

Digesting the Red Pill: Masculinity and Neoliberalism in the Manosphere

Men and Masculinities
2021, Vol. 24(1) 84-103
© The Author(s) 2018
Article reuse guidelines:
sagepub.com/journals-permissions
DOI: 10.1177/1097184X18816118
journals.sagepub.com/home/jmm



Shawn P. Van Valkenburgh¹

Abstract

This article undertakes the first known qualitative study focusing on The Red Pill, an online forum wherein heterosexual men attempt to improve their seduction skills by discussing evolutionary psychology and economic theories. My content analysis of twenty-six documents (130,000 words) designated by the community as central to its purpose and ideology shows that The Red Pill is not just an expression of hegemonic masculinity but also explicitly integrates neoliberal and scientific discourses into its seduction strategies. I theorize that the resulting philosophy superficially resolves a contradiction between hegemonic masculinity's prescriptive emotional walls and an inherent desire for connection by constructing women as exchangeable commodities.

Keywords

hegemonic masculinity, feminism, economy, sexualities, technology, sociology, class, men's rights

The manosphere is a loosely connected group of anti-feminist Internet communities comprised of phenomena as diverse as #gamergate, the alt-right, men's rights activism, and pickup artist forums (Ging 2017; Schmitz & Kazyak 2016). While it is

¹ Department of Sociology, University of California–Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:

Shawn P. Van Valkenburgh, Department of Sociology, University of California–Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106, USA.
Email: shawn@ucsb.edu

associated with “cyberhate” and online harassment (Jane 2018; Marwick and Caplan 2018; Massanari 2017), such virtual violence may be difficult to separate from real-world violence (Dragiewicz et al. 2018; Ging and Siapera 2018). Male pickup artists, for instance, use the manosphere to inform their efforts to manipulate women (O’Neill 2018). The manosphere may even “radicalize” men into committing acts of anti-woman violence (Marwick and Lewis 2017). Indeed, mass shooter Elliot Rodger (2014) wrote that certain manosphere websites “confirmed many of the theories I had about how wicked and degenerate women really are” (p.117–118).

Despite accumulating signs that understanding conservative online spaces is important for understanding masculinist social problems, the manosphere remains understudied within the social sciences.¹ As Schmitz and Kazyak (2016) observe, “[w]hile previous research has examined the men’s rights movement through printed texts, there remains a lack of research analyzing the *online* presence and influence of these groups” (p. 2, original emphasis). This article addresses this empirical gap with an exploratory qualitative study of a significant corner of the manosphere, a subforum of reddit.com known as “The Red Pill” (r/TRP).

r/TRP is a “subreddit” that is explicitly devoted to a “[d]iscussion of sexual strategy in a culture increasingly lacking a positive identity for men.”² In a preliminary study of the manosphere more generally, Ging (2017) identifies a certain “red pill philosophy” which is “the key concept that unites” the various sections of the manosphere (p. 3). Ging observes that this philosophy originated on r/TRP but has since “proliferated” into other sectors of the manosphere, including pickup artist and men’s rights forums. Ging goes so far as to suggest that r/TRP’s underlying philosophy functions to “generate consensus and belonging among the manosphere’s divergent elements” (p. 8).

r/TRP’s growing significance, influence, and potential generalizability are also indicated by the diffusion of “red pill” nomenclature into seemingly unrelated corners of the manosphere (Pearl 2016; Nicholas and Agius 2018; Ames 2017). Appropriately, journalists are becoming aware of r/TRP’s implication in social problems, characterizing it as the “online heart of modern misogyny” (Marche 2016). For instance, *The New York Times* reports that the r/TRP population overlaps with the “incel” community referenced by Toronto van attacker Alek Minassian (Taub 2018).

Thus, it is notable that no academic studies have systematically focused on r/TRP. This article will address this gap with a qualitative textual analysis of r/TRP’s manifesto, known as its “sidebar.” My findings parallel O’Neill’s (2018) recent ethnography of a UK “seduction” community, which shows pickup artists appropriating concepts from evolutionary psychology (EP) to legitimize and justify their seduction strategies—strategies which are also infused with a latent neoliberal logic. These phenomena are amplified in r/TRP, as the connections made among seduction, EP, and economics are made deliberately and explicitly. Indeed, r/TRP defines itself against other online seduction communities by claiming that its seduction strategies are uniquely founded on such “scientific” literatures and theories.

This article will demonstrate r/TRP appropriating EP to justify a denial of emotional yearning. This denial coexists in r/TRP alongside a construction of sexuality according to market logics. This article will conclude by exploring possible explanations for these convergences.

Method

The vast volume of data available online means that researchers must develop novel strategies for discerning which data are most analytically pertinent (Mountford 2018; Hodapp 2017). Partially addressing this methodological frontier, Hine (2008) calls for virtual ethnographers to engage in a “period of cultural familiarisation in order to facilitate a relatively smooth entry into active participation” to the extent that such “lurking” “mirrors the practices of ordinary members of a group” (p. 262). Such lurking could help sociologists determine which online data are most valuable for seeing a community “from the inside” (Charmaz 2014).

Fortunately for sociologists, r/TRP forum moderators (“mods”) are very clear about what an outsider should do if she or he wants to gain such familiarization: located on the right side of the r/TRP homepage, under the subheading, “NEW HERE?” one finds the following instructions: “New here? Read the following threads and the Theory Reading below. Read before participating.” Directly below these instructions lies a list of twenty-six links that redirect to a collection of online documents, a set of reading materials that constitute r/TRP’s “sidebar.” Participant familiarization with this sidebar is supposedly enforced by mods who claim to delete forum posts which demonstrate ignorance of its content. A close reading of the contents of r/TRP’s sidebar would therefore seem to be a necessary first step in conducting qualitative research on the community. As if anticipating sociological inquiry, r/TRP mods use the sidebar to highlight information that they identify as most important for the purposes of acculturation. Thus, it is hard to imagine a clearer road map for a would-be ethnographer who is motivated to initiate an exploratory foray into such an under-examined community. For a preliminary sociological study, then, the sidebar’s contents may defensibly serve as a working representation of r/TRP’s qualitative essence.

This article’s empirical contribution is to undertake the first systematic study of the contents of r/TRP’s sidebar—hereafter referred to simply as “the sidebar”—a collection of online documents (amounting to approximately 130,000 words) written by various authors. Due to a distinctive lack of research on r/TRP, the present study is less concerned with testing any particular hypothesis and is instead concerned with producing inductive and data-driven qualitative analysis. As such, my methodology partially overlaps with that of “grounded theory” (Charmaz 2014). Rather than producing theory by analyzing ethnographic data, however, I undertake a critical textual analysis of online documents in what resembles a “qualitative media analysis” (Rogers 2005). This method also resonates with Henricks’s (2017) “historical

ethnographic content analysis,” which “involves thinking of texts as lasting evidence that offer a window into (re)constructing specific sociohistorical moments” (p. 4).

Included in the sidebar are not only r/TRP’s explicit foundational rules for community participation but also a glossary of commonly used terms and a book-length amalgamation of theories about human nature and Western society. As will be discussed below, the sidebar defines r/TRP as a community that is organized around a set of social and biological theories. Newcomers are required not only to familiarize themselves with forum etiquette but also to gain some understanding of these theories. To fully understand the r/TRP community, one should therefore understand the theories it was designed to discuss and around which the content of virtual interactions is supposed to fluctuate. Although actual participation in the r/TRP community may practically deviate from this ideal, understanding how the community presents and understands itself remains an important starting point for research on the topic.

The content of the sidebar is relatively stable and consistent over time, further suggesting its appropriateness as a placeholder for in-depth interview content. Links are rarely added to or removed from the sidebar, as demonstrated by snapshots of r/TRP’s front page taken sporadically over a period of several years. In the present article, quotes will be drawn from documents and web pages that have been directly linked to the sidebar for a period of at least two years. Anticipating possible deletion of sidebar materials or links, all quoted documents have been archived using the website archive.is. Links to all archived web pages and documents cited in this article are provided below (see Table 1).

Inside the Sidebar: Sidebar as Enlightenment

In its most basic explanatory function, the sidebar reveals that r/TRP borrows its foundational terminology from the Wachowski sisters’ 1999 film *The Matrix* (Wachowski and Wachowski 1999) (I). The film is premised on the development of autonomous machines which parasitically feed on human energy. The “matrix” in question is a virtual reality which convinces human beings that they are living free lives, hiding the cruel truth that most people exist entirely within Gigeresque pods that drain them of their life force. Crucially, it is nevertheless possible for humans to become aware of their own captivity; the illusions of the matrix are not total or all-determining. As Ging (2017) observes, both the main character of *The Matrix* and the r/TRP visitor are “given the choice of taking one of the two pills. Taking the blue pill means switching off and living a life of delusion; taking the red pill means becoming enlightened to life’s ugly truths” (p. 3).

But the logic of *The Matrix* permeates the sidebar well beyond this initial similarity. Notably, both texts insist on recognizing objective truth as a necessary precondition for achieving personal and political freedom: “It’s a difficult pill to swallow, understanding that everything you were taught, everything you were lead to believe is a lie. But once you learn it, internalize it, and start living your new life, it gets better” (II). The truth may hurt, but it will ultimately set you free.

Table 1. Cited Sidebar Documents.

#	Sidebar Hyperlink Text	Title of Corresponding Web Page	Link to Archive
I	All-in-One Red Pill 101	A Comprehensive Guide to The Red Pill	http://archive.is/HXzzD
II	Introduction	Almost a Hundred Subscribers! Welcome newcomers	http://archive.is/cmQQa
III	The Misandry Bubble	The Misandry Bubble	http://archive.is/CVeEk
IV	Sexual Utopia in Power	Sexual Utopia in Power	http://archive.is/6iyIL
V	Red Pill Antibiotic Nuke	Red Pill Antibiotic Nuke, Come and Feed	http://archive.is/I5NII
VI	Scandinavians Cut All Funds to Its Gender Studies Institute	The Documentary That Made Scandinavians Cut All Funds to Its Gender Studies Institute	http://archive.is/rUyyc
VII	Official Rules	Rules for r/TheRedPill	http://archive.is/7LuNz
VIII	Glossary of Terms and Acronyms (2015)	Updated Glossary of Terms and Acronyms	http://archive.is/nxTLB
IX	How to Tease Bitches	HumanSockPuppet's Guide to Teasing Bitches	http://archive.is/tUAai
X	Schedules of Mating	Schedules of Mating	http://archive.is/PtYRp
XI	Shit Tests 101	Newbies Read This—the definitive guide to Shit Tests	http://archive.is/kv7uI
XII	Confessions of a Reformed Incel	Confessions of a Reformed InCel	http://archive.is/ixQIO
XIII	How to Manage Your Bitches	HumanSockPuppet's Guide to Managing Your Bitches	http://archive.is/jKVEC
XIV	Of Love and War	Of Love and War	http://archive.is/wY2gb
XV	Briffault's Law	The Rosetta Stone of Women's Behavior [via "Full Post here" link]	http://archive.is/LP5eO
XVI	Women in Love	Women in Love	http://archive.is/KjRch
XVII	48 Laws of Power Superthread	(48 Days of Power) Full List For Sidebar	http://archive.is/kO0Ay

Note: Each "Sidebar Hyperlink Text" is copied from <https://www.reddit.com/r/theredpill>, a snapshot of which was archived at <http://archive.is/PhFFw>. Because each "Sidebar Hyperlink Text" does not necessarily match the title of its linked web page, this table includes each "Corresponding Web Page Title" in a separate column. Thus, visiting <https://www.reddit.com/r/theredpill> (or <http://archive.is/PhFFw>) shows the quoted hyperlink texts that are displayed in the "Sidebar Hyperlink Text" column of this table. Following a given "Archive Link" reveals the corresponding web page title included here in the "Corresponding Web Pages Titles" column. All included web pages have been linked to the sidebar for at least two years previous to August 30, 2017, and their content has been verified as consistent during this period, except for the content of the "Official Rules" which can't be proven consistent before July 9, 2016, and "How to Tease Bitches" which was created on August 9, 2016.

Both the sidebar and *The Matrix* are also premised on the existence of widespread exploitation: the film suggests humanity's enslavement by the objects of their creation, while the sidebar posits men's exploitation by human women. In parallel,

while the fictional virtual reality of *The Matrix* disguises human exploitation, the sidebar suggests that *feminism* disguises the truth of male exploitation and oppression. According to the sidebar, the operative illusion is not the illusion of human freedom, but the illusion of woman's subjugation, known as "The Myth of Female Oppression": "All of us have been taught how women have supposedly been oppressed throughout human existence . . . In reality, this narrative is entirely fabricated" (III). This "myth" is supposed to enable not an exploitative machine-human relationship, but an exploitative woman-man relationship. While feminism promotes the "illusion" that women are subordinated to men, it also mistakes men's exploitation for women's liberation, hiding the fact that resources are being extracted from men via the state: "we have arrived at a society where 'feminists' feel that they are 'empowered,' 'independent,' and 'confident,' despite being heavily dependent on taxes paid mostly by men, an unconstitutional shadow state that extracts alimony and 'child support' from men" (III).

In the sidebar, however, the most important and salient ugly truth is not macroeconomic exploitation via taxation, but microeconomic and biological exploitation at the individual level. Feminism amounts to a collectively produced illusion which enables women to get what they want out of sexual relationships and reduces men's capacity to attain their own desired sexual outcomes: "**Feminism is a sexual strategy.** It puts women into the best position they can find, to select mates, to determine when they want to switch mates, to locate the best DNA possible, and to garner the most resources they can individually achieve" (II, original emphasis). According to the sidebar, feminism helps women pursue wealthy and attractive male partners in what is considered to be an epiphenomenal expression of their material genetic imperatives. By convincing men of women's oppression, feminism supposedly allows women to more effectively pursue their own genetically determined goals and impulses.

If feminism is a collective female tool for securing desirable mates and economic resources, the sidebar describes r/TRP as man's own corrective antidote. If feminism is a sexual strategy for women, then "The Red Pill is men's sexual strategy" and "an effective strategy against [women's] own sexual strategy" (II). But red pillers must recognize the existence of the feminist matrix before developing the skills to find freedom from its influence. As the sidebar notes, "[c]orrect diagnosis is the first precondition for effective strategy" (IV).

While the heroes of *The Matrix* aim to revolutionize the relatively impermanent relationship between humans and machines, however, the sidebar asserts that r/TRP's primary goal is not to fundamentally change society but to give heterosexual men more power in pursuing individual sexual relationships *within the existing system* (albeit, a system which is initially hidden). Explicitly opposed to postmodern understandings of sex and gender as social constructions in flux, the sidebar assumes that human nature and behavior are essentially unchanging and rooted in biological determinants. Thus, the sidebar suggests that r/TRP is less committed to changing the rules of the game and more concerned with discovering those rules and

discussing them for the purposes of men's personal sexual advantage. As such, the sidebar resonates with economic assumptions of meritocracy (O'Neill 2018).³

If cutting through the illusions of a sexual matrix is a liberatory precondition for finding individual sexual success, the sidebar claims to value *scientific* truth in particular. Indeed, the sidebar construes feminism and gender studies as the polar opposite of r/TRP, precisely on the grounds that the former's positions seem to be shaped by opinion and values, rather than empirical evidence: "their thoughts and ideas are based in idealism rather than directly measurable truth, and thus it seems that **liberalism has become the religion (doing that which obeys a set of ideals) to pragmatism's science (doing that which produces results in practice.)**" (V, original emphasis). This series of dichotomies—the conservative, scientific, pragmatic, objective, and masculine on the one hand; counterposed against the liberal, religious, idealist, subjective, and feminine on the other—permeates the sidebar. The observable world is considered the only valid source of empirical data, the "objective" analysis of which informs the sidebar's conclusions about human nature and society.

As such, the sidebar insists that its philosophy is quasi-positivist. In attempted alliance with the scientific community, the sidebar declares that the "The Red Pill is about pragmatism and truth based on observation" (V). In other words, r/TRP should not discuss values or ideals but should focus on "what works," which is itself determined by the evaluation of real-world observations. As an antidote to the illusions of feminism (and "feminist academia"), the r/TRP community should therefore "discuss precisely and objectively whether or not our beliefs line up with the testable results we can replicate" (II). Thus, one document linked to the sidebar applauds a comedian for critiquing a gender studies institute by using supposedly scientific data: "Comedian completely destroys every claim by the gender studies institute with proof from actual scientists, biologists, psychologists, etc. to the point where the state shuts it down" (VI).

This will to empirical evidence extends to the sidebar's criteria for posting new submissions to r/TRP. New text submissions are supposed to draw from empirical data rather than opinions or nonrigorous epistemologies. Pop culture texts, for instance, "do not present useful examples of typical human behaviour, and thus cannot be learned from" (VII). High-quality posts and comments on the r/TRP forum should therefore omit discussion of such nonscientific data, and failure to comply can presumably result in a post's removal.

Despite placing such value on empirical evidence, the sidebar distinguishes r/TRP from other "sexual strategy" subreddits—such as r/seduction—by its insistence that participants familiarize themselves with a basic set of social and biological *theories*:

A lot of you probably came here from r/seduction and are probably wondering why we'd need a new subreddit if one dedicated to game already exists. The reason is simple: Game is a facet of The Red Pill's sexual strategy. Determining good game is

impossible to do so without first understanding the context given by The Red Pill's framework. (II)

This "framework" amounts to a set of social and biological theories that rely on deductive reasoning as much as empirical data. In fact, the capacity for deductive reasoning supposedly sets r/TRP participants apart from female "snowflakes": "Young women cannot be expected to work out a personal system of sexual ethics in the manner of Descartes reconstructing the universe in his own mind" (IV). Women are often characterized by their tendency to rationalize their feelings and their inability to think rationally. Hence, the woman is defined as a "hamster" (or "rationalization hamster"), a term which is "[u]sed to describe the way that women use rationalization to resolve mental conflict and avoid cognitive dissonance. The core mechanism that allows women to say one thing and do a different thing" (X).

The sidebar therefore seeks resonance with a tradition of Western Enlightenment scientific thought, wherein deceiving everyday appearances are dispelled via rational analysis of empirical data as well critical reasoning. Thus, taken as a case study, the sidebar provokes questions about the dangers of misusing scientific discourses for problematic purposes. But far from drawing from positivist sciences generally, the sidebar privileges the fields of EP and neoclassical economics in particular. The relationship between the sidebar and EP will now be explored.

Sidebar Sociobiology

In its emphasis on deductive rationality and theory, as well as the kinds of evidence it values, the sidebar seeks a connection with EP. The sidebar explicitly designates the centrality of EP in no uncertain terms: "A large portion of Red Pill discussion revolves around evolutionary psychology. Understanding the facets of this psychology are key to developing a good sexual strategy" (II). According to the sidebar, learning evolutionary psychological axioms is the first step toward developing effective seduction skills. The sidebar refers to EP to validate its ontology with scientific authority. As such, fully understanding the sidebar requires some discussion of EP. (EP is marginalized within the social sciences and earns many deserved critiques [O'Neill 2015]. What follows should therefore not be read as endorsement of EP nor assumption of its scientific validity.)

The underlying premise of both EP and the sidebar is the axiom that human behavior and psychology have evolved to maximize gene reproduction. Building on this assumption, EP (controversially) deduces that men and women have divergent reproductive interests and therefore evolve essentially divergent personalities. EP literature sometimes goes so far as to treat males and females as different "species" (Trivers 1972). When men and women pursue their preferences for certain kinds of mates, EP insists, they are unknowingly and indirectly doing the bidding of their male and female genes. Building on this essentialism, EP posits the kinds of behaviors one can expect to see in men and women and sets out to test these

hypotheses through experiments and observation of human mating practices. Lacking an abundance of empirical evidence, however, EP often relies on retroactive evolutionary deduction in its attempts to provide “ultimate” (Symons 1979) explanations for sexual differences in behavior.

For the purposes of the sidebar, a major upshot of EP discourse is the implication that women hold a biological imperative to have sex with a certain type of man and to marry man with a different set of traits. In particular, women are presumably driven to marry men who are emotionally and economically supportive and who will help them raise their children. At the same time, women are thought to have a contradictory biological drive to sleep with men who will provide them with “good genes” but who won’t necessarily help support offspring. EP scholar David Buss (1994) uses this reasoning to explain why women might cheat on their spouses: “an optimal female mating strategy . . . would be to secure reliable investments from her husband and superior genes from an affair partner” (p. 236).

A comparison between Buss’s work and the sidebar demonstrates that the latter does not simply provide an *ex nihilo* rationalization for mistreating women but presents a somewhat faithful interpretation of this “scientific” EP discourse. In the sidebar, Buss’s theory of adultery becomes the “Alpha Fucks/Beta Bucks” (AF/BB) principle (VIII), which one sidebar author translates as follows: “We all know that bitches have a dualistic mating strategy: they want the Jerkboy Alpha Sperm Donor to squirt a strong baby inside them, and they want a Dependable Beta Money Dispenser to foot the bill for their IKEA nesting instincts” (IX).⁴ This particular author confidently assumes that “[w]e all know” of AF/BB’s veracity, suggesting its saturation within the r/TRP community. But with such shocking language, it is easy to miss that AF/BB is actually a perceptive interpretation of Buss’s own contested EP logic; it is a coarsely worded reflection of the common EP position that women have an evolutionary imperative to sleep with “alphas” who will provide them with good genes, while marrying and exploiting cuckolded “betas” who will provide their children with emotional and economic support. The sidebar provides concise and readable exegeses on the subject:

Provisioning and security potential are fantastic motivators for pairing with a Good Dad, but the same characteristics that make him such are generally a disadvantage when compared with the man who better exemplifies genetic, physical attraction and the risk taking qualities that would imbue her child with a better capacity to adapt to its environment (i.e., stronger, faster, more attractive than others to ensure the passing of her own genetic material to future generations). This is the Jerk vs. Nice Guy paradox writ large on an evolutionary scale. (X)

While it may be tempting to read this as a superficial misrepresentation of EP, in fact, it succinctly summarizes certain core premises of EP literature. Indeed, some EP academics recognize that r/TRP’s underlying pickup artist program is a more-or-less accurate representation and practical implementation of their work, even

referring to it as an “emerging science of human courtship” (Oesch and Miklousic 2012; Roberts, van Vugt, and Dunbar 2012). Thus, the extent to which the sidebar faithfully incorporates contemporary EP literature into its philosophy is the extent to which a branch of academia is implicated in r/TRP’s construction, thereby calling for sustained critical investigation of these supposedly value-neutral scientific discourses (O’Neill 2018).

Red Pill Praxis

But while the sidebar owes much of its philosophy to EP, it is not entirely reducible to EP. The sidebar’s addition to EP is the premise that men can become attractive to women by mimicking alpha behavior and appearance. Thus, the sidebar promotes a kind of *applied* EP. Becoming sexually attractive to women means subconsciously convincing them that you have “good genes.” One means for doing so is learning seduction skills or “game.” The sidebar writes this of game:

The traits that make a man attractive to women are learnable skills, that improve with practice. Once a man learns these skills, he is indistinguishable from a man who had natural talents in this area. Whether a man then chooses to use these skills to secure one solid relationship or multiple brief ones, is entirely up to him. (III)

An important facet to developing game is learning to distinguish between genuine and superficial forms of rejection. For example, the sidebar asserts that women challenge would-be seducers with “rapport breaks,” defined as expressions of displeasure, refusal, or negativity that may *seem* like discouraging signs, but are really just “faux indicator[s] of disinterest” (XI). The sidebar uses EP discourse to suggest that a woman will present such indicators of disinterest not because she is truly uninterested in being seduced by a particular man but because she is testing him for persistence—an indicator of good genes. Thus, in order to communicate his own “genetic fitness,” the man should ignore such protestations:

This is where the evolutionary theory comes into play: you’re demonstrating her faux negativity doesn’t phase you and that you’re an emotionally developed person who isn’t going to melt down at the first sign of trouble. Ergo you’ll be able to protect her when threats to her safety emerge. (XI)

The degree to which such an indicator of rejection—a woman saying “I don’t date short guys,” for instance—can be interpreted as merely a rapport break is the degree to which “no” comes to mean “yes”; a woman will attempt to deter a man *precisely because she is interested in him*. Thus, the rapport break shares some logic with the sidebar’s even more problematic concept of “last minute resistance,” which posits that a woman will explicitly—but disingenuously—decline sexual consent, not because she doesn’t actually want to have sex but merely because she wants to “save face” beforehand in order to avoid being “perceived as a slut by herself or

her peers” (VIII). (For a more thorough discussion of “last minute resistance” and its dangerous implications, see O’Neill 2018.)

If game is an important component of communicating genetic fitness to women, another is improving one’s appearance. For instance, women are assumed to find muscles attractive (V). This is easily understandable within EP’s framework of ultimate explanation: one must not only mimic the confidence and behavior of alphas but the physical *appearance* of alphas. Appropriately, much of the sidebar is devoted to discussing the importance of physical fitness and weight lifting (I). Thus, far from being merely an exercise in theory, the sidebar also presents a theory of exercise.

Indeed, sidebar readers are encouraged to not only learn the basic theories and premises of EP but to put them into practice. Consider the sidebar’s “Guide to Managing Your Bitches”: “This guide will begin with some basic **theory**, describing why men are the arbitrators of relationships. It will then establish some common **definitions** and lay the groundwork for the **strategy** section afterwards” (XIII, original emphasis). Here, once again, the “theory” in question is the EP-inspired “AF/BB” principle. For this guide’s author, discussing the AF/BB principle naturally leads to a discussion of “[r]elationship strategies for maximizing happiness and minimizing drama” and advice on “[h]ow to turn those strategies into lasting positive lifestyle changes” (XIII). Ultimately, understanding the principles of EP is a necessary but insufficient precondition for developing game. Fully developing game amounts to internalizing the principles of EP, which is ultimately an outcome of *rehearsal*: “now you know the lowdown of how to tease bitches. With enough practice, you’ll mix these principles into your own persona to create a surefire strategy for priming new lays” (IX). Such practice, in turn, should ultimately lead to full *internalization* of EP: “learn it, internalize it, and start living your new life” (II).

According to McCaughey (2008), EP is now becoming attractive to a popular male audience, not because of any scientific rigor but because it legitimizes the type of behavior and worldview that are encouraged in communities like r/TRP. EP ideas gain cultural currency “not because they are so compelling scientifically” (McCaughy 2008, 112) (indeed, the discipline is plagued with well-documented weaknesses; see O’Neill [2015] for a fuller critique and sociological analysis of EP) but because they validate a particular embodied masculinity with universal scientific authority. Specifically, EP provides a scientific rationalization for hegemonic masculinity’s “narrow focus on genital sexuality, high-intensity but low-emotion sex, sexual compulsiveness, an unacknowledged emotional dependence, and even overt rage and violence” (McCaughy 2008, 134). Furthermore, EP encourages men to “be sucked into a view of women as attractive commodities, and then rationalize their view by referring to their evolved nature” (McCaughy 2008, 72). As I will now demonstrate, the sidebar’s appropriation of EP is associated with precisely these outcomes.

Vulnerability Denied

While r/TRP has a deserved reputation for emotional inexpressiveness (Marche 2016) that is consistent with common models of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2012; Kimmel 2013), the sidebar also locates in men a deep desire for subjective human connection:

[Men] want to relax. We want to be open and honest. We want to have a safe haven in which struggle has no place, where we gain strength and rest instead of having it pulled from us. We want to stop being on guard all the time, and have a chance to simply be with someone who can understand our basic humanity without begrudging it. To stop fighting, to stop playing the game, just for a while. We want to, so badly. (XIV)

This would seem to be an admission that men harbor a genuine, fundamental yearning for emotional safety and intimacy with women—a “safe haven.” But the sidebar understands this yearning not as an expression of a basic psychological human need that is common to men and women alike—as recognized in social psychology literature (Rudman and Glick 2010)—but as a tenacious feminist *illusion* that should be ignored and eventually dispelled. While admitting the temptation to seek partners with personality qualities such as “[l]oyalty, honor, gratitude, and duty” (XV), the sidebar nevertheless characterizes this motivation as the product of a “Disneyesque” illusion imposed onto men through their “earliest feminized conditioning” (XVI). Man’s seemingly powerful desire for subjective and emotional sexual connection, then, is actually just a reflection of the feminist “matrix” which deludes men into consenting to exploitative relationships: “[men] aren’t born with these values; they are drummed into us from the cradle on by society/culture, our families, and most definitely by the women in our lives (sorry, but that includes you too, Mom)” (XVI). According to the sidebar, the power of a deeply felt need for intimacy demonstrates only the degree to which women have succeeded in deluding and manipulating men for their own reproductive and economic purposes. Thus, the sidebar’s core prescription is to “matur[e] *beyond* that want for an idealized unconditional love” (XIV); to see the world as it “really is” as a precondition for developing effective sexual strategy.

The sidebar embraces this cynical hero’s journey partly out of perceived emotional necessity: men must ignore their needs for intersubjective connection because these needs will never be met by inherently Machiavellian women. Although men may yearn to “relax, trust and be vulnerable, upfront, rational and open,” they will inevitably encounter a permanent obstacle: “the great abyss is still the lack of an ability for women to love Men as Men would like them to” (XVI). In this stunning projection, it is not men who are inclined to be emotionally stunted, but women. Men are said to adopt stoicism only as a *response* to this unavoidable female nature. In a twist on some conventional gender stereotypes, then, the sidebar tells us that the “unconditional male concept of love is rebuked by women’s, by-necessity, fluid and

utilitarian concept of love” (XIV). The sidebar further counterposes the man’s “idealizations of unconditional love for the sake of love” against the “tactical, opportunistic concept of female love” (XIV).⁵

The sidebar explains this female psychology, too, using EP rhetoric: supposedly, women’s ruthlessly utilitarian mind-set helps them reproduce. The sidebar appropriates Darwinian concepts to conclude that women “would have” evolved psychological mechanisms to trick men into being kind and generous partners, as these male qualities “would have” helped women’s offspring survive on a mythological African savannah. Referring to these EP ideas, the sidebar encourages readers to conclude that “all women are like that” (tellingly abbreviated in r/TRP’s “glossary” as “AWALT” [VIII]) and discourages men from trusting their own altruistic impulses. When a Machiavellianism is projected onto women’s intentions, this justifies men’s adoption of a similarly Machiavellian mind-set. Fittingly, a major post on the sidebar is reserved for a discussion of a book entitled *48 Laws of Power*, an explicitly Machiavellian approach to succeeding in business and personal relationships (XVII). Armed with a faith in EP’s deductive logic, the r/TRP hero’s journey means persistently ignoring one’s emotions and desires, relying instead on EP as a guide to social truth.

This (non)emotional component of hegemonic masculinity is also embraced as a means to a particular end, since the rejection of emotional sensitivity is thought to be a fundamental precondition for developing effective sexual strategy. In the sidebar, women are understood to be *attracted* to stoicism and emotional inexpressiveness. A man’s success with women is said to depend on his ability to “hold frame,” or to not betray any emotional vulnerability:

Women rely on men to be emotionally stoic, we often call this “holding frame.” You have to be mentally strong so that she can lean on you, she will find you attractive for being able to handle problems that she can’t . . . Men must be strong and ignore their inner emotional distress so that women can indulge in their emotions and ride them out to their natural conclusion. (V)

Here, women are attracted to “strength,” where strength is equated with the ability to ignore and suppress one’s emotions. This construction of female psychology, too, is retroactively deduced from EP logic: women who partnered with stoic men in evolutionarily active communities “would have” successfully reproduce their genes, ultimately provoking the evolutionary development of women who are naturally attracted to such men.

Crucially, “holding frame” means not only ignoring one’s own emotions but also ignoring the emotions of one’s potential sexual partner. Along these lines, “teasing” can be an effective strategy for conveying an alpha personality. But to tease effectively, one must not be dissuaded by women’s unenthusiastic reactions:

When you've spent your entire life treating bitches like Fabergé eggs, teasing and negging them may make you feel uncomfortable. You may feel a twinging instinct to smooth off your sick burn with a "just kidding" or some other man-boobed apology. Do not fucking do this . . . Don't ruin your power play by checking if she's okay. (IX)

This logic is unequivocal: one's sexual success hinges on faith in the sidebar's deduced principles of game rather than any phenomenological experience of a potential partner's emotional displays. Indeed, in order to be victorious on the sexual battlefield, one must impose an emotional boot camp: "you must be willing to be firm with her, give her orders, and tell her 'no,' even against a flood of her tears" (XIII). The supposed mechanism for sleeping with women is to ignore intrinsic and extrinsic emotional cues: ignore one's own inclinations to altruism, sympathy, and generosity and ignore women's protestations and signs of discomfort (O'Neill 2018).

But while the sidebar denies a deep need for connection, these suppressed erotic energies do not disappear entirely; they reemerge elsewhere, displaced onto women who are conveniently commodified under hegemonic *economic* ideologies.

Seduction and Economics: A Happy Marriage or Strange Bedfellows?

Considering extant literature on the manosphere (Ging 2017), it is perhaps unsurprising that the sidebar would favor EP as its patron discipline. But the sidebar also holds neoclassical economics and rational actor theory in high regard. Indeed, the sidebar can also be characterized by its explicit application of a neoliberal economic ideology to sexual relationships (O'Neill 2018; Rogers 2005). Implying some familiarity with neoclassical economics, the sidebar openly values academic works that apply economic principles to sexual relations:

Gary Becker was the first to describe human behavior in terms of economics Roy Baumeister further refined the idea . . . A heterosexual community can be analyzed as a marketplace in which men seek to acquire sex from women by offering other resources in exchange. Societies will therefore define gender roles as if women are sellers and men buyers of sex. Societies will endow female sexuality, but not male sexuality, with value (as in virginity, fidelity, chastity). The sexual activities of different couples are loosely interrelated by a marketplace, instead of being fully separate or private, and each couple's decisions may be influenced by market conditions. (I)

Notably, economist and rational choice theorist Gary Becker is indexed here as an academic patron saint. So too is Roy Baumeister, whose "sexual economics theory" (Baumeister and Vohs 2004) overtly attempts to fuse economics and EP. The academic status of these authors functions to legitimize several of the sidebar's key sexual-economic concepts, including the sexual marketplace and sexual/social market value.

The sidebar's "sexual marketplace" is characterized by "[t]he sexual economy of supply and demand for sex and relationships" (I). As such, it is a blatant attribution of capitalist-economic logic to sexual relationships in which women become "sellers" and men become "buyers of sex": "In sex as in other matters the buyers, not the sellers, ultimately determine the price. And the buyers, by and large, are merely average men" (IV). This model relies on a neoclassical economic emphasis on individual decision-making and rational choice, though preferences and scarcities can affect how these decisions take place. The "price" of sex, for instance, is not determined by the cost of labor but by decisions of individual buyers and sellers (echoing neoclassical economics on price formation).

Sexual market value (SMV), in turn, is "One's worth in the sexual marketplace; often conflated with one's attractiveness" (I). SMV amounts to a quantification of sexualized human bodies, reducing them to rationalized exchange values and rendering them commensurable in the sexual marketplace. Facilitating a relentless conversion of quality into quantity, of women's physical appearance into social exchange value, the sidebar asserts the notation HB x , wherein HB stands for "hot babe" and the variable x is assigned a value 1–10 (XIII). (For instance, an "HB8" would be a hot babe ranked as an "8.") As such, women are said to use "Push-up bras/Implants/Makeup/Corsets/Hair coloring, wigs, and extensions" to augment their SMV (I). The SMV of a man can also be "improved manually" (I) via improvements in physical attractiveness (V) as well as gains in socioeconomic status, such that making oneself physically attractive and improving one's personal SMV score are essentially identical. Qualitative attributes like "physical appearance" matter in the sidebar only insofar as they relate to the quantitative exigencies of SMV, the sexual marketplace's only currency.

The sidebar's equivalency between the commodity and the woman is most explicitly realized in its futurist prediction that sex robots, virtual reality simulations, Real Dolls, and other sex commodities will not be merely adequate substitutes for the "real thing," but the ideal against which women will be compared and inevitably found wanting:

For those (mostly women) who claim that the [virtual reality] sex of 2020 would not be a sufficient substitute for the real thing, that drawback is more than superceded by the inescapable fact that the virtual woman would be made to be a 10/10+ in appearance . . . This will cause a massive devaluation in the sexual market value of most women, resulting in 8s being treated like 5s . . . (III)

Here, the commodity fetishization of women is drawn out to an extreme, as the ideal woman becomes equivalent to the sex commodity's inexorable self-development, projected into the near future (Thorpe 2016). Quantified and rendered as commodities, women become commensurable not only with other women but with nonliving commodities with similar use-values, including any sex commodities of today and tomorrow. And just as neoclassical economists theorize how

the value of a commodity evaporates after the introduction of a superior technology, the sidebar suggests that technological improvements in sexual commodities will ultimately make the value of the woman-as-commodity disappear in a “cataclysmic sexual devaluation” (III). Not only are women commodified in the sense that they are fetishized, consumed as objects, and given a quantifiable exchange value, but also in the sense that their exchange value can fluctuate according to technological advancements.

Conclusion

r/TRP’s underlying philosophy—as expressed in its sidebar—can be understood “as an *extension* and *acceleration* of existing cultural norms” (O’Neill 2018, 7) insofar as it privileges scientific rationality and integrates common economic discourses involving meritocracy, rationalization, quantification, and market-based exchange into its seduction ideology. According to O’Neill, such an economized sexuality is a symptom of neoliberalism, which “disseminates the model of the market to all domains and activities” (Brown, as cited in O’Neill 2018, 22). As such, sexual relationships come to be understood in terms of quantity rather than quality. True to form, while the sidebar is explicitly devoted to understanding sex in numerical terms—the goal is frequent sex with women who have a high “SMV”—it presents zero discussion of how to make sex *enjoyable*, suggesting a broader confusion between means and ends. If the sidebar denies any needs for emotional connection, it encourages the pursuit of sexual relationships that resemble commodity relations.

It is plausible that these two “moments” are internally related: the sidebar finds in neoliberal discourses a convenient framework for stripping intimacy from human relationships, such that commodified women no longer threaten any emotional boundaries established by hegemonic masculinity:

Where sexuality becomes overdetermined by market logics, it produces a kind of circumscribed libidinousness that is entirely generic in its aims and ambitions. There is an emptying out of the subjective and the interpersonal, as a capitalist logic of value comes to undermine and obscure a more expansive appreciation of human values. (O’Neill 2018, 44)

Thus, the sidebar’s contents can be plausibly understood as an attempt to use neoliberal economic discourses to superficially reconcile a powerful dissonance: when an unstoppable force—the need for intimate sexual connection—meets an immovable object—emotional rigidity—erotic energies can be displaced onto women who are framed as commodities, exchangeable in a sexual marketplace.

This relationship may express an underlying connection between EP and neo-classical economics, disciplines which are attractive to men because they “carry the cultural purchase of science” and reinforce “how men want to see themselves” (McCaughey 2008, 112). While these two disciplines may seem to be strange bedfellows, in fact they may be internally related. As O’Neill (2018) observes,

“evolutionary narratives have much in common with neoliberal rationalities, as both promote a logic of individualism centred on profit maximization—whether this is defined in terms of finance or progeny” (p. 127). Here, O’Neill channels Haraway (1991), who has observed distinctive qualitative parallels between sociobiology and capitalist ideology, such that in the former “profit is measured in the currency of genes” (p. 60).⁶ Further research might explore the logical, causal, and/or historical relationships between neoclassical economics and EP, of which Baumeister’s “sexual economics theory” is one particularly extreme and recent expression.

My analysis of r/TRP’s sidebar is a reminder that masculinities are not *only* constructed in microsocial interactions but are *also* deeply embedded in structural conditions. As Connell (2012) points out, this fact is too often ignored in masculinities studies. According to O’Neill (2018), this may be especially true when it comes to neoliberalism: “where masculinities scholars attend to the workings of neoliberalism, it is generally with an understanding of neoliberalism as an economic programme rather than a cultural rationality” (p. 18).

Determining the precise nature of the complex relationship between seduction and neoliberalism in r/TRP requires more research. Fortunately, r/TRP’s sidebar is a rich source of qualitative data, and the above analysis is not the only one available. Further sidebar research might address how r/TRP’s philosophy not only commodifies women but also scapegoats them for economic problems—thereby resolving a dissonance between economic conservatism and inchoate awareness of late capitalism’s contradictions. Quantitative studies may also be instructive along these lines. For example, if the above findings are robust and generalizable, then it is plausible that the community would be characterized by economic conservatism at least as much as social conservatism. Further survey research will test this hypothesis.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Gotell and Dutton speculate that this neglect has to do with the manosphere’s “vile misogyny” making its content “hard to digest and capable of evoking all manner of visceral reactions” (Menzies, as cited in Gotell and Dutton 2016, 70). Although a recent issue of *Feminist Media Studies* was devoted to “online misogyny”, few of its articles directly address the manosphere, and none focus on the particular subject matter of the present study.
2. This definition is found on The Red Pill’s (r/TRP) home page, www.reddit.com/r/TheRedPill (archived at <http://archive.is/PhFFw>). However, in September 2018, the administrators of

reddit.com applied a “quarantine” to r/TRP which requires visitors to explicitly opt in to viewing its content. As long as this quarantine remains in effect—which it does as of this writing—visitors must agree to view “shocking or highly offensive content” before viewing r/TRP, and must log in with a reddit username/account in order to view the content and materials referenced in this article. Otherwise, the sidebar area—from which the present article’s data are drawn—remains blank. This quarantine also makes the number of “subscribers” to r/TRP appear to be zero, when in fact the number of subscribers at the time of the quarantine was close to 300,000.

3. This meritocratic orientation is what distinguishes r/TRP from “incel” communities which deny individual agency in the pursuit of relationships and instead advocate for violent “revolution” against women (Beauchamp 2018).
4. Notably, the phrase “IKEA nesting instinct” originates from the 1999 film *Fight Club* (Fincher 1999). For a discussion of the relationship between this film and the pickup artist philosophy, see O’Neill (2018).
5. Allan (2016) compellingly draws attention to the centrality of “affect” in modern men’s rights discourse. Indeed, the sidebar attempts to tap into male readers’ underlying emotions and vulnerabilities in an effort to recruit them into an anti-feminist position. However, an adequate discussion of the sidebar’s divergences from and similarities to Allan’s intriguing model is unfortunately beyond the scope of the present article and remains a subject for future scholarship.
6. “Sociobiology analyses all behaviour in terms of the ultimate level of explanation, the genetic market place. Bodies and societies are only the replicators’ strategies for maximizing their own reproductive profit” (Haraway 1991, 60).

References

- Allan, J. A. 2016. “Phallic Affect, or Why Men’s Rights Activists Have Feelings.” *Men and Masculinities* 19:22–41.
- Ames, E. 2017. “Liberals Sick of the Alt-left Are Taking ‘The Red Pill’.” *Fox News*, September 15. Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/09/13/liberals-sick-alt-left-are-taking-red-pill.html>.
- Baumeister, R. F., and K. D. Vohs. 2004. “Sexual Economics: Sex as Female Resource for Social Exchange in Heterosexual Interactions.” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 8:339–63.
- Beauchamp, Z. 2018. “Incel, the Ideology Behind the Toronto Attack, Explained.” *Vox*, April 25. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/4/25/17277496/incel-toronto-attack-alek-minassian>.
- Buss, D. 1994. *The Evolution of Desire*. New York: Basic Books.
- Charmaz, K. 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Connell, R. 2012. “Masculinity Research and Global Change.” *Masculinities & Social Change* 1:4–18.
- Dragiewicz, M., J. Burgess, A. Matamoros-Fernández, M. Salter, N. P. Suzor, D. Woodlock, and B. Harris. 2018. “Technology Facilitated Coercive Control: Domestic Violence and the Competing Roles of Digital Media Platforms.” *Feminist Media Studies* 18:609–25.

- Fincher, D. (Director). 1999. *Fight Club* [Motion picture]. US: Twentieth Century Fox.
- Ging, D. 2017. "Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere." *Men and Masculinities*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1097184X17706401.
- Ging, D., and E. Siapera. 2018. "Special Issue on Online Misogyny." *Feminist Media Studies* 18:515–24.
- Gotell, L., and E. Dutton. 2016. "Sexual Violence in the 'Manosphere': Antifeminist Men's Rights Discourses on Rape." *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 5:65–80.
- Haraway, D. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Henricks, K. 2017. "'I'm Principled Against Slavery, but . . .': Colorblindness and the Three-fifths Debate." *Social Problems* 65:285–304.
- Hine, C. 2008. "Virtual Ethnography: Modes, Varieties, Affordances." In *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*, edited by N. Fielding, R. M. Lee, and G. Blank, 257–70. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Hodapp, C. 2017. *Men's Rights, Gender, and Social Media*. New York: Lexington Books.
- Jane, E. A. 2018. "Gendered Cyberhate as Workplace Harassment and Economic Vandalism." *Feminist Media Studies* 18:575–91.
- Kimmel, M. 2013. *Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era*. New York: Nation Books.
- Marche, S. 2016. "Swallowing the Red Pill: A Journey to the Heart of Modern Misogyny." *The Guardian*, April 14. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/apr/14/the-red-pill-reddit-modern-misogyny-manosphere-men>.
- Marwick, A. E., and R. Caplan. 2018. "Drinking Male Tears: Language, the Manosphere, and Networked Harassment." *Feminist Media Studies* 18:543–59.
- Marwick, A. E., and R. Lewis. 2017. *Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online*. Retrieved from the Data & Society Research Institute website: <https://datasociety.net/output/media-manipulation-and-disinfo-online/>.
- Massanari, A. 2017. "#Gamergate and The Fapping: How Reddit's Algorithm, Governance, and Culture Support Toxic Technocultures." *New Media & Society* 19:329–46.
- McCaughey, M. 2008. *The Caveman Mystique: Pop-Darwinism and the Debates Over Sex, Violence, and Science*. New York: Routledge.
- Mountford, J. B. 2018. "Topic Modeling the Red Pill." *Social Sciences* 7:42. doi: 10.3390/socsci7030048.
- Nicholas, L., and C. Agius. 2018. *The Persistence of Global Masculinism: Discourse, Gender and Neo-colonial Re-articulations of Violence*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Oesch, N., and I. Miklousic. 2012. "The Dating Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Emerging Science of Human Courtship." *Evolutionary Psychology* 10:899–909.
- O'Neill, R. 2015. "Feminist Encounters with Evolutionary Psychology" [Special issue]. *Australian Feminist Studies* 30:345–50.
- O'Neill, R. 2018. *Seduction: Men, Masculinity and Mediated Intimacy*. Medford, MA: Polity.

- Pearl, M. 2016. "How to Tell If Your Alt-right Relative Is Trying to Redpill You at Thanksgiving." *Vice*, November 22. https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/nnk3bm/how-to-tell-if-your-alt-right-relative-is-trying-to-redpill-you-at-thanksgiving.
- Roberts, S. C., M. van Vugt, and R. I. M. Dunbar. 2012. "Evolutionary Psychology in the Modern World: Applications, Perspectives, and Strategies." *Evolutionary Psychology* 10: 762–69.
- Rodger, E. 2014. *My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger*. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/1173619/rodger-manifesto.pdf>
- Rogers, A. 2005. "Chaos to Control: Men's Magazines and the Mastering of Intimacy." *Men and Masculinities* 8:175–94.
- Rudman, L. A., and P. Glick. 2010. *The Social Psychology of Gender: How Power and Intimacy Shape Gender Relations*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Schmitz, R. M., and E. Kazyak. 2016. "Masculinities in Cyberspace: An Analysis of Portrayals of Manhood in Men's Rights Activist Websites." *Social Sciences* 5:18. doi: 10.3390/socsci5020018.
- Symons, D. 1979. *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Taub, A. 2018. "On Social Media's Fringes, Growing Extremism Targets Women." *The New York Times*, May 9. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/09/world/americas/incels-toronto-attack.html>.
- Thorpe, C. 2016. *Necroculture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Trivers, R. L. 1972. "Parental Investment and Sexual Selection." In *Sexual Selection and the Descent of Man, 1871–1971*, edited by B. G. Campbell, 136–79. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Wachowski, A., and L. Wachowski. (Directors). 1999. *The Matrix* [Motion picture]. US: Warner Brothers.

Author Biography

Shawn Van Valkenburgh is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research interests include science and technology, gender, and critical theory.