

A Reactionary Ideology or an Outcry From the Oppressed?

An Analysis of /r/TheRedPill

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Research Question:

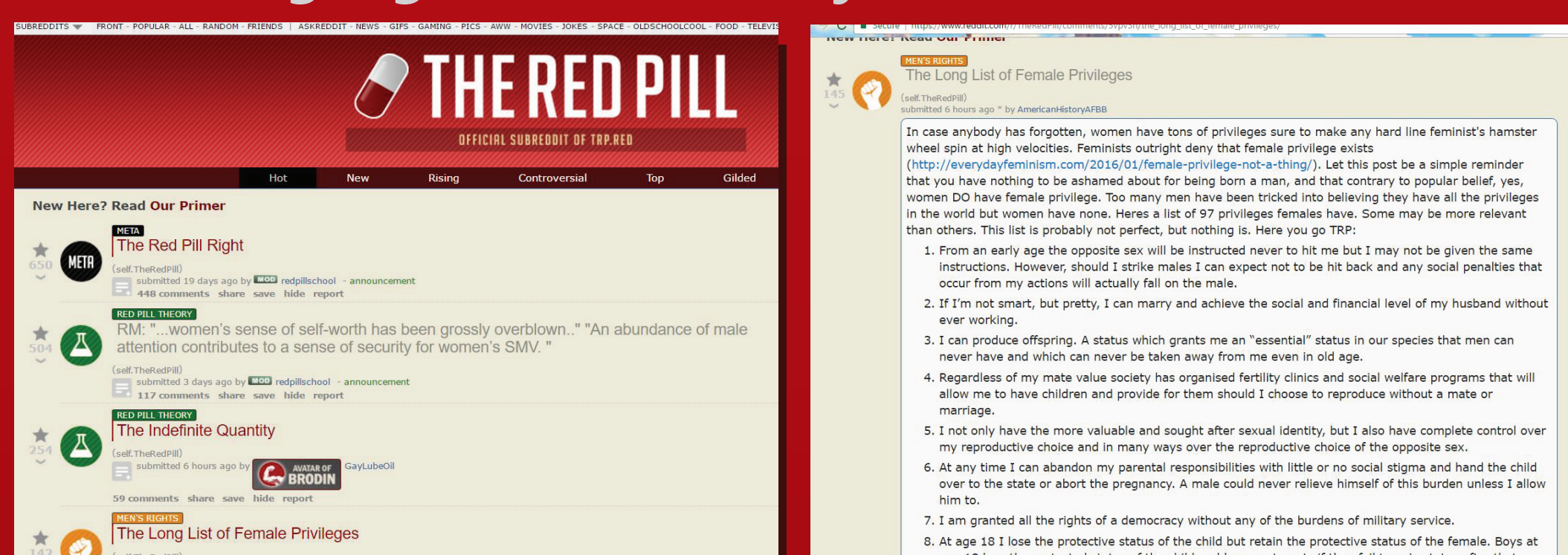
Is /r/TheRedPill a reliable resource of philosophy and sexual theory for men in the digital age? Is their manifesto sexist in any manner? Does this infamous website “live up” to the negative reputation it has gained on other parts of Reddit?

Abstract

The Red Pill is a “subreddit” that intends to provide men with various resources and texts that will help them integrate into the post-feminist world. It calls itself a “mens rights” website, and is a public forum to discuss topics related to male/female relationships. In researching this, I wanted to discover the true nature of this website in question. Specifically, I wanted to see if it lived up to the toxic reputation that it received on the greater “Reddit-sphere”. In analyzing this subreddit, I looked at case studies of user interactions and behaviours, as well as the site’s manifesto and supposed ‘academic’ resources. The conclusion is that not only does this website provide a very dangerous avenue for men in the 21st century for life and relationship advice, but it also promotes a highly reductive view against women and feminism. The importance of this falls to understanding how many lives this website affects, and could potentially affect in the future; people have been documented to lose their relationships as well as their own sense of empathy towards the opposite sex.

Research Methodology

One of the key research methods I’m implemented was looking through real posts made by regular users of the forum, and analyzing their findings as well as their use of language and mentality.



Another element of the website that I looked into were the texts that were foundational to their rules and overall manifesto. Through a critical reading of these books and journal articles, I was immediately able to tell that the core aspects of their ideology are not based in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals, but are instead based in the realm of pseudo-science and heavily anecdotal evidence. Once these case studies, as well as the information was collected on the foundational writings and philosophies, the initial research question became far easier to answer.

Findings

- Many of the issues from The Red Pill stem from the collective ignorance towards academic texts, many of them citing that peer-reviewed journals has a ‘latent feminist bias’, though this bias is never explained or expanded on. Instead, most of their texts are non-scholarly texts, pandering to essentialist ideologies. Yet, the authors of the website treat these texts like factual evidence.
- Their manifesto, which lays out rules for men to ‘improve their lives’ has alienating practices within it. The most prominent problem is in their “beta vs. alpha” protocol, which puts men who treat women equally as “beta” males. Beta males are seen to be immediately sexually undesirable, and submissive to women. “Alpha” males are men who prioritize their own sexual pleasure first, and treat women with disrespect, in order to establish sexual dominance. Not only does this system demonize the act of treating the opposite sex fairly, it makes value judgements on all women, and misinforms men on female biology and psychology.
- Finally, there were many case studies of users posting about their relationships before and after they started following TRP, and they almost always ended poorly.

Conclusion/Results

The findings from taking a closer look at the subreddit were not positive. The Red Pill's manifesto is based on non-credible sources and frequent user posts. The overall purpose of the site is to better the idea of becoming a man, but ignores any homosexual or bisexual readers. The main strands of theory are aggressive, sexist and against feminism. The directives and advice given has been shown to be destructive to otherwise healthy relationships, and the system of categorization (beta vs. alpha) hurts both women and men. Not only is this website problematic for readers looking for gender theory, but it persists in an essentialist attitude which will be incompatible with today's society. Hopefully, as more progressive academic voices enter into the realm of social media, a fairer egalitarian voice will rise to dispel many of the myths and sexist ideas that The Red Pill continues to propagate.