

# Alt Reality Bubbles

*An exploration of the online culture wars  
in contemporary and future online spaces*

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# Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Virtual Insanity	5
3 Web of ideology	8
3.1 Alt-Right	8
3.2 Manosphere	11
3.2.1 Men's Rights Activists	11
3.2.2 MGTOW	12
3.2.3 Neo-Masc	12
3.3 The Left	15
4 Neo-Pillarization	16
5 Conclusion	19
6 Bibliography	20
7 Lexicon	21

## Introduction

Contemporary fascism, misogyny, and extreme right ideologies are cultivated in online forums collaboratively. Right-wing and Leftists ideology is expressed with neologisms in nihilist meta-memes and forum-posts which are rapidly evolving and duplicating. The online enthusiasts are creating an impassable forest where the mainstream will easily get lost. Right-wing conservatism and left-wing socialism are reformed with new styles of media-usage, propaganda, and focus of ideology.

According to Slovenian philosopher *Slavoj Žižek* ideologies are “*political discourses whose primary function is not to make correct theoretical statements about political reality, but to orient subjects' lived relations to and within this reality.*”<sup>1</sup> Therefore even if people are aware of their ideology, they could continue to hold its views believing it is the correct version of reality. In this text I want to attempt to explore a few prominent online ideologies in a nonjudgmental form which are different from my own ideology, to gain a deeper understanding of how these function in order to research if my believe in a hypothetical future in which these online phenomena will have a large impact on our societal and political structure holds any ground.

I will discuss these ideologies in through the framework of subculture, which is the context used by long-term documenter of online culture Angela Nagle, and Matthew N. Lyons – independent scholar and freelance writer who studies reactionary and supremacist movements. This is challenged by earlier work of Brady Robards and Andy Bennet, who suggest although online identity expression has been interpreted as exhibiting subcultural qualities, the theoretical framework of post-subcultural neo-tribalism suits better. In their work they argue that contemporary youth cultural practice doesn't have “*the rigidity of the forms of organisation with which we are familiar, [tribe] refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favour appearance and form.*”<sup>2</sup> The groups that are discussed in this text however have distinct norms, and values regarding cultural, political and sexual matters, have written theory, and are organized to such extent they adhere more closely to conventional subcultural readings. In the text I will coin the term Alt Reality Bubbles, which is a term for the online space in which an online subculture develops their ideology. The term is conjunction of alternative reality and the online filter bubbles. This term captures the influence of online (social) media on the development of online cultures in framing their own alternative reality.

Furthermore, I will be using the term Alt-Right, which to critics is a euphemism for white nationalism, but as George Michael<sup>3</sup> says in his text about the rise of the Alt-Right, it is a more nuanced term as it encompasses a broader spectrum of far-right fringe groups.

In this thesis I will explore the Online Subculture Wars by firstly looking at the context in which they came to be (chapter 1), secondly describing three online subcultures who have a significant influence in online and offline culture and politics (chapter 2) and thirdly explore a hypothetical situation in which this polarization continues to increase towards a neo-pillarization (chapter 3).

1 Sharpe, M. (2004) *Slavoj Žižek (1949 —)* [online] Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/zizek/>

2 Robards, B., & Bennett, A. (2011). *My Tribe: Post-Subcultural Manifestations of Belonging on Social Networking Sites* [Abstract]. *Sociology*, 45(2).

3 Michael, G. (2017) *The Rise of the Alt-Right and the Politics of Polarization in America* [online] Skeptic. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317905355\\_The\\_Rise\\_of\\_the\\_Alt-Right\\_and\\_the\\_Politics\\_of\\_Polarization\\_in\\_America](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317905355_The_Rise_of_the_Alt-Right_and_the_Politics_of_Polarization_in_America)

What are the subcultures that have the most influence on our society and politics today, what is their breeding ground and how can extreme ideological polarization hypothetically continue?

## Virtual Insanity

“See, it's a crazy world we're living in” sings Jamiroquai in his song *Virtual Insanity*<sup>4</sup> in 1996 about the seemingly endless virtual world we wander through. In the chorus of the song, he argues that we are governed by our love for twisting the intended use of new technology and therefore our futures are in virtual reality, a virtual insanity. Later in the song, he predicts the apocalypse, with lyrics about how this has got to change before “*No more will we be*”.

*“Futures made of that virtual insanity now,  
Always seem to, be governed by our love,  
For useless, twisting, of that new technology,  
Oh, now there is no sound, for we all live underground”*

We might not live underground quite yet, but 'virtual insanity' is a decent description of our current online media usage. The term *hyperreality* was coined fifteen years earlier than this song in the text *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) by Jean Baudrillard. He argues symbols and signs replaced reality to the point we can't distinguish the real from simulation anymore. These simulacra are no copies of reality but are real in their own right. They construct perceived reality while preceding reality. The hyperreal has no connection with the real, nor does it try to hide reality.<sup>5</sup>

He describes four stages of representation, of which hyperreality occurs in the last two stages. **(1)** The first one is a copy of the original of which we believe it is truthful. It is a direct reflection of the original work. **(2)** The second stage is a corrupt copy or a perversion of reality. The image is unfaithful but it still hints at reality. **(3)** The next stage is a copy without an original. It claims to be truthful and show reality, but it is no representation. **(4)** And lastly, the fourth one has no connection to reality whatsoever. At this stage, the hyperreal is equivalent to the real, as the hyperreal doesn't need to pretend to be real anymore. The hyperreal needs to prove itself only in hyperreal terms.<sup>6</sup>

This evolution in hyperreality is echoed in the current online meme-culture. Every meme is an image and/or text that conveys an idea, activity, piece of culture or media and is spread rapidly from person to person via forum posts and social media. Richard Dawkins, who coined the term meme in his book *The Selfish Gene* in 1976, wrote about memes as an analogy to biological evolution based on genes. A meme is a cultural entity that is a replicator of a certain idea(s). The memes evolve with versions reacting on a version reaction on a version and so on until the meme becomes so meta you can only explain the meme with terms derived from the within the culture itself. The lifespan of memes within the online ecosystem grows shorter and quicker, with viral memes that rise to fame in a day and are forgotten the next.<sup>7</sup>

A good example of the complexity a meme could reach is the meme *Ugandan Knuckles*. Re-emerging in December of 2017 it quickly rose to fame with its easily incorporated line “*show me da wey*” and “*u don't know da wey*”.<sup>8</sup> The meme consists of a depiction of a character called

4 Jamiroquai. (1996). *Travelling Without Moving* [CD] London: Sony Soho Square

5 Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*. Michigan: *University of Michigan Press*

6 Idem, p. 6

7 Dawkins, R. (1976). *The Selfish Gene* (2 ed.), Oxford: *Oxford University Press*, p. 192.

8 Don. (2017) *Ugandan Knuckles* [online] Know Your Meme. Available at: <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/ugandan-knuckles#fn3>

*Knuckles* from the *Sonic* game franchise created in a parody video by YouTuber *Gregzilla*.<sup>9</sup> Online fans on *Twitch* had been referencing Ugandan warriors while playing a game and as the character became more popular a DeviantArtist *tidiestflyer* made a 3D model of it which can be used as an avatar in the online multiplayer game *VRChat*.<sup>10</sup> After the release of a video called “*You Do Not Know The Way*”<sup>11</sup> in which a group of *VRChat* players use *Ugandan Knuckles* to troll other players the meme quickly grew popular. The eventual backlash came when *Knuckles* was accused of promoting ethnic and racial stereotypes against Ugandans.<sup>12 13</sup>

This example of an innocent meme turning dark is following a familiar path. Angela Nagle wrote how the lifespan of a meme can be mapped out from virtue to cynical inscrutable irony.<sup>14</sup> The cycle starts by competitive virtue signaling (**1**), a step in the process in which people glorify the meme to an extreme extent. In the case of *Ugandan Knuckles* it was the moment the meme existed of countless crossover images with other memes and media with the “show me da wey” slogan as a constant. Then “a kind of giddy ironic mocking of the social media spectacle starts to take over” (**2**) while the meme eventually when it manages to survive this long, reaches a viral popularity. *Ugandan Knuckles* reached this point when more and more people started working together within the *VRChat* to form groups of avatars taking over spaces within *VRChat*. The last step in the cycle is via extreme nihilism, cynicism, and irony to Schadenfreude and transgression. The *Ugandan Knuckles* meme reached this step when the meme became merely a characterization of Ugandan stereotypes. At the last point, the meme has evolved enough it allows for it to become very meta. Little is needed to refer to the meme. It's the last stage the meme can only be explained by terms derived from the world of the meme itself, it lives in hyperreality.

This phenomenon of meme-culture, described through hyperreality by Jean Baudrillard, evolution by Richard Dawkins, and transgression by Angela Nagle is key to understanding the influence of online subcultures which through the western rapid online media cycle have global consequences by shifting not only our political spectra, but our understanding of life, truth and reality itself.

Home to a significant part the history of meme-culture, which is such a big part of the identity of online subcultures, is the image board *4chan*. When discussing online forums, a cliché image of a sexually frustrated teenager playing video games in his mothers' basement might pop up in our mind. A young boy searching for some excitement, validation, belonging and identity. Influenced by the many caricatures on TV in the 90s and 00s, this visual representation of the nerdy introvert still has square glasses, a band t-shirt or plaid blouse and no social skills. One can wonder how true this portrayal of a generalized *4chan* user is nowadays, whereas he hasn't been the only one in hyperreality for a while.

The */b/* traveling teen still could have been semi-innocently shit-posting his way through the 2000s, in the last few years he has been discovering his political views on */pol/*, its politically incorrect board. There he has encountered a surplus of ideologies you once found in the fringes of online

9 Gregzilla. (2017). *knuckles sings* [video]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iu7SxzFbp-I> [Accessed January 2018].

10 Tidiestflyer (2017) *The Knuckles meme as a 3d model* [3D model] Available at: <https://www.deviantart.com/art/The-Knuckles-meme-as-a-3d-model-704695335>

11 Stahlsby. (2017) *YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WAY* [video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxjofn2bYE8> [Accessed January 2018].

12 Hathaway, J (2018) The Ugandan Knuckles meme is spreading to competitive gaming [online] The Daily Dot. Available at: <https://www.dailydot.com/unclick/ugandan-knuckles-meme-overwatch/>

13 Grayson, N., Myers, M. (2018) *Racist Jokes Keep Showing Up In Overwatch League Broadcasts* [online] Kotaku. Available at: <https://compete.kotaku.com/racist-jokes-keep-showing-up-in-overwatch-league-broadc-1822376195>

14 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, p. 5.

chatrooms in the darker corners of the internet.<sup>15</sup> Extreme right and left ideologies have been merging with game-nerds and meme-enthusiasts and collaboratively they are shaping their ideology.

*4chan* has never been a place of virtue. Instead, it has always been a place where there was a place for the bored and the lonely to come and anonymously shout over each other. Which has resulted – next to the endless cycle of creative memery and puns – in mass-bullying, pornography, suicide, and child-pornography. The website has had these problems for years, but where by most visitors accepted as the inevitable downside of the website’s freedom. These have had negative influences, but weren't key factors in a major societal shift like its */pol/* board is now. The development of a few of these subcultures on imageboards and forums like the popular *4chan* and *Reddit* have aided to the rise of extreme right-wing views worldwide.<sup>16\</sup><sup>17</sup>

The term I will use to deepen the understanding of space and time in a development of ideology from a subculture, which gathers and organizes primarily online and on which the use of contemporary media has substantial influence in the development of ideology, is Alt Reality Bubble. The term describes the breeding grounds: the platforms, text, terms, signals that are used to build mutual understanding. This entails the both the literal space of words on a forum or figurative space of a video-essay. As the term subculture emphasizes a difference in culture and people, the term Alt Reality Bubble emphasizes the online inhabited space, implies the algorithmic involvement of the technology behind the filter bubble and can be seen as a expansion of the echo chamber. An Alt Reality Bubble expands beyond the borders of *4chan* into the *Youtube* comments as it acknowledges the influence of different platforms to form one subcultural ideology. A subculture could have different Alt Reality Bubbles in which multiple ideologies are formed, but an Alt Reality Bubble could also have an influence of multiple subcultures. The Alt Reality Bubble is the stage on which the actors coin their neologisms, write their theory and interact with fellow members of their community.

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15 Winkie, L. (2015) *I was a teenage 4chan troll—until I learned to change my ways*. [online] Daily Dot. Available at: <https://www.dailydot.com/via/4chan-troll-white-boy-internet-sexism/>

16 Bernstein, M. S., Monroy-Hernández, A., Harry, D., André, P., Panovich, K., & Vargas, G. G. (2011, July). *4chan and /b: An Analysis of Anonymity and Ephemerality in a Large Online Community*. In ICWSM (pp. 50-57).

17 Chen, C. (2012). *The creation and meaning of internet memes in 4chan: Popular internet culture in the age of online digital reproduction*. *Habitus*,(3), 6-19.

## Web of ideology

Different online ideologies exist within an immense number of different subcultures with each their own preferred (social) media platform, language and aesthetic. Each subculture employs their own set of jargon, describing the world, their views and or themselves and spreading them in their Alt Reality Bubble. These subcultures aren't necessarily political and don't conform to the old school left-to-right scale of our political spectrum, but were born out of a clash of our new global social media landscape, existing (political) ideologies, societal discontent after our recent recession and depression, and escapist or nostalgic tendencies following the harsh truths of the Anthropocene. Which online subcultures are influencing our current political discourse?

Categorizing these groups in this stage is a strenuous process. Some are early in their online evolution and therefore constantly branching out into subgroups and sub-subgroups, finding their specific brand of ideology in an ever-expanding mess of semiotic complexity.

The temporary nature of these stages of evolution of ideology is the very reason writing about this phenomenon feels like constantly lacking behind. Sources are quickly outdated, hypes die, people switch sides and terms change definition. One prominent scholar who has published a book about recent online subcultures is *Angela Nagle*. Her research has spun several years of following these different groups on various platforms.

From the crowded battlefield of current online culture wars she identified three subcultures with a number of subgroups in her 2017 book *Kill All Normies*<sup>18</sup> which I will discuss in the following paragraphs:

- (1) Alt-Right
- (2) Manosphere
  - (2.1) MRA
  - (2.2) MGTOW
  - (2.3) Neo-Masc
- (3) The Left

### *Alt-Right*

The *Alt-Right* is a loosely-connected group of white supremacists, neo-nazis, neo-fascists and other far right-wing subcultures from America and Western Europe. *Angela Nagle* points out that the term alt-right was used in online circles to include only a new wave of overtly white segregationist and white nationalist movements and subcultures.<sup>19</sup>

The term was coined by Richard Spencer, who has called for a US white ethnostate and a pan-national white Empire modeled after an approximation of the Roman Empire. The term is quickly developing and evolving its definition as reflected on its highly active Wikipedia page. On the 7th of January 2018 the first line of the definition of alt-right was changed from: “*The Alt-right, or alternative right is a loosely-connected subset of the American and British political far-right, primarily comprised of white nationalists, Neo-Nazis, and other fringe groups.*” to the slightly

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18 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books.

19 Idem, p. 11.

different: “*The Alt-right, or alternative right is an **ill-defined** subset of the American and British political far-right, primarily comprised of white nationalists, Neo-Nazis, and other fringe groups.*”<sup>20</sup> This change is significant as it reflects the slow demise of the term as it's on its way to become as pejorative as the word hipster. The editor comments: “*Better-reflected the fact that "alt-right" has no clear definition in terms of breadth, but at least refers to neo-fascists and white nationalists.*” and “*Reverted because "loosely connected" frames the Alt-Right's fuzziness in terms of leadership structure while lack of centralization is not necessarily remarkable for fringe political movements. The Article is written in terms of boundaries.*” Currently, in March 2018, the definition states: “*The alt-right, or alternative right, is a **loosely-connected** and **somewhat ill-defined** grouping of white supremacists, neo-Confederates, neo-Nazis, neo-fascists, and other far-right fringe hate groups.*” which seems to be a compromise between the two, stating both its widespread and unorganized grouping as the unfitness of the term to provide a well-encompassing categorization.<sup>21</sup>

In *Angela Nagles* book she describes the preoccupation of groups within the alt-right as to varying degrees with IQ, European demographic and civilizational decline, cultural decadence, cultural Marxism, anti-egalitarianism, and Islamification.<sup>22</sup>

What lies at the core of their ideology is a fear of the foreign.<sup>23</sup> They believe if the West doesn't act now, the demise of western civilization will be fact rather than fiction through being mixed with other and “lesser” cultures.<sup>24</sup> They try to prove these theories by preaching pseudoscience which connects IQ to race and by adhering to an alternative version of history. They believe that the left is now the predominant political movement of the elites, and has infiltrated our media, universities, and governments. In order to conquer these areas back, they are reappropriating a transgressive language recently used by the left.

*Angela Nagle* also points out the “alt” in the name alt-right which suggests the wish to create an alternative right-wing movement in opposition to the existing conservative establishment.<sup>25</sup> This establishment is thought of by the alt-right as a bunch of weak Christian passive ducks who don't take action to stop the foreign invasion of immigrants who are believed to be taking over Western culture.

She further points to the *Neoreactionary movement* or *Nrx* as a more obscure anti-egalitarian reactionary tendency, which is one of the older right-wing groups online that still consists of a number of online web pages but doesn't seem to go mainstream anytime soon. Later in the text Nagle connects the online right-wing movement we call alt-right to younger generations via the meme-culture of 4chan and later 8chan, acknowledging the fact the movement couldn't have had its

20 Beyond My Ken, Lukacris (2018) *Alt-Right* [online] Wikipedia. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Alt-right&diff=819061223&oldid=819058540>

21 Wikipedia (2018) *Alt-Right* [online] Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alt-right>

22 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books.

23 Lyons, M. N. (2017) *CTRL-ALT-DELETE: THE ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGY OF THE ALTERNATIVE RIGHT*. [online] Political Research Associates. Available at: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/01/20/ctrl-alt-delete-report-on-the-alternative-right/?print=print>, ch. *PART 2 – MAJOR IDEOLOGICAL CURRENTS*

24 Johnson, G. (2010) *Theory And Practice* [online] *Counter Currents*. Available at: <https://www.counter-currents.com/2010/09/theory-practice/> “(c) Whites will not save ourselves unless we (i) speak frankly about the role of Jews around the world in promoting ideas and policies that threaten our race’s survival and (ii) work to reduce Jewish power and influence. (d) Whites will not survive unless we regain political control over a viable national homeland or homelands.”

25 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, p. 12.

influence if it only existed on fringe obscure platforms in the outer corners of the web. She also points out the *4chan shitposters* and meme-making gamers didn't necessarily had a coherent commitment to conservative thought or politics but shared an anti-PC, anti-leftist impulse and a common aesthetic sensibility.<sup>26</sup> This grew to a high when Hillary Clinton during her run for office chose to use some of the language of the expanding identity politics of more feminine Tumblr spaces, hyper-politically correct terms like *check your privilege* which went offline to university campus politics, *Gamergate* and later to the *#metoo* movement.<sup>27</sup>

The watered-down version of the *Alt-Right*, fittingly called the *Alt-Light* or *Alt-Lite*, has a more mainstream and therefore dangerous effect as it became popular amongst social media figures and politicians. “*But it was really the broadest orbit of the alt-right, which became known as the alt-light, that popularized this new diffuse and chaotic online set of cross-pollinating subcultures and helped bring it into the mainstream.*”<sup>28</sup>, Nagle writes. The alt-light is a normalized lighter version of similar extreme right-wing ideas by the expansion of the *Overton Window*. It is a term used to describe rather to self-identify.

The *Overton Window*, also referred to within the *Alt-Right* as the *O-Window*, is a concept in political science that explains what the public view as normal or what they believe to be extreme. Through the intense media cycle in America which has been blasting out one ridiculous headline after another since Trumps run for office and our European news cycles intense fixation on overseas drama we slowly got numb. Whatever first seemed radical, ridiculous or even unthinkable, slowly got less surreal. The theory goes that if you want to shift the window, therefore shift what people perceive as normal, you have to not go for the radical but shout the unthinkable. Forcing people to consider an unthinkable idea, even when they reject it, makes all less radical ideas seem more acceptable by comparison. The alt-light seems a whole lot more acceptable because of the alt-right.<sup>29</sup>

A prominent alt-light figure is Steve Bannon, former executive chairman of *Breitbart News*, which he called *Breitbart* the platform for the alt-right in 2016 before denying the claim later.<sup>30</sup> Bannon was the chief officer of Donald Trumps electoral campaign and served for seven months as White House Chief Strategist. Together with other popular alt-light figures of that time like Milo Yiannopoulos, Kellyanne Conway (Counselor to the President and previously campaign manager) and Trump himself. All have played significant roles in taking online transgression and trolling offline and turned it into political strategy.<sup>31</sup> To such extent, there is a lot of disagreement in Trumps own conservative party and anti-Trump conservatives are debating pro-Trump conservatives on each issue. Not everybody within alt-right or who could be considered alt-light endorses President Trump but there seems to be a broad understanding of him being on their side.<sup>32</sup>

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26 Ibidem.

27 Fox News Insider (2016) *Hillary: White People 'Need to Recognize Our Privilege'* [online] Fox News Insider. Available at: <http://insider.foxnews.com/2016/04/13/hillary-clinton-white-people-need-recognize-our-privilege>

28 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, p. 18.

29 Maza, C. (2017) *How Trump makes extreme things look normal* [online] Vox. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2017/12/21/16806676/strikethrough-how-trump-overton-window-extreme-normal>

30 Sarah Posner (August 22, 2016). *How Donald Trump's New Campaign Chief Created an Online Haven for White Nationalists*. Mother Jones. 'We're the platform for the alt-right,' Bannon told me proudly when I interviewed him at the Republican National Convention (RNC) in July."

31 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, p. 18.

32 Maza, C. (2017) *How Trump makes extreme things look normal* [online] Vox. Available at: <https://www.vox.com/2017/12/21/16806676/strikethrough-how-trump-overton-window-extreme-normal>

Politics was already swaying right-wing even before the pendulum swung back as far right as it did after Obama, but under the influence of online subculture, it now has a new influx of young energy everywhere.<sup>33</sup>

### *Manosphere*

The *Manosphere* is a subculture which feels after three waves of feminism the pendulum has swung too far in favor of women and it has caused unfair policies and regulations, and a deeply unbalanced sexual marketplace. On different websites, blogs and *YouTube* channels men are teaching men to acquire an ‘alpha frame’, battle woman in court, grow self-esteem, pick up woman and other skills which they believe will help save Western civilization of its eventual demise caused by feminism and weak beta men. The term is used to describe these different subgroups which vary from progressive men's issues activists to corners of the internet, filled with involuntary celibacy-obsessed and resentment-fueled misogynist cultures.<sup>34</sup>

It is a loosely-knit network of blogs, websites, *Youtube* channels, *Facebook* groups and forums associated with anti-feminism in the right-wing sphere like and partly overlapping with the Alt-Right that has been growing for years.<sup>35</sup>

Angela Nagle writes it would have undoubtedly have been written up as a digital revolution if it had different cultural politics.<sup>36</sup>

Three prominent and active subcultures within this ideology are the MRA: Men's Rights Activists<sup>(1.2.1)</sup>, the *MGTOW: Men Going Their Own Way*<sup>(1.2.2)</sup> and the *Neo-Masc: Neo-Masculinity*<sup>(1.2.3)</sup> or anti-feminist movement. Key differences between these movements who only seem connected through their anti-feminist rhetoric are that the *MRA* wants to change or reform the system, *Neo-Masc* want to take advantage of the system and *MGTOW* want to leave the system.<sup>37</sup>

### *Men's Rights Activists*

The men's rights activists with prominent figures like Paul Elam and his website *A Voice for Men* is the group within the *Manosphere* which is the least misogynist, as they focus on equal rights and legal change mostly.<sup>38</sup> Main goals include equal rights for men in court around social issues like maternity fraud, divorce, domestic violence and alimony and government services like military service, health insurance, and social safety nets. This is typically an older group of men who have had a history of divorce and have encountered some form of injustice. The movement has been

33 Lyons, M. N. (2017) *CTRL-ALT-DELETE: THE ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGY OF THE ALTERNATIVE RIGHT*. [online] Political Research Associates. Available at: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/01/20/ctrl-alt-delete-report-on-the-alternative-right/?print=print>, ch. *PART 1 – ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT*

34 Idem, ch. *MANOSPHERE*.

35 Lyons, M. N. (2017) *CTRL-ALT-DELETE: THE ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGY OF THE ALTERNATIVE RIGHT*. [online] Political Research Associates. Available at: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/01/20/ctrl-alt-delete-report-on-the-alternative-right/?print=print>, ch. *MANOSPHERE*.

“There is significant overlap between the manosphere and the Alt Right. Both are heavily active on discussion websites such as 4chan, 8chan, and Reddit, and a number of prominent Alt Rightists [...] have also been active in the manosphere. Many other Alt Rightists have absorbed and promoted manosphere versions of gender ideology.”

36 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, p 86.

37 *The Red Pill* (2016) [documentary] New York City: Jaye, C.

38 Ibidem.

described as a reaction to feminism<sup>39 40</sup> and is branched off from earlier movements like the Men's Liberation movement in the seventies.<sup>41</sup>

### ***MGTOW***

The second group in the *Manosphere* that has a very distinct ideology is the *Men Going Their Own Way* (*MGTOW*) movement, whose members have chosen to avoid any (romantic) relationships with women. They are a mostly pseudonymous group online active on forums and blogs who focus on independence from woman, self-improvement and individual achievement. *MGTOW* view this as a protest and a revenge to the woman that treated them badly, the woman that will eventually cheat, leave or are gold diggers, or will trick them into paying alimony for children that aren't theirs.<sup>42</sup> In their vocabulary, they use terms like alpha and beta to describe their masculinity, give grades to woman based on looks and will get quite defensive if you would call them out as an incel, an involuntary celibate. They complain about woman dating a Chad in their twenties and riding the cock carousel and are undatable when they reach 27 as their 'stocks' on in the sexual marketplace have fallen. They believe woman have uncontrollable biological impulses and therefore can't think rationally. In order not to fall into all these traps *MGTOW* chooses to avoid any romantic relationships and sometimes as much contact with woman as possible.<sup>43</sup>

Angela Nagle describes four levels of *MGTOW* with level 0 indicating the member has just taken the red pill and rejects feminism. At level **(1)** *MGTOW*'s reject LTR (long-term relationships), at level **(2)** also short-term relationships and hook-ups, at level **(3)** they are economically independent of woman and when *MGTOW* reach level **(4)** they reject society which is infected with feminism and try to boycott all social interactions with woman.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Neo-Masc***

The *Neo-Masculinity* movement mainly residing on online platforms like the *Reddit* forum *The Red Pill* is a group of men who believe feminism will ultimately cause the decline of western civilization.<sup>45</sup> Their focus is regaining their power on *The Sexual Marketplace* to restore conservative pre-feminist order. This is one the most misogynist groups within the *Manosphere* which incorporates some of the *Pick Up Artist community*, which sole purpose is to have as many

39 Lyons, M. N. (2017) *CTRL-ALT-DELETE: THE ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGY OF THE ALTERNATIVE RIGHT*. [online] Political Research Associates. Available at: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/01/20/ctrl-alt-delete-report-on-the-alternative-right/?print=print>, ch. *MANOSPHERE*.

"*Manospherians have emphasized male victimhood—the false belief that men in U.S. society are oppressed or disempowered by feminism or by women in general.*"

40 Schmitz, R. M., Kazyak, E. (2016) *Masculinities in Cyberspace: An Analysis of Portrayals of Manhood in Men's Rights Activist Websites*. Edinburg, USA: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Available at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/5/2/18/htm>. "*MRAs appeared as an outgrowth of the men's liberation movement, which established itself in response to feminism under the argument that men also suffer negative consequences as a result of rigid gender role expectations in society.*"

41 *The Red Pill* (2016) [documentary] New York City: Jaye, C.

42 *MGTOW, The Manosphere* [online] Available at: <https://www.mgtow.com/manosphere/>

43 Goldwag, A. (2012) *Leader's Suicide Brings Attention to Men's Rights Movement* [online] A Voice For Men. Available at: <http://www.avoiceformen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2012/04/ion-to-Mens-Rights-Movement-Southern-Poverty-Law-Center.pdf>

44 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, pp. 94-95.

45 pk\_atheist (2015) *Almost a hundred subscribers! Welcome newcomers.* [online] *The Red Pill*. Available at: [http://archive.is/20150610190226/www.reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/12v1hf/almost\\_a\\_hundred\\_subscribers\\_welcome\\_newcomers/](http://archive.is/20150610190226/www.reddit.com/r/TheRedPill/comments/12v1hf/almost_a_hundred_subscribers_welcome_newcomers/)

Note: in April 2018 the Red Pill subreddit has over 115.000 subscribers.

hookups as possible with 'hot babes'(they grade them of course), some conservative rhetoric which place woman back into traditional roles mixed in with some hyper-masculine demands of the men in the group and biological pseudoscience.<sup>46</sup>

Angela Nagle describes a contradiction within this culture. The red-pilled men want all the benefits of-of tradition, like a virgin housewife, without its necessary restraints and duties. They still want sexual success with pornified women, without the insecurities of a society in which women have sexual choice and freedom.<sup>47</sup>

One term that pops up in this group a lot and has a lot of connotation that explains the focus and viewpoint of this subculture is the word *cuck*. It is a word with a rich history that is used by right-wing internet to point to 'lesser men'. It is well-described by Nina Power in her essay *The language of the New Brutality* in which she explains that it sums up the racist, sexist, vicious tendency of the language and imagery she calls *The New Brutality*. She further dives into the etymology of the term which she explains a whole host of male anxieties. The term stems from the old French word for *cuckoo*, which is *cucu*. In porn, the word *cuckold* is used to describe a male who stands by while his wife or female partner has sex with another man, which is black in a lot of instances. This points to the emasculate, effeminate male, who is deflated of masculinity, strength, and power and enjoying their own degradation. The term is expanded for a different politicized but related meaning, *cuckservative*, to describe conservatives who are open to liberal values, not red-pilled and not masculine enough. As Nina Power describes: “*To be a cuck is to be screwed over, a victim of women and other men, sexually and economically.*”<sup>48</sup> The word links to earlier similar fears of castration held by fascist groups described as unconscious by Klaus Theweleit.<sup>49</sup>

In whichever context the term is used, it is meant as a specific insult that contains a specific ideal about men, which might have slight variations but a similar overall message: this person is less masculine and less far right than he should be. The popularity (frequency) is of importance (as it tells us how widespread this idea is) even as the person it is directed towards.<sup>50</sup>

In the paragraph below written by a user of the *The Red Pill* subreddit, which is the most prominent *Neo-Masc* forum in their Alt Reality Bubble, the everyday use of jargon like this is even more clear:

***'Even spinning plates its hard to get away from scarcity mentality when you land a high SMV'***

*"23 years old, new to TRP, rAFC maybe a month into reading the subreddit and books. Just recently got out of a 3.5y LTR about a month and a half ago, and I've started spinning some plates. Been with 4 girls in the last two weeks, so pretty content with the volume I've been getting. I got with a new plate Friday night, but earlier in the night I gamed an older woman (really just being friendly) at the bar I was at. Long story short, she told me she had a daughter my age that wasn't out and gave me her daughter's number. Saturday night this girl (HB9) was at my house! Absolutely crazy story, but the point of it is that I can't get this girl out of my head. Friday night plate even just hit me up to come over tonight and I*

46 *The Red Pill* (2016) [documentary] New York City: Jaye, C.

47 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, pp. 96.

48 Power, N. (2017) *The Language of the New Brutality* [online] e-flux. Available at: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/83/141286/the-language-of-the-new-brutality/>

49 Theweleit, K. (1977) *Male Fantasies, Vol. 1: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, trans. Stephen Conway in collaboration with Erica Carter and Chris Turner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 89. “The “fear of castration” is a consciously held fear, just as the equation of communism and rifle-woman is consciously made.”

50 Schmitz, R. M., Kazyak, E. (2016) *Masculinities in Cyberspace: An Analysis of Portrayals of Manhood in Men's Rights Activist Websites*. Edinburg, USA: University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Available at: <http://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/5/2/18/htm>.

turned her down. All I want to do is text HB9 to come over again and do her dirty, but I'm afraid that if I text her I am just giving in to scarcity mentality, seeming needy and pandering to my old AFC ways. I already texted her Sunday night to hang out again and it didn't work out logistically. I'm going to hold out and wait until she texts me -- I already know its what you guys would recommend, and I'm sure she will text me by the end of the week or weekend. I think my issue is I don't have other plates that have as high of a SMV as her."<sup>51</sup>

This would be translated to:

***'Even sleeping around its hard to get away from scarcity mentality when you land a high Sexual Market Value.'***

23 years old, new to The forum The Red Pill, recovering average frustrated chump maybe a month into reading the subreddit and books. Just recently got out of a 3.5y long term relationship about a month and a half ago, and I've started sleeping with different women. Been with 4 girls in the last two weeks, so pretty content with the volume I've been getting. I got with a new woman I only sleep with Friday night, but earlier in the night I hit on an older woman (really just being friendly) at the bar I was at. Long story short, she told me she had a daughter my age that wasn't out and gave me her daughter's number. Saturday night this girl (Hot Bitch, 9 out of 10) was at my house! Absolutely crazy story, but the point of it is that I can't get this girl out of my head. Friday night plate even just hit me up to come over tonight and I turned her down. All I want to do is text Hot Bitch, 9 out of 10 to come over again and do her dirty, but I'm afraid that if I text her I am just giving in to scarcity mentality, seeming needy and pandering to my old Average Frustrated Chump ways. I already texted her Sunday night to hang out again and it didn't work out logistically. I'm going to hold out and wait until she texts me -- I already know its what you guys would recommend, and I'm sure she will text me by the end of the week or weekend. I think my issue is I don't have another woman I only sleep with that have as high of a Sexual Market Value as her."

The jargon used in the paragraph above all link to core ideas within the *Manosphere*. The language functions to link theory to practice but also seems to hide the most extreme and core ideas. When the texts get pure misogynistic, emotional (shame, anger, lust, frustration) or personal words are replaced with jargon. A lot of the terms are abbreviated to make them even more unrecognizable. Referring to woman as plates is an easy example of how jargon is used to dehumanize and objectify.\

The term *The Red Pill* itself is a metaphor for people who believe in their version of reality, seeing "the truth". These red-pillers are highly aware how their version differs from the mainstream and are actively trying to shift this mainstream. Self-identified members of the *Manosphere* are "red-pilled", "RP" or "took the red pill". Born from myths and popularized by a scene from the 1999 movie *The Matrix*, it has been used as a metaphor for "true" version versus a "fake" version of reality ever since. "This is your last chance. After this there is no turning back. You take the blue pill: the story ends, you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill: you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes."<sup>52</sup>

The contemptuous term for the 'heretic', 'the enemy', the blissfully ignorant in this heroic drama are the "blue-pilled" people. They are the ones in the dark, ignoring the harsh truth the red-pilled *Manosphere* discovered. The blue-pilled believe in the mainstream media, they are leftist *cucks*, beta-males, virtue signaling *SJWs*.<sup>53</sup>

51 *ImHereForThisSub* (2017) *The Red Pill* [online] Reddit.

52 *The Matrix* (1999) [film] Warner Bros. Pictures: The Wachowski Brothers

53 Tomassi, R (2018) *DANGERS OF THE BLUE PILL*. [online] The Rational Male. Available at: <https://therationalmale.com/2018/03/20/dangers-of-the-blue-pill/>

## ***The Left***

On the opposite side of the Online Culture Wars we find left-wing subcultures. Until the Charlottesville rally of August 2017 – in which the Alt-Right stepped away from hiding in safe anonymity behind the screen and proclaimed a white supremacist agenda – the left and right-wing ideologies clashed mostly in the public online spaces of the comment sections of *Youtube* and *Facebook*. On these platforms the Left uses a term that interestingly also has a term that praises those aware of the truth – like The Red Pill for the Alt-Right and the Manosphere – by literally describing that person as "woken up to the truth", by using the term Woke or #woke.

In a manifesto published on *Tripleampersand* by *ANON*, left-wing themselves, criticized the term as "ubiquitous, obnoxious and self-serving"<sup>54</sup>, pointing out that it is safety-pin politics, masturbatory symbolism, and virtue signaling. It calls for a new stronger "alt-woke", which would be a “*a new awakening for the post-modern Left to navigate the protean digital era. Altwoke can be categorized as the new New Left. Or Second Wave Neo-Marxism. The Post- Truth Left. Anti-liberal postcapitalist left.*”

*Social Justice Warrior (SJW)* is a derogatory term for people with left-wing views who are usually actively spreading its views online and are calling out and condemning people with less progressive views. The social networking site *Tumblr* is often added to *Feminism* as a second pejorative term, as it is the online place where a lot of left-wing progressives gather to share and develop ideas. It is meant to point to younger feminists who call out all forms of injustice, which in the extreme can lead to its own kind of censorship. *Gender Politics* activists are a different branch of loosely-formed online left-wing groups who are fighting for the rights (of expression) of every gender, sex, and skin color.<sup>55</sup>

Angela Nagle chooses to use the term *Tumblr-liberalism* as an umbrella term for the left in her book *Kill All Normies*, which rightfully pinpoints *Tumblr* as the lefts the main platform but doesn't fully encompass the whole movement, as it is broader than one of its main platforms. The main occupation on *Tumblr* was providing a safe space for the gender fluid, mentally-ill, physically disabled and non-whites. “*Although one could trace various threads to a multitude of different online and offline points of origin, Tumblr was one of the most important platforms for the emergence of a whole political and aesthetic sensibility, developing its own vocabulary and style – very much the reverse mirror image of rightist 4chan in this way.*”<sup>56</sup>

The contemporary left-wing movements (the *Social Justice Warriors*, *Tumblr Feminists* and *Gender Politics* activists) seem to be equally entangled in semiotic complexity, and don't have a convincing non-pejorative umbrella term yet, except they could be described as being "woke". It is too loosely connected to form a stable Alt Reality Bubble as it continues to inhabit mainstream online spaces. The Left as an online subculture doesn't seem to get past defining itself as it consists of multiple smaller subgroups that aren't functioning as a centralized group.

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54 Anon (2017) #AltWoke Manifesto[online] Tripleampersand. Available at: <http://tripleampersand.org/alt-woke-manifesto/>

55 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, pp. 94-95.

56 Ibidem.

## Neo-Pillarization

Most of our current media diet exists of content available on global social media networks which are in the hands of a few *Silicon Valley* companies. *Facebook* and *Google* and *Twitter* have a monopoly on online information and therefore a substantial influence on what information we digest through algorithmically deciding what is accessible to us. Tech companies are – often through controversy and the subsequent criticism – waking up to this reality and are starting to take responsibility for the content they are allowing on their platforms.<sup>57</sup> Right-wing countercultures and extreme ideologies believe our mainstream media is under influence of left-wing ideas and are speaking of a thought police and censorship. In August of 2017 a *Free Speech Tech Alliance* was announced on Gab, an alternative *Twitter*.<sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup>This difficult dilemma between “safe content” through censorship and an open platform with potentially malicious content raises many philosophical and moral questions. Far right advocates are barred from using mainstream platforms for posting extreme content. In protest, they are collaboratively declaring independence from the mainstream by creating an alternative internet called *Alt-Tech* on which they promote their views<sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup>

Some online alt-tech includes alternatives for mainstream news like *The Daily Stormer* and *Breitbart*. *Gab*, with a *Pepe the Frog*-like logo on which not only right-wing ideology but also products off of *shop.gab.ai* are promoted. Bathroom curtains with *Gab*'s logo and the text "*Make Speech Free Again*" as a twist on Trumps "*Make America Great Again*" for instance. On the homepage which shows the most popular posts of the day multiple anti-Jew, anti-Mexican and anti-refugee memes can be spotted.<sup>62</sup> *Voat* is an alternative to *Reddit*, with the fitting pro-free speech: "*have your say*"-motto. The mode of address on the home page and the corporate identity are plain and don't immediately reveal their political stance. The website greets new users with: "*Voat is a censorship-free community platform where content is submitted, organized, moderated and voted on (ranked) by the users. Users can earn a percentage of our ad-revenue share for the content they submit.*"<sup>63</sup> The posts, however, make it blatantly clear which ideology is promoted on *Voat*. Multiple posts on *Alt-Right* topics like White Genocide, anti-Mexico, and Pro-Trump rhetoric. It is interesting *Voat* offers users part of their ad-revenue, as on other platforms like *Youtube* being advertiser-friendly means creating non-offensive content in order for it to be a safe investment for advertisers. *Voat* works around this issue by using non-PC advertisement for instance for "*Non-feminist Fan Fiction*", "*Patriotic Flags Online Store*", a new album of the unknown band "*American Scream*" and their own website. Some ads are simply memes who link to Donald Trumps official website.

*WeSearchr* or *FreeStartr* are two crowdfunding platforms where the Alt-Right fundraise for their projects, lawsuits or collects subscriptions. The subtitle of *FreeStartr* is "*Free speech crowdfunding. No bans. No censorship. All of your fundraising in one place with an absolute free*

57 Malter, J. (2017) *Alt-Tech platforms: A haven for fringe views online*[online] CNN. Available at: <http://money.cnn.com/2017/11/10/technology/culture/divided-we-code-alt-tech/index.html>

58 Damore, J. (2017) *Announcing The Free Speech Tech Alliance* [online] Gab. Available at: <https://medium.com/@getongab/announcing-the-alt-tech-alliance-18bebe89c60a>

59 *The Battle For The Free Internet* [online] Gab. Available at: <https://gab.ai/>

60 Roose, K. (2017) *The 'alt-right' created a parallel internet. It's a holy mess* [online] CNBC. Available at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/12/11/the-alt-right-created-a-parallel-internet-its-a-holy-mess.html>

61 Ellis, E. M. (2017) *Red Pilled: My Bizarre Week Using The Alt-Right's Vision of the Internet* [online] Wired. Available at: <https://www.wired.com/story/alt-tech-social-media/>

62 *Popular Posts* [online] Gab. Available at: <https://gab.ai/popular> [Accessed at March 2018]

63 *Voat* [online] Available at: <https://voat.co/>

speech guarantee."<sup>64</sup> On the homepage are projects like the one of Vox Day, somebody who wants to create superheroes for the Alt-Right. "A new alternative comic series intended to challenge and eventually replace the SJW-converged comics of DC and Marvel. Alt□ Hero is a world not too terribly different than our own."<sup>65</sup> which raised about ten times the requested amount. A noteworthy campaigner is Roosh V, the misogynist *Pick Up Artist* who is now active in the *Manosphere* via writings for the prominent *Manosphere* website *Return Of Kings* and his own youtube channel.

Similar is *Hatreon*, the Alt-Right's version of *Patreon*, where just like on *Patreon* people can support their favorite creators by giving them an extra monthly income. Featured creators are among others *Alt-Right* superstar Richard Spencer and Andrew Angelin of *The Daily Stormer*. These platforms are seen as a safe-haven for the barred members of the mainstream social media and therefore are close to being as openly transgressive as the corners of /pol/, except for a lack of anonymity which is embedded in *4chans* platform.<sup>66</sup> The left, as promoters of *PC* culture, don't need alternative platforms and have gathered on (social) media like *Tumblr* and *Buzzfeed*.<sup>67 68</sup> They are outspoken in their left-wing views addressing identity politics and political correctness. On *Tumblr* users create their own homepage by following other users which content and reblogs they view. On it's trending page the difference with right-wing platforms can immediately be spotted. In addition to the usual cute cats, fanfiction and *Tumblr*-aesthetics, there are trans-visibility memes, *LGBTHQ+* crossover fanfiction, and content related to *#metoo* and *Black Lives Matter*. Each subculture reinforces the online echo chambers on their own platforms, to such extent they are creating Alt Reality Bubbles.

The division between subcultures each with their own Reality Bubble represented by their own media filled echo chambers is a reminder of a phenomenon part of Dutch history. In the twentieth century in the Netherlands there was such a widespread societal segregation it was "pillarized", or in Dutch "verzuild". Society was divided into segments or "pillars" per ideology or religion. There was a Protestant, Catholic, Socialist and Liberal pillar each with their own social institutions, like newspaper, radio, schools, social organizations, trade unions, banks, hospitals, sports clubs and political parties. Different media, for instance, were the *KRO* (de *Katholieke Radio Omroep* or in English: the *Catholic Radio Broadcasting*), which like the name says was Catholic and the *AVRO* (de *Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep* or in English: the *General Association Radio Broadcasting*)<sup>69</sup> which was Liberal. The cause of pillarisation is thought by Hans Righart to be out of a fear of secularization by the Catholic church. By each having their own source of information, the pillars had a secure grasp on the beliefs of their followers. It started around 1917 as the first world war ended and lasted all the way through the Second World War. Its grip on society weakened around the mid-sixties until the pillars where completely in ruins around the mid-seventies.<sup>70</sup> Till this day a lot of the old structure still exists, some institutions still with reference to their earlier ideology.

64 *Free speech crowdfunding* [online] FreeStarttr. Available at: <https://freestarttr.com/>

65 Vox Day (2017) *Alt□ Hero Volumes I, II, and III*[online] FreeStarttr. Available at: <https://freestarttr.com/project/althero/>

66 Ellis, E. M. (2017) *Red Pilled: My Bizarre Week Using The Alt-Right's Vision of the Internet* [online] Wired. Available at: <https://www.wired.com/story/alt-tech-social-media/>

67 Gainor, D. (2017) *Alt-Left Insanity: Can Anything Be Nuttier Than Buzzfeed?*[online] CNS News. Available at: <https://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/dan-gainor/alt-left-insanity-can-anything-be-nuttier-buzzfeed>

68 Nagle, A. (2017) *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right*. Winchester: Zero Books, pp. 68.

69 Van Der Kaap, A. (2012) *Twee geloven op één kussen.....* [online] Histoforum. Available at: <http://histoforum.net/toetsopdrachten/geloven.html>, bron 4, 6.

70 Righart, H. (1986). *De katholieke zuil in Europa: een vergelijkend onderzoek naar het ontstaan van verzuiling onder katholieken in Oostenrijk, Zwitserland, België en Nederland* (Vol. 15). Boom.

The Neo-Pillarized society could be the outcome of a further polarization within the current political climate. To highlight the analogy between this current climate and the pillarized society of last century the Alt Reality Bubbles will be further organised and institutionalised under pillars. There would be two right-wing pillars: the *Alt-Right*, the *Alt-Light*, the *Neoreactionary movement* and other far-right alt reality bubbles would form a pillar. The *Manosphere* with all its subgroups would form another right-wing pillar. These could fittingly be called the *Red Pill-ars*. There would be one left-wing pillar, which would be called the *Blue Pill-ar* as a derogatory term by the right-wing pillars. The politically correct, the *Social Justice Warriors*, and other left-wing alt reality bubbles would ban together under this pillar. Lastly there would be a fourth centrist pillar, which would be equal to the Liberal atheist pillar in Dutch Pillarized times. Each would have their own sources of information by separating their media and schools through separate institutions. *Red-pilled* children and blue-pilled children would get a different education with different values. Here the red-pilled could get classes in white genocide, racial doctrine, national history, and how to be an alpha-male. Woman would get an education on how to raise children with the right values. The *blue-pilled* on the other hand would learn about black history, LGBTHQ+ sex-ed, environmental issues, and political correctness. They would receive different medical assistance, listen to different podcasts, visit different websites and maybe even live in different areas. There would be jobs that would typically be held by blue-pilled people and jobs that are more in line with red-pilled values. *Red-pilled* wives would stay home and take care of the children.

In government an agreeable nationwide representation with such extreme polarization would be near impossible. In the Netherlands, the “*verzuiling*” worked politically with a parliamentary representative coalition system striving for broad consensus.<sup>71</sup> After a general election, the process of formation starts in which the chosen parties try to form a majority with multiple parties. The other chosen members of the parties will form an opposition. The same system could work with the hypothetical neo-pillarization, each alt reality bubble under each pillar could have representation in government by forming a party. The *Alt-Right* could form a party that creates independence from traditional conservatives by forming a majority by collaborating with the right-wing *Manosphere* and the *Alt-Light*.

Through neo-pillarization each subculture would perpetuate their Alt Reality Bubbles under pillars to further develop their ideology which could claim an established offline presence.

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71 Reilly, B. (2003) *Government Structure and Electoral Systems* [online] Canberra: Australian National University. Available at: <http://cic.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/e20govtstructureelectoralsystemsreilly.pdf>

## Conclusion

In this thesis I explored in the first chapter the Online Subculture Wars looking at the context in which online subcultures were born, in which *4chans* meme-culture shaped the way for a different media-usage that would create distinct online subcultures which create their own Alt Reality Bubble. In the second chapter I described three prominent online subcultures who have had a significant influence in online and offline culture and politics and in the third chapter I made an analogy of online polarization and dutch pillarization, which together could form a future in which neo-pillarization makes the extreme online polarization able to establish itself in offline public space and government.

The hypothetical future in which online subculture claim offline presence through a neo-pillarized society is a possibility I am absolutely terrified of, but which is a possibility that should be taken as seriously as we take the new media and technology which changes us and will in turn will change our culture and politics.

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# Lexicon

This lexicon exists of terms that are mentioned in the text but not explained. Definitions of terms are taken from the Alt Reality Lexicon, which uses different sources like Wikipedia, Urban Dictionary and forums. Available at: <http://altrightlexicon.referata.com>.

## **#metoo**

*The Me Too movement (or "#MeToo", with local alternatives in other languages) spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag used on social media to help demonstrate the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace*

## **/b/**

*/b/ is 4chans random board*

## **/pol/**

*/pol/ is 4chans politically incorrect board*

## **Alt-Tech**

*Alt-Tech are alternative platforms created by the Alt-Right in order to spread views that are too extreme to be accepted by mainstream platforms*

## **Chad**

*Chad Thundercock is a term that used to describe a desirable man young man in his prime*

## **Gamergate**

*Gamergate (2014) was one of those events where a personal feud between a journalist and her boyfriend turned into a widespread controversy through a harassment campaign targeting woman in the video game industry. Supporters on 4chan and reddit supported Nathan Grayson in the disagreement over Zoe Quinn and started targeting other female video game developers and critics. The threats accelerated and spread out to produce an online anti-feminist movement, aiding the Manosphere and Alt-Right.*

## **Gender Politics**

*Identity politics includes the ways in which people's politics are shaped by aspects of their identity through loosely correlated social organizations. Examples include social organizations based on age, religion, social class or caste, culture, dialect, disability, education, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, generation, occupation, profession, race, political party affiliation, sexual orientation, settlement, urban and rural habitation, and veteran status.*

## **Image board**

*An imageboard or image board is a type of Internet forum which operates mostly via posting images*

## **Memes**

*A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture—often with the aim of conveying a particular phenomenon, theme, or meaning represented by the meme*

## **Normies**

*Normie is slang for a conventional and mainstream person*

## **PC, Political Correctness**

*The term political correctness is used to describe language, policies, or measures that are intended to avoid offense or disadvantage to members of particular groups in society*

**Pick Up Artist community**

*The seduction community, also known as the pick-up artist, PUA, or pickup community, is a movement of men whose goal is seduction and sexual success with/access to women*

**Riding the Cock Carousel**

*An idea perpetuated on manosphere blogs that women casually sleep around in their 20's with hot, non-committal player types*

**SJW, Social Justice Warrior**

*Social justice warrior is a pejorative term for an individual who promotes socially progressive views, including feminism, civil rights, and multiculturalism, as well as identity politics*

**Sexual Marketplace, Sexual Market Value (SMV)**

*How attractive a person is according to members of the opposite sex*

**The Red Pill**

*Signifies the recognition of the true nature of female behavior, including her attraction to traits of dominance, preference for men with status, attraction to men who have been pre-selected by other women, and hypergamous nature  
Also: A forum within the Manosphere*

**Transgression**

*aims to transgress; i.e. to outrage or violate basic morals and sensibilities*

**Tumblr Feminists**

*A young girl who became a feminist after she got a Tumblr account*

**Beta-males**

*An unremarkable, careful man who avoids risk and confrontation. Beta males lack the physical presence, charisma and confidence of the Alpha male.*

**Cuck, cuckold, cuckservative**

- 1. A man or woman who watches someone they love get taken by another person or another person flirt with the one they love.*
- 2. Someone who watches their wife/husband get fucked by another person.*
- 3. Someone who has leftist views politically speaking.*

**Virtue signaling**

*To take a conspicuous but essentially useless action ostensibly to support a good cause but actually to show off how much more moral you are than everybody else.*