents.

Participant Information
I would like to invite you to take part in my research project. Before you decide whether you would like to participate, please read the following information to understand why I am conducting this research and what is being asked of you if you do decide to participate. Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have.

This project aims to find out how widespread the issue of anti-feminism is amongst children in the UK, stemming from the rise in misogynistic discourse online. I am undertaking this project as this issue has not been looked into enough and the consequences of rising anti-feminism, if not tackled, will be detrimental to society in future years.

I am examining how the effects of the dissemination of misogyny online has manifested in primary schools in the UK by looking at the experiences of women in teaching as part of my undergraduate dissertation. I am studying Economics and Politics (BSc) at the University of Bristol.

All female primary school teachers are encouraged to participate in this questionnaire.

Participation in this project is completely voluntary. If after reading all of this information, and asking any additional questions you may have, you agree to take part, I will then ask you to consent to your participation. You are free to withdraw at any time, without providing a reason.

This data will be used in a project due at the end of April 2025. This means the cut-off date for withdrawal of your data is 21.04.2025.

By taking part in this project you agree to complete a short questionnaire that should take about 10-20 minutes. The questionnaire is made up of questions regarding your experiences as a teacher. Some questions you may find uncomfortable to answer due to your personal experiences. You are under no obligation to answer questions you do not want to and you can exit the questionnaire at any time.

Participating in these studies is crucial to the advancement of knowledge and understanding of social phenomena. It is of vital importance to wider society to understand how harmful anti-feminist discourse online is reaching young children. Research such as this can help us reach conclusions of what can be done to prevent the spread of misogyny further and tackle the beliefs already present, protecting girls' and women's futures.

Your answers will be collected and stored in a database where no personal information, such as your name, will be kept. Your data will be demonstrated under a unique personal ID number, making your answers fully confidential. No one but I will have access to your answers as it will be stored securely on my University of Bristol file store.

This research is organised by The School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies (SPAIS) at the University of Bristol. My supervisor, Professor Jutta Weldes, who is part of the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies at the University of Bristol has reviewed the study, as well as the SPAIS Ethics Committee at the University of Bristol.

For any questions, please contact me at:
[My University of Bristol email]

If you have any concerns related to my participation in this study, please contact the Research Governance Team: research-governance@bristol.ac.uk

I sincerely thank you in advance for you time and efforts,
[My name]

Consent Details
Please take care in reading this section.

Do you confirm that you:
Identify as a woman?
Work as a teacher in a UK primary school?

Have you:
Been given information explaining about the study?
Had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?
Received satisfactory answers to all questions you asked?
Received enough information about the study for you to make a decision about your participation?

Do you understand that:
You are free to withdraw at any time from the study and free to withdraw your data prior to the final publication up until the point of anonymisation on 21.04.2025?
You do not need to give a reason for withdrawing?

Do you understand:
The nature and purpose of the procedures involved in this study, and have these been communicated to you?
And acknowledge that the investigation is designed to promote scientific knowledge and that the University of Bristol will use the data you provide for no purpose other than research?

That the data you provide will be kept confidential, and that on completion of the study your data will be anonymised by removing all links between your name or other identifying information and your study data, and that this will be done by 21.04.2025, and before any presentation or publication of your data?

Do you agree to the University of Bristol keeping and processing the data you have provided during the course of this study, and understand that these data will be used only for the purpose set out in the information given to you, and your consent is conditional upon the University complying with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act / General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?

Do you answer yes or no to the above questions? (Yes/No)
Do you fully and freely consent to your participation in this study? (Yes/No)

Survey Questions:
Demographics and Context
1. **What area of the UK is the school you teach at in? (**Northwest England/Northeast England/Westmidlands England/Eastmidlands England/Southwest England/Southeast England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales/Online School)
2. **Do you work in an urban area (city or town) or a rural area?** (Urban area/Rural area/Online school)
3. **What type of school do you work in?** (All-girls school/All-boys school/Co-educational school)
4. **What is your age range?** (18-25/26-35/36-45/46-55/56-65/65+)
5. **How many years have you been teaching?**
Perceptions of Misogyny Among Students
6. **Have you observed any behaviour in students that you would describe as gender-biased or misogynistic?** (Yes/No)
7. **If yes, please elaborate on your observations here.** (Open-ended)
8. **Have any students made comments about gender roles that you found concerning?** (Yes/No)
9. **If yes, please elaborate here.** (Open-ended)
10. **Have you noticed students using gender-based insults (e.g., "girls can't do that" or "boys are better at this" etc.)?** (Yes/No)
11. **If yes, please elaborate on the kind of language used.** (Open-ended)
12. **Have girls in your class reported feeling excluded or belittled by male classmates?** (Yes/No/n/a)
13. **Have you, as a teacher, ever experiences misogynistic behaviour directed at you by your students?** (Yes/No)
14. **If yes, please elaborate on your experience(s).** (Open-ended)
15. **Have you noticed a change in boys' behaviour/attitudes towards girls compared to previous years?** (Yes/No)
16. **If yes, how would you describe this change? (On a scale of 1 (very positive) to 5 (very negative), 3 being neither positive nor negative)** (1/2/3/4/5)
Influence of Online Content

17. **Have you heard students discuss online content, influencers, or social media personalities that promote misogynistic views (e.g., Andrew Tate, Ben Shapiro, Nick Fuentes, Sneako, Pearl Davis, Adin Ross, RooshV etc.)** (Yes/No)
18. **If yes, what names in particular are most common?** (Open-ended)
19. **Have you heard students use language that pertains to misogynistic online content (i.e., the Manosphere)? (e.g., alpha/beta male, blue-pill/red-pill, gimps, simps, soy boys, manginas etc.)** (Yes/No)
20. **If yes, please elaborate on the kind of language used.** (Open-ended)
21. **Have you observed behaviours that you feel might have been influences by online trends related to gender stereotypes (i.e., have you witnessed misogynistic behaviour that has been adopted from online content?)** (Yes/No)
22. **If yes, please elaborate here.** (Open-ended)
23. **Is there anything that you feel is relevant to this topic that you have not been able to mention in the above questions that you would like to add?** (Open-ended)