

Dear Editors and Reviewers,

Thank you for the opportunity to revise our manuscript – we addressed all comments below and indicate where these changes appear in the manuscript.

We believe the reviewers' recommendations and requests have significantly strengthened the manuscript. A sincere thank you to them and you for your substantive engagement with the theoretical and empirical contributions of our work.

Sincerely

The authors

Reviewers' comments	Authors' response
REVIEWER 2	
The paper is mostly clear. While not original by any means, it demonstrates the applicability of a rather generic concept to a particular domain/population.	We believe that the paper is original in applying resentment to explaining transmutations that do not morally elevate the position of the subject, unlike in paradigmatic cases of Nietzschean and Schelerian resentment. Instead of moral superiority, incels seem to achieve a transformation from ignorance to epistemic superiority that elevates their status in relation to others who are taken to be ignorant. This is a similar transformation that can be observed among believers of conspiracy theories that have only recently been studied from the perspective of resentment. In this way, our study bridges empirical studies that have not yet discovered resentment. To highlight the originality of this work, we have added the following sentence to lines 321 onwards : "This <i>epistemic</i> superiority is significantly different from <i>moral</i> superiority, emphasized by Nietzsche and Scheler in their accounts of <i>resentment</i>, which shows that Incels can teach us something new about this phenomenon."

Its innovative aspects are not so clear. I have no idea what sets the focus on 'psychological processes' apart from approaches that look at 'discrete emotional experiences' (p2).	To elaborate further on the innovative aspects of our work we have clarified this passage in line 66 onwards to read: In existing literature, however, moral emotionality is often viewed through the lens of discrete emotional experiences or as interconnected emotions within families, triggered by perceived injustices or transgressions (Haidt, 2003; Shweder and Haidt, 2000). However, our approach expands upon these studies by delving into the intricate role of emotional mechanisms, which function as psychological processes fundamental to how individuals and groups navigate tensions and conflicts. Emotional mechanisms serve as processes that not only transform initial emotions but also shape individuals' perceptions of themselves and the world around them (Elster, 1999; Salice & Salmela, 2022). We also added Graph 1 to show how discrete emotional experiences are accounted for within the <i>ressentiment</i> framework.
Moreover there is something weirdly tautological about simultaneously 'uncovering' resentment and relying on it as analytical concept for 'understanding' (p3). If resentment has already been established as global sentiment of neoliberalism (p13, this could of course also be contested, but the authors have no such intentions), then why do we need case studies to prove that it applies to incels?	We thank the reviewer for the opportunity to clarify our view. Some authors have argued that <i>ressentiment</i> is a global sentiment of neoliberalism, but this does not suffice to establish their claim. Therefore, it makes sense to conduct case studies to test the plausibility of this philosophical claim among groups that seem to manifest resentment. We also highlight resentment as an analytic concept that allows us to explain the alarming rise of resentful victimhood culture in contemporary neoliberal societies. We have revised the text in lines 413 onwards as follows:

	Some authors have argued that the failings of a utopian neoliberal society, exacerbated by envy towards those considered to be successful, has created a globalized sentiment of resentment (Kay, 2021; Mishra, 2017), and our study provides support to this claim, adding to the burgeoning literature on the role of resentment in the emergence and reinforcement of a culture of victimhood that erodes liberal democracies both externally and from within (Campbell & Manning, 2018; Illouz, 2023; Sharafutdinova, 2020). Resentment offers the analytical framework to understand why incels engage in resentful victimhood morality in response to economic insecurities and status anxiety experienced in contemporary neoliberal societies that place responsibility for success and failure on the individual, whatever the conditions (Sandel, 2020). It explains how Incels, unable to dissolve self-targeting negative emotions, transmute them into anti-social orientations and violent actions towards others and themselves.
The definition of resentment on p4 is extremely superficial. For example, do the values of incels really change? If Scheler's sour grapes diagnosis applies here, the change only covers up that values precisely do not change!	We have clarified in the text that the value of the coveted object of Incels (women) changes from seeing them as desirable persons to seeing them as dehumanised, despised commodities. In the data we do not observe the process of change, but we observe the outcome of change (women from good to bad – which is the value change), and the value of the self from inferior and worthless to all knowing, and therefore superior even if still worthless. We have added the following clarification to Line 181 where we discuss identity and value change in resentment: "...women, re-evaluated from desirable partners into dehumanised and despised commodities...". In the conclusion we have added that while our data does not provide direct insight into

	the process of transformation, it does offer a glimpse into its outcomes. Specifically, we observe a shift in perceptions from a portrayal of women transitioning from a state perceived as "good" to one deemed "bad," representing a significant change in values. Additionally, the data reflects a transformation in self-perception, where individuals transition from feeling inferior and devoid of worth to adopting a sense of omniscience, thereby positioning themselves as superior despite retaining a sense of personal worthlessness. This is now discussed in lines 472 onwards.
It is also unclear how an anger differs from a 'moral emotion' such as resentment, and why the latter is more self-deluding or self-indulgent than the former.	We have now clarified the differences between resentment and ressentiment and reference related work. We have also added Footnote 4 in lines 211 onwards about this issue. While resentment as moral anger can emerge on its own or through ressentiment, it is important to observe differences in the intentional targets and action tendencies between these two types of resentment. The first type of resentment is moral anger at injustices and wrongs that motivates individual or collective action seeking to correct or retribute the relevant injustice or wrongdoing. This high action readiness associates the first type of resentment with anger-proper. The second type of resentment resulting from ressentiment is more complex as it is generated from repressed shame, envy, or humiliation, which are intolerable for the self. Therefore, resentment mediated by ressentiment has an indeterminate and “blurred” affective focus on generic “enemies” of the self (cf. Szanto, 2018) that allows its targeting to various scapegoats in political rhetoric (Salmela & von Scheve, 2017). For more detailed accounts on the differences

	between unmediated resentment and ressentiment-mediated resentment, see Capelos et al. (2022), and Salmela & Szanto (forthcoming).
However, my main concern with this paper is that, while it uses a concept with some philosophical connotations (Nietzsche, Scheler), it merely empirically applies this and takes no issue with all the various ways in which the uses of this concept have been problematized (as ideologeme (Jameson), as unworthy of investigation (Nietzsche), depoliticizing (Amery). It takes no case studies to immediately see that a certain mainstream understanding of ressentiment applies to the incel community. Thus empirical verification may be relevant to certain forms of social science, but it has no philosophical value. In the 'Discussion' the authors propose to expand their approach to 'femcels' or racialized contexts, but the empirical diversification of its applicability changes nothing in the concept. Instead, from a contribution to a philosophy journal one might expect a critical reflection on the question whether a catch-all diagnosis such as ressentiment is specific enough.	We have now clarified that the philosophical ramifications of our project lie elsewhere than in criticizing ressentiment, which we believe to be underdeveloped as an analytic concept in social sciences, and its development is the first theoretical aim of this paper. The second, more directly philosophical aim is to apply ressentiment to explaining normatively problematic phenomena such as the rise of resentful victimhood cultures, such as Incels with their misogynistic devaluation of women, in contemporary neoliberal societies. This amounts to a moral argument against these societies and their meritocratic individualism. See text in lines 77 and also in the Discussion, lines 437 onwards
Finally, I recommend the authors take into account the pragmatics of their diagnosis of ressentiment. What should it achieve/contribute to, beyond understanding what is already understood? It is easy to resent the Manosphere for its culture of ressentiment. What change does this paper make and how?	To highlight the pragmatics of our analysis of ressentiment beyond what we already know we have added a clarification in the conclusion that a nuanced understanding of ressentiment, both on an individual and collective level, steers clear of oversimplification and moral judgments, refraining from labelling emotions as inherently good or bad. Instead, it emphasises the importance of empathy and comprehension. Our analysis also delves into the societal repercussions of neoliberal meritocratic individualism, which places the burden of success and failure solely on the individual across all life domains. The

	misogyny observed among Incels, stemming from internalised aspects of this ideology, reflects a broader societal malaise. Additionally, the patriarchal ideals upheld by Incels, which prescribe women to conform to standards of attractiveness and submission, warrant criticism, as previously noted by Tietjen & Tirkkonen (2023). This response is in lines 456 onwards
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