Podcasting Misogyny: A Narrative Discourse Analysis of Four Popular 'Manfluencer' Podcasts on YouTube

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Abstract

Podcasting has become increasingly popular over the last twenty years. According to recent statistics, about 70 million people in the United States and 21.1 million people in the United Kingdom are podcast listeners (Statista, 2024). Unsurprisingly, therefore, this format has also gained significant popularity in the manosphere ecosystem, an online community consisting of individuals or groups who hold anti-feminist, misogynist, and male supremacist views (Ging, 2019). Within this community, men (and a small number of women) promote rigid standards of hypermasculinity, frequently disguised as financial advice, self-help tips and guidance on mental wellbeing (Baker et al., 2024). This study uses narrative discourse analysis to examine three podcast videos from four of the most popular male-oriented manosphere channels on YouTube: CeoCast, Fresh & Fit, The Ahmed Mahmood Show, and Whatever Podcast. These podcasts, which often feature discussions on financial success and physical and emotional empowerment, provide rich material for analysis, offering a deeper understanding of the narrative construction of masculinities in the manosphere. This study explores, in particular, how constructions of masculinity in manosphere podcasts operate as part of a broader neoliberal ideology, characterised by individualism, self-reliance, and market-driven solutions. Drawing on recent work by Garlick (2021), Van Valkenburgh (2021) and Bujalka et al. (2022), I conclude that the increasing marketisation of male-supremacism-as-entertainment has potentially far greater reach and impact than more conventional forms of (gender) political rhetoric, and discuss possible ways to mitigate against its influence among male youth, in particular.

Keywords: manosphere, masculinity, narrative discourse analysis, neoliberalism, podcast