

Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies May 31, 2024 [Blog](#)

Article summary: Excluded soyboys and spoiled gaming – Masculinity and antifeminism in an Ylilauta gaming culture discussion (Meriläinen, Arjoranta & Lounela, 2023)

Sekalainen

Kai se on tavallaan sellainen vähän tyhmempien ihmisten "kieli", kun työkalut yhtään omaperäisempään tai artikuloitumpaan kommunikointiin puuttuvat niin sitten hoetaan tuollaisia meemiläisyyksiä ikään kuin keskustelun korvikkeena tai epätoivoisena yrityksenä olla hauska.

Ylilauta » Sekalainen » Non-toxic – syrjimätön pelikulttuuri on valtakunnallinen ...

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Pidetään poliittinen ja yhteiskunnallinen keskustelu "Yhteiskunta ja politiikka" -alueella. Kiitos!

screenshot of the beginning of the Sekalainen (miscellaneous) page on Ylilauta from the end of 2020. A

Ylilauta, the Finnish equivalent of *4chan*, is an image board infamous for its characteristically hostile discussions of diverse contemporary topics. Frequented especially by young men, the image board commonly features discussions on gender, often paired with outright misogyny and other discriminating speech. There is a particular, carnevalistic tone to *Ylilauta* discussions, typified by irony, hostility, intentional trolling, and dark humour.

In this article, published in *Sukupuolentutkimus*, the Finnish journal for gender studies, we examined a single discussion thread on an event about making digital gaming more inclusive, organized by a Finnish youth work project. Focusing on issues of gender, we conducted a

thematic analysis on the posts in the thread, and constructed two main themes: *Misogyny and antifeminism* and *Geek masculinity and proper adulthood*. As the theme titles suggest, the discussants actively engaged with questions of gender from distinctly different perspectives.

Our analysis combined with previous research supported the notion that some gaming men experience digital gaming environments and communities as safe environments with a prevailing norm of geek masculinity that sets them apart from the rest of society. These players perceived the increased feminist discussions of equity in both game culture and society more broadly as a threat to these spaces, which tied into a wider anti-feminist sentiment and ongoing culture wars.

Another important strain of discussion in the thread related to negotiations of masculinity and adulthood. Here, traditional views of masculinity and manliness clashed with geek masculine ideals also present on the image board. For example, enjoying gaming was viewed as a sign of masculine confidence: the “traditional” man ridicules gaming because he is afraid to appear childish, and is thus insecure in their masculinity.

Our study showed the diversity of *Ylilauta* discussion, as even a single thread was a rich microcosm of views, perspectives, ideologies, and reasons for participating in the discussion. Despite the popular image of *Ylilauta* posters as, for example, uniformly hateful towards feminism, there were also discussants calling out bigotry – although they were in the minority. Further research is needed to discern how much the negotiations of masculinity are a specific feature of *Ylilauta* or to which extent they occur in game culture discussions in general.

This English summary is based on the following article, originally published in Finnish: Meriläinen, M., Arjoranta, J., & Lounela, E. (2023). Syrjityt soijapojat ja pilattu pelaaminen. Maskuliinisuus ja antifeminismi Ylilaudan pelikulttuurikeskustelussa. *Sukupuolentutkimus* 36 (3-4), 29–42. <https://journal.fi/sukupuolentutkimus/article/view/143216>



Mikko Meriläinen, PhD, is a postdoctoral research fellow at Tampere University's Game Research Lab. He has extensively studied young people's game culture participation, with a focus on the different roles of gaming as part of everyday life. He is currently exploring the intersections of masculinity and game culture.

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Picture Credits: Ida Tokola



PhD Jonne Arjoranta holds a doctoral degree in digital culture from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland and the title of docent from Tampere University. He is specialised in philosophical hermeneutics, game studies and internet cultures and is interested in playful politics, game hermeneutics and geek culture. His dissertation *Real-Time Hermeneutics: Meaning-Making in Ludonarrative Digital Games* deals with the structures of meaning in digital games. He has published, for example, in *Game Studies*, *Games and Culture* and *International Journal of Role-Playing*. He is the editor-in-chief for the *Finnish Yearbook of Game Studies*.

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