



Understanding the online Manosphere

Thursday 21 November 11am – 12pm



Simon Copland

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Location

Larry Saha Room

Haydon-Allen Building #22, Room 2175,
University Avenue, ANU

In April 2018 Alek Minassian sped a van through Toronto, Canada, killing ten and injuring sixteen others. Minassian belonged to an online community called 'incels' (involuntary celibates), comprised of men who blame women for their inability to gain sexual relationships. Incels speak disparagingly of 'Chads' and 'Stacys', nicknames used for sexually active men and women. Prior to the attack Miassian wrote a Facebook post stating "The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and Stacys!"

The Toronto attack highlighted a form of extremism related to online men spaces occurring in websites such as 4chan and Reddit. While men's rights has a historical basis in feminism, groups have increasingly become anti-feminist, adopting misogynistic and violent language. The online 'manosphere' in particular has sprouted new communities such as 'Incels', 'Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW)' and 'The Red Pill'.

In this talk, part of my PhD research, I conduct an in depth examination the online manosphere on the social news and sharing website 'Reddit'. Through examining three manosphere subreddits I study online community structure and development as well as the discourse of the sphere. In doing so I aim to complexify our understanding of social interactions in the manosphere, conducting a 'careful reading', which aims to jump what Arlie Hoschild describes as the 'empathy wall'. I examine the manosphere as a complex array of practices of gender, self-care and what Foucault describes as 'critique' and 'parrhesia'. I argue it is the complexity of this space we must understand if we wish to limit the extremism within.

Simon Copland is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the Australian National University (ANU), studying online men's rights groups and communities 'manosphere'. He has a Masters in Science Communication.

Simon is a freelance writer, and the co-editor of Green Agenda, an online publishing space for green ideas. He has been published in The Guardian, BBC Online and Overland Journal, amongst others. He co-produces the podcast 'Queers', a fortnightly discussion on queer politics and culture. He had a chapter in the books Queer Stories and Going Postal in 2018.

Simon is a David Bowie and rugby union fanatic.

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