

Masculinity, Power, and Persuasion: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Andrew Tate's Motivational Speeches

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Master's thesis

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Zagreb, 2024

Abstract

This thesis employs critical discourse analysis to examine the rhetorical strategies and ideological underpinnings of Andrew Tate's motivational speeches. Tate, a controversial social media figure, has gained significant influence through his promotion of hyper-masculine, neoliberal, and misogynistic ideologies. Utilizing Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this thesis investigates how Tate's discourse constructs and reinforces particular notions of masculinity, success, and gender relations. The analysis focuses on three interconnected levels: textual features, discursive practices, and social practices. At the textual level, the study examines linguistic elements such as syntactic structures, emotive language, absolutist statements, and rhetorical devices. The discursive practice explores how Tate produces and distributes content within the social media landscape. The social practice situates Tate's discourse within broader ideological frameworks, including traditional masculinity, neoliberalism, meritocracy, and misogynistic attitudes. Findings reveal that these ideologies are promoted through the use of emotive and aggressive language to elicit emotionally charged reactions; use of absolutist language and contrastive structures to present ideas as indisputable truths; use of repetition and rhetorical questions to reinforce key points; use of hyperbole and metaphors to make arguments more compelling; and use of informal style and personal anecdotes to appear trustworthy and relatable. This thesis contributes to the growing body of literature at the intersection of social media influence, discourse, and ideology, while emphasizing the critical importance of media literacy in the contemporary digital environment.

Keywords: Andrew Tate, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology, Masculinity, Social Media Influence

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Introduction

The contemporary digital landscape has significantly transformed how individuals communicate and influence public discourse. One notable figure who has skilfully exploited social media platforms to propagate and monetize his perspectives is Andrew Tate. Known for his contentious and often polarising worldviews, Tate has cultivated a substantial online following by promoting a hyper-masculine, neoliberal, and misogynist ideology centred on individualism, dominance, and financial success.

This thesis aims to critically examine the underlying messages, power dynamics, and ideological constructions embedded in Andrew Tate's social media presence. Through the framework of critical discourse analysis, this research investigates how Tate's use of language reinforces traditional gender norms, perpetuates stereotypes, and impacts societal views on masculinity and success. By analysing selected motivational speeches delivered by Tate, this study seeks to uncover the rhetorical strategies he employs to assert authority and mobilise his audience; as well as how his narratives shape perceptions of success and masculinity, reflecting broader socio-cultural and political contexts. Through this examination, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between discourse, power, and ideology in the information age. By focusing on Andrew Tate, the thesis not only highlights the mechanisms through which influential internet figures can sway public opinion, but also underscores the importance of critical media literacy in discerning and challenging the ideological underpinnings of contemporary discourse.

1. Andrew Tate

In recent years, Andrew Tate has become a significant subject of discussion in contemporary social media and self-help circles. Born on December 1, 1986, in the United States, Tate rose to prominence primarily through his presence on social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter and TikTok, where he portrays himself as a self-made millionaire, world champion kickboxer, and advocate of what he describes as 'alpha male' principles (Radford 2024). His content typically involves motivational speeches, lifestyle advice, and provocative commentary on various social issues (Das 2022). Tate's persona is built around themes of wealth, fitness, and a perceived alpha male superiority. He frequently displays his luxurious lifestyle, including high-end sports cars, private jets, luxurious homes, and frequent international travel. (Radford 2024) Tate presents himself as the epitome of the successful, self-made man, often attributing his achievements to a combination of relentless work ethic and an uncompromising mindset (Omars 2022). This presentation has attracted a substantial following among young men seeking guidance on how to achieve similar levels of success and confidence (Feltham 2024). Tate's media strategies play a crucial role in his influence - he employs provocative and often controversial statements to generate attention and engagement. This 'shock value' approach ensures that his content remains viral, drawing both supporters and critics into the conversation. His use of social media algorithms and understanding of digital marketing amplifies his reach, making his content accessible to a wide audience. (Carter 2023) Furthermore, Tate's engagement with his audience is interactive and direct. He often responds to followers and critics alike, maintaining a dynamic presence that fosters a sense of community among his supporters. (Fuel Your Digital 2024) His entrepreneurial ventures, such as online courses and mentorship programs, monetize his influence, transforming his ideological followers into paying customers (Das 2022).

The concept of the 'alpha male' is central to Andrew Tate's rhetoric and persona, and is utilised not only as a personal branding tool, but also a lens through which he interprets and advises on issues of masculinity, success, and social dynamics. Tate's definition of the alpha male revolves around traits such as dominance, assertiveness, self-confidence, and control. He often contrasts the alpha male with what he describes as 'beta males,' whom he portrays as submissive, insecure, and passive. The alpha male, according to Tate's book *Alpha: How to Be an Alpha Male Who Does Not Give a Fuck* (2023), is the epitome of success and power, and is characterised by:

- financial success

For Tate, wealth is the primary indicator of alpha status. He frequently highlights his own financial achievements, suggesting that an alpha male must strive for and attain significant economic power. This financial success is portrayed as the result of hard work, strategic thinking, and a refusal to conform to conventional employment or societal expectations.

- physical fitness

As a former kickboxing champion, Tate places high value on physical strength, fitness, and the ability to defend oneself. The alpha male, in his perspective, is physically dominant and uses this dominance to assert authority in various aspects of life.

- mental toughness

Tate emphasises the importance of mental resilience, often advocating for a stoic approach to challenges and promoting the idea that an alpha male does not succumb to emotional vulnerabilities or societal pressures. This mental toughness is linked to a broader narrative of self-reliance and personal accountability.

- leadership and dominance

Leadership is a crucial element of the alpha male identity. Tate argues that alpha males naturally take on leadership roles, whether in business, personal relationships, or social interactions. This leadership is often framed as a form of dominance, where the alpha male imposes his will and decisions on others.

- independence and non-conformity

Independence from societal norms and expectations is a recurring theme in Tate's alpha male discourse. He positions the alpha male as a non-conformist who rejects traditional paths and instead forges his own way. This often includes a disdain for conventional employment and a preference for entrepreneurial ventures.

Tate's emphasis on wealth and physical fitness as markers of success resonates with young men who may feel disillusioned or disenfranchised by contemporary socio-economic conditions (Feltham 2024). His portrayal of an 'alpha male' lifestyle provides a blueprint for those seeking to assert control and achieve status in a competitive world, but it also reinforces problematic stereotypes and ideologies that are deeply rooted in hyper-masculine ideals and neoliberal

values. His discourse also often draws on traditional gender roles, framing the alpha male as the provider and protector, while women are depicted in supportive or subordinate roles (Fielding 2023). Tate has been frequently criticised for promoting misogynistic views through his provocative statements about women and relationships. His comments in interviews and social media platforms have included assertions that women belong in the home, that they are men's property, and that they should be obedient and subservient to men. These misogynistic views extend to his advice on relationships, where he has advised men to exercise strict control over their female partners and has endorsed practices that many consider abusive and manipulative. Tate's content glamorises a hyper-masculine, dominant personality, encouraging his followers to emulate aggressive behaviour and attitudes towards women. (Das 2022) In December 2022, Tate and his brother Tristan were arrested in Romania on charges including human trafficking, rape, and formation of an organized crime group. The allegations claim they lured women under false pretences and forced them into sex work, exploiting them through online platforms. The case drew significant media attention and sparked widespread debate about Tate's influence and the legality of his actions. Both brothers deny the allegations, asserting their innocence amidst ongoing legal proceedings. (Mian and Nicholls 2024)

Several major social media platforms have taken action against Tate by banning or suspending his accounts. These actions have sparked debates about the balance between free speech and the need to prevent the spread of harmful content. Meta, the company overseeing Facebook and Instagram, removed Andrew Tate's accounts from their social media platforms in August 2022. The company cited violations of its policies on dangerous individuals and organisations, as well as hate speech - Tate's content was found to repeatedly violate community guidelines by promoting misogynistic ideas and inciting hatred against women. TikTok also banned Tate, citing violations of its community guidelines, which include policies against hate speech and harmful behaviour. YouTube, a platform where Tate had the most significant presence, removed his channels in August 2022. The ban was based on multiple breaches of YouTube's policies, including hate speech, harassment, and dangerous content. (Sung 2022) Tate had also been banned from Twitter after several temporary suspensions for violating policies on hate speech and harmful conduct, but his account was reinstated by Elon Musk upon his purchase of Twitter in 2022 (Griffin 2022). Despite the bans, Tate's content is repeatedly and consistently reuploaded to social media platforms by his fans and followers. Tate employs a distinctive and aggressive marketing strategy that is based on viral reuploads of his content to maximize online presence and attract new followers. Tate's team produces engaging and often

provocative content, which is distributed through an affiliate marketing system where members earn commissions for distribution. These affiliates are encouraged to download, reupload, and repurpose Tate's videos across various social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter. By using clickbait headlines and controversial topics, these videos aim to attract high engagement and manipulate social media algorithms, increasing the likelihood of achieving viral status. The effectiveness of this approach lies in its wide reach, high engagement, cost-effectiveness, and scalability, as affiliates continually contribute to the content distribution, amplifying Tate's online influence and driving follower growth. (Inside Insight 2022)

Analysing Andrew Tate's presence and popularity is essential for understanding the broader implications of his rhetoric on contemporary society. Tate's promotion of a hyper-masculine, success-at-all-costs, neoliberal ideology not only influences individual attitudes towards masculinity and success, but also reinforces societal pressures on men to conform to ideals of strength, dominance, and financial success. By examining the interplay between his personal narrative, media strategies, and the sociocultural context, this thesis aims to critically assess how Tate's discourse perpetuates damaging stereotypes and stigmas, particularly regarding the construction of masculinity and mental health.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) first appeared in the 1990s as an interdisciplinary approach pioneered by scholars like Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, Teun van Dijk, and Norman Fairclough. It differentiates itself from other forms of discourse analysis by its explicit critical orientation and focus on uncovering relationships between discourse, power, and ideology. (Amoussou and Allagbe 2018) Descriptive forms of discourse analysis traditionally focus on observing and documenting the orderliness (coherence and conformity) and naturalisation ('ideological representations which come to be seen as non-ideological 'common sense'' (Fairclough 1995:31)) of interactions from the participants' perspectives. In order to explain discourse features, these forms of analysis collapse various elements such as beliefs, values, and ideologies into a singular category of 'knowledge', overlooking the crucial distinction between factual knowledge and ideological representations. In contrast, critical discourse

analysis aims to denaturalize discourse, expose the social and ideological structures embedded within it, and reveal how discourses are shaped by and contribute to the reproduction of power relations and social structures. (Fairclough 1995) According to Fairclough (1995), CDA has three basic properties: it is relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. It is relational because its primary focus is not on entities or individuals but on social relations; it is dialectical because it explores the mutually influential relationship between social relations and discourse; and it is interdisciplinary because it combines discourse theory with political, sociological, political-economic, educational, and/or other theories. Similarly, Van Dijk (1993) proposes the three main principles of CDA: taking an explicit and normative sociopolitical stance; gaining insight into the crucial role of discourse in the reproduction of dominance and inequality; and understanding social issues through a multidisciplinary approach.

Discourse, in the context of critical discourse analysis, refers to the complex array of linguistic and communicative practices that constitute social interactions, power dynamics, and ideological representations within society. Discourse includes both spoken and written communication, as well as visual elements and their content, structure, and function. Furthermore, CDA examines both formal and informal communication, analysing texts such as conversations, media, political speeches, and documents in order to reveal how discourse is interwoven with social, cultural, and political contexts; as well as how it acts as a site where power relations and inequalities are enacted, perpetuated, and contested. (Amoussou and Allagbe 2018, Fairclough 1995) Language is a key medium through which meaning is mobilised and circulated, and is therefore crucial to the study of ideology. Ideology is not a static system of beliefs, so in order to study it, it is necessary to employ a dynamic, contextualised approach that examines how meaning is actualized in particular circumstances in order to maintain or challenge relations of domination. (Thompson 1987) A diverse range of linguistic features, from lexical meanings to aspects of form and style, can be ideologically invested. The relationship between language and ideology is dialectical and dynamic - ideology cannot be simply located in either language structures or language use, but is present in the relationship between the two. Structures like linguistic codes, registers, and formations encode ideological assumptions, but discursive events contribute to reproducing and transforming these structures. (Fairclough 1995)

In order to study this phenomenon and explore the intricate relationships between language, power, and ideology, critical discourse analysis employs a wide range of methodologies. Fairclough's three-dimensional model represents a distinct and widely utilized analytical

framework within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Consequently, this thesis will adopt Fairclough's model as its primary analytical tool.

2.1.1. Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model

In *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995), Fairclough proposed a three-dimensional methodological framework for critical discourse analysis. The framework suggests that each discursive event can be understood through three distinct dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The first dimension emphasises the linguistic aspects of the event, focusing on the specific words, phrases, and syntactical structures employed in the discourse. The second dimension refers to the instance of discursive practice, highlighting the processes involved in the production and interpretation of the text. The third dimension considers the discursive event as a piece of social practice, placing it within the broader context of social dynamics, norms, and power relations. More specifically, textual analysis closely examines the linguistic features of the text, including vocabulary choices, grammatical structures, and rhetorical devices, in order to identify how they contribute to the construction of meanings and their representations within the text. The objective of textual analysis is to identify any ideologies, beliefs, or values that are promoted or challenged through language use. Discursive practice analyses the production process of the text by determining who the authors or producers are, as well as what are their affiliations and intentions in producing the text. It also examines how the text is disseminated and circulated by exploring the role of media channels, publishing platforms, and audience targeting strategies in shaping the visibility and accessibility of the discourse. Finally, discursive practice studies how different audiences interpret and respond to the text by analysing variations in reception based on socio-cultural factors, ideologies, and the power dynamics between producers and consumers of discourse. Social practice situates the text within its broader socio-cultural context. It considers historical, political, and economic factors that shape the production and reception of discourse, and analyses how societal norms and values influence language use and interpretation. It also identifies power dynamics that are inherent in the text by examining how discourse is used to reinforce or challenge existing power structures, hierarchies, and inequalities. Finally, social practice critically assesses the ideological dimensions embedded in the text and evaluates how these ideologies reflect and shape broader social practices and relations.

By synthesising these three levels of analysis, Fairclough's analytical model enables a nuanced understanding of how discourse constructs and is constructed by social realities, offering insights into the mechanisms through which ideologies are disseminated and contested.

2.1.2. Linguistic and rhetorical strategies in Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis examines various linguistic and rhetorical strategies to uncover how language constructs and reinforces ideologies, power relations, and social identities. Some commonly examined strategies within Critical Discourse Analysis include lexical and stylistic choices, metaphors, interpellation, polarisation, transitivity, and modality. (Machin and Mayr 2012, Jørgensen and Phillips 2002)

One of the primary focuses of CDA is lexical analysis, which explores how specific word choices reflect ideological positions. Lexical choices are not neutral; they shape the reader's perception by framing concepts in particular ways. Lexical analysis goes beyond defining individual words to consider the broader lexical fields they create within a text. Lexical fields refer to networks of related terms that, when used together, construct a particular map of meaning, often implicitly promoting a specific worldview or ideology. This type of analysis reveals how language can embed implicit biases or ideologies, which may not be immediately obvious but influence how readers interpret and understand a text. By consistently using certain terms, authors create a broader network of meanings that push the reader toward a particular perspective. This effect is further amplified through the use of emotionally charged language, as language is not just a tool for conveying facts, but can also be utilized to manipulate emotions to steer public opinion. The use of emotionally charged language can create a heightened sense of engagement, guiding the audience's emotional reaction and, in turn, shaping their views on the subject. This can also be achieved through the use of metaphors - by framing one concept in terms of another, metaphors subtly shape how issues are perceived and interpreted. The choice of metaphor can have significant ideological implications, influencing both thought and behaviour. CDA examines metaphoric constructions to expose how they guide interpretation and promote specific ways of thinking about societal, political, or cultural issues. (Machin and Mayr 2012)

Furthermore, CDA examines the construction of social identities and the reinforcement of power dynamics, which are often achieved through interpellation. Interpellation refers to how

language positions individuals within social structures, shaping their sense of self and place in society. By addressing people in specific ways, discourse assigns roles and identities that are often unconsciously accepted and influence how individuals perceive themselves and their relationships to others within a power hierarchy. Interpellation is closely related to polarisation, a strategy which involves creating binary oppositions within discourse. These oppositions, such as 'us' versus 'them' simplify complex social dynamics by dividing groups or ideas into contrasting categories that serve to reinforce ideological divides, making it easier for audiences to align with one side or the other. (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002) Power dynamics within discourse can also be identified in the use of transitivity. Transitivity analysis examines how actions and agency are represented in language, providing insights into how power relations are encoded in discourse. By analysing who is portrayed as the active agent and who is the passive recipient, CDA reveals how discourses shape our understanding of responsibility and causality. The choice of grammatical structures, such as the use of passive voice, can obscure agency, deflecting blame or responsibility from particular actors. This manipulation of agency serves to subtly influence the reader's perception of power and accountability within the discourse. Furthermore, by using modal verbs such as 'may', 'should', or 'must', authors indicate their level of confidence in their statements or their desire to influence the reader's response. The analysis of modality reveals the author's stance on an issue and their intended relationship with the audience. (Machin and Mayr 2012)

Finally, stylistic choices in language, such as the use of informal language, personal pronouns, or specific quoting verbs, can significantly affect how a text is perceived. Informal language fosters a sense of closeness and relatability between the speaker and the audience, enhancing the persuasive power of the message. CDA explores stylistic decisions to uncover how they contribute to the overall persuasive strategy of the text. (Machin and Mayr 2012)

Understanding linguistic and rhetorical devices that influence the interpretation of language provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language operates within social contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis reveals the often-hidden mechanisms by which discourse reinforces or challenges power relations, shapes ideologies, and influences public perception. By bringing these subtle strategies to light, CDA enables readers to critically engage with texts and better understand the underlying forces that govern communication, thereby promoting a more conscious and informed approach to interpreting the world around them.

3. Methodology

3.1. Aim and method

This thesis aims to uncover and critically examine underlying messages, power dynamics, ideologies, and social structures that are embedded in Andrew Tate's discourse. The research method employed in this study is critical discourse analysis, a qualitative method that allows for in-depth examination of associations between language use, power dynamics, and ideological constructions.

3.2. Data Collection

This critical discourse analysis was conducted on three publicly available motivational speeches given by Tate. The speeches were obtained from YouTube, and criteria for selection included speeches that have a significant number of views (over one million), are representative of Tate's rhetorical style, and explicitly aim to motivate or inspire the audience. The chosen sample included the following videos:

- Speech 1: Andrew Tate's Speech NO ONE Wants To Hear — One Of The Most Eye-Opening Speeches
(available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7d2YNHxd58&t=45s>)
- Speech 2: CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS - Motivational Speech by Andrew Tate | Andrew Tate Motivation
(available at <https://youtu.be/4iCsdvxJL0o?si=RW6A1ohtNgqtM5UM>)
- Speech 3: PAIN & SUFFERING | Andrew Tate Best Motivational video ever
(available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rq9M_AxblFg)

3.3. Analytical framework

All three selected speeches were transcribed verbatim in order to ensure accuracy in capturing linguistic nuances and rhetorical strategies. Transcriptions were then encoded and analysed according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model.

4. Results and analysis

4.1. Textual analysis

Textual analysis of Andrew Tate's speeches reveals a deliberate use of various rhetorical and linguistic strategies to assert authority and promote ideas of self-sufficiency and traditional masculinity. Tate employs various syntactic elements to present his attitudes as indisputable imperatives, and simultaneously uses emotive language to evoke strong emotional responses and intensify the persuasive effect of his speeches. Absolutist language and contrastive structures present his arguments as indisputable truths, and repetition and rhetorical questions reinforce key ideas and provoke thought among listeners. Hyperboles and metaphors are used to exaggerate and illustrate his points, making his arguments more compelling and memorable to the audience. Incorporating informal language and personal anecdotes humanises his discourse and makes him appear more relatable and trustworthy. In combination, these strategies underscore Tate's adeptness in shaping discourse, influencing perceptions, and mobilising his audience through skilful and calculated use of language.

4.1.1. Syntactic elements

The use of modal verbs of obligation, second-person pronouns, present tense, active voice, and short, declarative sentences serves to create a direct, compelling, and authoritative discourse:

- (1) "You must allow yourself to be manipulated, and you must fix it, all of it."
- (2) "You have to believe you're the man, and you have to believe you can achieve anything."
- (3) "You have to get up and do it."
- (4) "You have to rewire your brain."
- (5) "You have to start saying I want to take money, because that's how you have to think."
- (6) "You have to leave some people behind."

The repeated use of modal verbs "must" and "have to" creates a sense of obligation and necessity, framing Tate's advice as commands and non-negotiable imperatives. Tate positions himself as an authority that directly addresses the listener through the consistent use of the second-person pronoun "you", creating a personal context and emphasising the listener's

agency and responsibility. This is further supported by the use of the active voice and implicit contrasting between the current and desired state. As a result, complex life challenges are reduced to simple commands, and the idea of personal growth is oversimplified. Tate predominantly uses sentences in the present tense, which is often used to indicate general truths, habits, or commands. Furthermore, the use of present tense creates a sense of urgency and relevance to the present moment, and reinforces the authoritative tone. In order to strengthen this impact, the sentences are often short and declarative, making them easy to understand, easy to memorise, and accessible to a wide audience. Declarative sentences convey a sense of certainty and authority that helps establish dominance and control over the discourse. Arguments are portrayed as simple and undeniable facts, and presented confidently and unambiguously. Collectively, these elements and structures create a forceful, authoritative tone that is highly persuasive and emphasises personal agency.

4.1.2. Emotive language

Emotionally charged language in speeches and texts serves to engage and capture the audience's attention, making the message more memorable and compelling. It enhances persuasion by appealing to emotions and framing issues in specific ways to influence attitudes. Tate frequently uses emotionally charged vocabulary to evoke strong reactions, create a narrative of adversity and resistance, and frame his opinions as ethically superior. For example, commonly identified words in his speeches include:

- suffering, pain, struggle, battle - emphasise the difficulty of life and masculinity
 - (1) “Because suffering is what gives it value.”
- dangerous, scary, afraid - highlight the risks and fears men must overcome
 - (2) “I lived a scary life, but by going through all of that I am now respected.”
- respect, honour, duty - appeal to ethical principles
 - (3) “But the true masculine frame throughout history was doing the things they didn't want to do but they knew they had to do, because they had honour and duty.”

Tate employs this vocabulary to evoke strong emotions in the audience, imbue his message with critical importance, and to persuade the audience to adopt his views by portraying them as ethically superior. This vocabulary choice also frames men's experiences in terms of conflict and resolution, creating a narrative of adversity that needs to be accepted and overcome in order to achieve power. This adversity is central to Tate's notion of masculinity, which is constructed as an aspirational identity and elevated through words like 'respect' and 'honour'. Emotive language enhances Tate's rhetorical and persuasive power, making the message more compelling and motivating to his audience. In order to delegitimize opposing perspectives, Tate strategically employs terms that have strong negative connotations, such as 'weak', 'emasculated', 'dangerous', 'bitch', and 'peasant':

- (4) "When you remove self-control from men, you get...not only do you get emasculated weak men, but you'll also get very dangerous men because the world at large is trying to tell you just be more in touch with your feelings and everything's going to be fine."
- (5) "That's why I live in a competitive environment, I live with my brother, my cousin I live with men. We have a big house we could all afford fucking 10 houses each, we live together on purpose. My brother does 500 push-ups, I ain't gonna be the bitch in the house, I'm not gonna not do them."
- (6) "Life is hierarchical, there's always going to be kings and there's always going to be peasants."

By employing derogatory language, Tate aims to undermine the credibility and authority of those who hold opposing viewpoints. These terms not only provoke strong emotional reactions among listeners, such as disdain or dismissal, but also create a sense of superiority and unity within Tate's own audience. The effect is a polarization of opinions, where the targeted perspectives are portrayed as inferior or unworthy of serious consideration. Tate aims to assert dominance, construct a specific masculine identity, create clear in-group/out-group distinctions, and intimidate opposition. This approach results in emotional manipulation of his audience, normalization of harmful language, reinforcement of stereotypes, and oversimplification of complex issues. While effective in building a dedicated base of followers, this linguistic strategy is problematic as it can contribute to harmful social dynamics, encourage aggression, and propagate oversimplified, potentially destructive ideologies. Furthermore, a

specific subset of emotive language that is frequently employed by Tate is aggressive and dominant language, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (7) "Because you decided not to suffer, you have enjoyed comfort when I haven't, and that's fine, but don't expect me to look at you as my equal because you're not, I'll snap your fucking neck."
- (8) "You have to start saying I want to take money, because that's how you have to think. You don't make it, you take it."
- (9) "I have absolute self-control. If I decide to smash your face in, it was a very conscious decision, nothing to do with the fact I was angry."

Aggressive language provokes strong emotional responses, which influence how information is processed and interpreted. It is also used to define in-groups and out-groups in order to demonise or delegitimize opponents. Tate positions those who he perceives have suffered and/or have control over their minds against people who have, in his perspective, led a comfortable life and/or are not in control of their thought-processes. Such polarisation strengthens group identity and clearly marks who is "with" or "against" him and his audience. Tate uses aggressive and dominant language as a persuasive technique to establish authority, compel the audience to accept his viewpoint, and silence his opponents by depicting violent hostility towards them. Such language also normalises hostility and aggression, reinforcing harmful ideologies.

4.1.3. Absolutist language and contrastive structures

The use of absolutist language creates or reinforces binary thinking, dividing issues into extreme positions without room for nuance or middle ground. Complex issues are reduced to simplistic terms, obscuring important details or context, as can be seen in Tate's oversimplification of mental health and social status, as well as his deterministic ideology that ignores the interplay between individual agency and external circumstances:

- (1) "If you have a mind that you can't control, then you're never going to be a king."
- (2) "Nobody cares about you. Nobody, absolutely nobody, gives a shit about you."
- (3) "Men are cowards, we have an epidemic of cowardice. Everybody is so afraid."

- (4) “You have to believe how you view the world absolutely and utterly shapes how you react to the world, how you act in the world, how people view you.”

By employing absolutist language, Tate presents personal opinions as inarguable facts, and projects certainty and authority that aims to discourage questioning or dissent. This vocabulary choice also strengthens in-group/out-group dynamics by creating clear, unambiguous distinctions between the groups; and reinforces biases by making it difficult for individuals to consider alternative viewpoints. The use of absolutist language is further supported by contrastive structures, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (5) “Everyone knows what they're supposed to do, you either control your mind or you don't.”
- (6) “You have the chance to build yourself up and become a superhero if you're prepared to do the hard work and be indefatigable enough to never quit, but if you're going to stand around and wait for a handout nobody's going to ever respect you.”

The employment of contrastive structures shapes how information is perceived by juxtaposing different elements and presenting clear alternatives. Once again, complex issues such as mental health and social status are oversimplified into polarised binary options, and in-group and out-group characteristics are further defined. This helps build a compelling narrative that persuades the audience by setting up a simple, clear conflict with simple, clear choices. The audience is not required to critically examine complex issues, but simply position themselves within a conflict where one side is clearly portrayed as superior.

4.1.4. Repetition and rhetorical questions

Tate's use of rhetorical questions and repetitions serves two main strategic purposes: emphasising key points and challenging the listener's existing beliefs or expectations. Repetitive structures create a rhythmic speech pattern that is impactful, easy to recall, and builds emotional intensity, especially when combined with Tate's choice of emotionally charged language:

- (1) “Why does it have to be quick? Why does it have to be easy? Why do you think life is all quick and easy? Why can't it be hard and difficult? Why can't you suffer?”

- (2) "I don't feel depression, how can I feel depression when I'm the most powerful version of me that I could ever fucking be? How can I feel depression when I could squeeze my own hand hard enough to break my own bones? How can I feel depression when I've smashed and destroyed 68 people's faces in front of me, men who thought they could test me in fair combat, how can I feel depressed?"
- (3) "You have to get up and do it. You have to decide if you want to compete, you have to upgrade your character."

Through repetition, key concepts are highlighted and attention is drawn to specific ideas Tate wants the audience to adopt, revealing their hierarchical importance within the discourse. Furthermore, by posing questions that lead to his desired conclusions, Tate reinforces his ideological beliefs and guides listeners towards adopting his viewpoint by provoking "critical" reflection.

4.1.5. Hyperbole

Tate frequently uses extreme statements in order to shock the audience and capture their attention:

- (1) "(...) I'll snap your fucking neck."
- (2) "Nobody cares about you. Nobody, absolutely nobody, gives a shit about you."
- (3) "How can I feel depression when I could squeeze my own hand hard enough to break my own bones?"

Hyperbolic statements can evoke strong emotional responses, for example when Tate states "nobody cares about you," it is likely to provoke feelings of isolation or defiance in his audience, making his message memorable, quotable and impactful. Furthermore, hyperbolic statements help Tate position himself as an authoritative figure and appeal to those seeking strong leadership. Tate has cultivated an image of hyper-masculinity and extreme self-confidence, and hyperbolic statements about his strength, self-control, and invulnerability to depression reinforce this persona. Such statements also provoke discussions - even if people disagree with extreme statements, they're likely to talk about them, increasing Tate's visibility and influence.

4.1.6. Metaphors and analogies

Several metaphors and analogies were identified in Tate's speeches, including:

- life as a video game (particularly Grand Theft Auto):
 - (1) "We're living inside of a video game, because in a video game you're going to go through trial and tribulation, you're going to struggle to upgrade your character."
 - (2) "My life is GTA, I don't need to play a game for GTA. If I want a gun, I'll fucking buy it; if I want a car, I'll fucking buy it; if I want a bitch, I'll get her; it's me, I am GTA."
- men as lions in the animal kingdom:
 - (3) "The lions that you see on TV, they weren't just born big lions, they had to fight other lions"
- people without mental control as feathers in the wind:
 - (4) "If you cannot control your own mind, then you are just a feather in the wind of life."

These metaphors and analogies serve to simplify complex concepts, make Tate's arguments more relatable or vivid, and reinforce his positions on masculinity, success, and personal development. Tate takes complex ideas about life, success, and personal development, and translates them into more easily understood terms, as can be seen in the video game analogy that simplifies the idea of personal growth and achievement in terms of playing a game. These metaphors often present simplified, binary views of the world (e.g., either you're a lion or you're not), which can make Tate's arguments seem more straightforward and compelling. Furthermore, vivid metaphors such as "life as GTA" or "men as lions" are more likely to stick in the audience's mind, making Tate's message more impactful. Metaphors and analogies are also used to evoke emotional responses, for instance the "feather in the wind" metaphor might provoke feelings of vulnerability or a desire for control in the listener. Each of these metaphors aligns with and reinforces Tate's overall message about masculinity, control, and success. By confidently presenting these metaphors, Tate positions himself as someone who understands the "true nature" of the world, enhancing his perceived authority.

4.1.7. Informal style and personal anecdotes

Tate uses an informal style of language in order to create closeness between him and the audience and foster in-group identity. By using informal language and personal anecdotes, he appears more genuine and relatable, and makes his content easily accessible to a broader audience:

- (1) ‘‘If I want a gun, I'll fucking buy it; if I want a car, I'll fucking buy it; if I want a bitch, I'll get her; it's me, I am GTA.’’
- (2) ‘‘Because that's how I started my first business and made a million dollars. I sat in my room pissed off and I fucking came up with the idea.’’

Informal style creates an impression of authenticity and directness, as if Tate is speaking candidly rather than delivering a scripted message, and can even make listeners feel as if they're having a personal conversation with him. By sharing personal stories, Tate fosters a sense of false intimacy where listeners feel they know him personally. Furthermore, personal anecdotes are typically more memorable than abstract concepts, and help build trust by suggesting that Tate is speaking from experience rather than theory. The use of personal anecdotes in Tate's speeches is especially prominent when there is a lack of rigorous evidence or logical arguments that support his statements. Finally, the use of aggressive, unfiltered language aligns with Tate's cultivated image of hyper-masculinity and blunt honesty.

4.2. Discursive practice

The primary author of the discourse is Andrew Tate, but the videos are not directly produced or uploaded by him due to his ban from YouTube. Instead, they are created and distributed by various channels across various social media platforms as part of an affiliate marketing strategy. The producers of these videos are likely members of Tate's affiliate program, who have financial incentives to spread his content. Their intention is to generate engagement and views and to expand Tate's influence and follower base, thereby earning commissions. This decentralized approach increases the content's reach and makes it more resilient to individual bans or restrictions. There is a notable power dynamic at play between Tate, the producer of the original content, and the affiliates who redistribute and repurpose his speeches. Affiliates benefit through commissions and exposure, while Tate gains an increased online presence and

follower growth despite being banned. This dynamic illustrates how bans on digital platforms can be circumvented through strategic content distribution and manipulation of online engagement metrics. The content in analysed videos is taken from Tate's interviews and strategically repackaged as "motivational speeches", which may serve to legitimize Tate's messages and make them more palatable to a wider audience. This reframing also allows the content to potentially bypass content moderation systems that might flag Tate's original, more controversial content. The distribution strategy is highly decentralised and leverages multiple channels across various social media platforms. By analysing three motivational speech videos on YouTube, we see three different channels with varying subscriber counts (from 5.63K to 318K) all sharing similar content. Each channel (Motivation Mentors, Healthy Mindset, successLine) has a similar audience targeting strategy:

- Motivation Mentors: targets a broad audience interested in success and personal development, and has a substantial subscriber base (318K).
- Healthy Mindset: focuses on motivational and inspirational content, with a slightly smaller but still significant subscriber base (237K).
- successLine: emphasizes life-changing inspiration and wealth creation, with a smaller subscriber base (5.63K).

The videos employ several tactics to maximize visibility and engagement, such as clickbait titles and thumbnails, incorporation of visually appealing graphics and text overlays, and strategic editing to create a coherent "motivational speech" narrative. The high view counts (ranging from 1M to 1.9M) suggest that this strategy is effective in reaching a large audience. The like-to-view ratios also indicate strong engagement, while comments are managed differently between channels: while some channels disable comments (Healthy Mindset), others facilitate engagement to foster community interaction and feedback (Motivation Mentors, successLine). The audience response appears largely positive, as evidenced by the high like counts and the nature of comments. This suggests that the repackaging of Tate's content as motivational material is successful in appealing to a wide audience. The fact that one channel has disabled comments might indicate an attempt to control the narrative or avoid potential controversy, but it could also be a strategy to drive engagement to other platforms where the affiliate has more control. The high engagement rates suggest that the content resonates with the target audience, potentially reinforcing existing beliefs or attracting new followers to Tate's ideology. The motivational framing may make Tate's more controversial

ideas more acceptable to a broader audience. However, it is important to note that this analysis is based on visible metrics and may not capture the full spectrum of audience responses, particularly from those who disagree with or are negatively impacted by Tate's content.

In conclusion, this discursive practice demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of social media algorithms and user behaviour. It exemplifies how controversial content can be repackaged and widely distributed through decentralized networks, potentially circumventing platform restrictions and reaching large audiences. This approach raises important questions about content moderation, the ethics of affiliate marketing, and the potential societal impacts of viral, controversial content masked as motivation.

4.3. Social practice

4.3.1. Traditional, patriarchal notion of masculinity

The speeches reflect a contemporary context where traditional notions of masculinity are being challenged and redefined. Tate's rhetoric appears to be a reaction to what he perceives as the feminization of society and men becoming ‘soft’:

- (1) “If you have a mind that you can't control, then you're never going to be a king. You're going to be a peasant, that's your life, you have a peasant's life ahead of you, and that's, that's your destiny, enjoy. Right, there's always been peasants, that's life, but I believe that the most important thing you can do as a man is to gain control of your mind.”
- (2) “You have to believe you're the man, and you have to believe you can achieve anything.”
- (3) “Society doesn't care about you; you're only going to be cared about based on how useful you are. You have the chance to build yourself up and become a superhero if you're prepared to do the hard work and be indefatigable enough to never quit, but if you're going to stand around and wait for a handout nobody's going to ever respect you.”
- (4) “And the dangerous thing about overly emotional men is that they're dangerous, they're genuinely dangerous. This is what's crazy, all these people who talk about toxic masculinity and how bad it is for men to be traditionally masculine. A traditionally masculine man does the things he doesn't feel like doing, because it is

his duty to do that. He charges into the burning building because it is his duty, not because he feels like it, because it is his duty. We're now teaching the new generation of men that they don't have duty and they can just act on their feelings, and act how they feel, and they don't have to act as a man should.”

(5) “Sitting here telling men to cry more, and act with their feelings, that it's okay to feel this way that way etc and have no self-control...that is why we have the problems we have in the world.”

(6) “Leave the feelings to the girls. Right, that's what we do, we act. We're men of action, we get things done.”

Modern notions of masculinity question traditionally imposed stereotypes like men needing to be emotionally stoic, physically dominant, and solely focused on providing and protecting. Tate's rhetoric can be seen as backlash against these changing norms - he repeatedly emphasises traditionally masculine traits and behaviours, presenting them as superior and necessary. Tate associates traditional masculinity with success, power, and respect, implying that departure from these norms leads to failure and weakness, and is misguided and harmful to men. Furthermore, Tate's speeches reinforce traditional patriarchal power structures by consistently emphasising male dominance and the need for men to be ‘strong’ and in control. Tate's notion of masculinity is oversimplistic, and potentially harmful for several reasons. It presents a one-size-fits-all model of masculinity that doesn't account for individual differences, cultural variations, or the complex nature of human identity. This rigid view can be damaging to men who don't fit this narrow definition. Furthermore, Tate discourages men from expressing emotions other than anger, which can lead to poor mental health outcomes, as emotional suppression is linked to various psychological issues. By positioning traditionally masculine traits as superior, Tate implicitly and explicitly devalues feminine traits and reinforces gender inequality, which can contribute to toxic behaviours and relationships. His emphasis on constant competition and domination can lead to stress, anxiety, and difficulties in forming genuine connections with others. While Tate claims his approach prevents violence, his emphasis on dominance and physical strength could actually encourage aggressive behaviour. His views ignore the benefits of evolving gender norms and the positive changes that have come from challenging traditional masculinity; as well as leave little room for empathy, compassion, and emotional intelligence, which are crucial for healthy relationships and social functioning. While Tate's rhetoric may appeal to some men who feel uncertain in a changing world, it ultimately promotes a harmful, restrictive view of masculinity that can lead to personal

and societal problems. A healthier approach would embrace a more flexible and inclusive understanding of masculinity that allows for emotional expression, respect for others, and diverse ways of being a man.

4.3.2. Neoliberal values and meritocracy

Tate's discourse is heavily influenced by neoliberal, capitalist and individualist ideologies. He emphasizes personal responsibility, financial success, and competition as key elements of masculinity and happiness.

- (1) "If you truly wanted money, you wouldn't be able to sleep until you fucking had it."
- (2) "I think you need to be sitting here, panicking at the fact that you don't have enough money. You need to be concerned and worried and sad, and you need to do something about it today."
- (3) "Society doesn't care about you; you're only going to be cared about based on how useful you are."
- (4) "We're always in constant competition with each other (...)"
- (5) "Nobody cares about you. Nobody, absolutely nobody, gives a shit about you. (...) You are never going to have any of the things you want if you do not get them yourself."
- (6) "If you were genuinely pissed off about your situation, you would not need me to motivate you, you would motivate your fucking self and you would do something to change it yourself."
- (7) "Because suffering is what gives it value."

Tate equates success with the accumulation of wealth and promotes the capitalist notion of competition as a driving force for progress. These statements also reflect the neoliberal idea that success is purely a matter of individual effort, ignoring systemic barriers or advantages. The self is commodified, and human value is reduced to economic productivity. Individualism is perhaps the most prominent neoliberal ideology in Tate's speeches, and is identified in the glorification of self-reliance and personal responsibility. Tate rejects the notion of collective support and dismisses the importance of support systems, emphasising individual resilience instead. Meritocracy is strongly present in Tate's rhetoric, and is often intertwined with his

individualist and capitalist perspectives. Tate consistently promotes the idea that success results purely from individual effort and merit, embodying the belief that anything is achievable through hard work, regardless of external factors. Within Tate's discourse, struggle is valorised - Tate often presents struggle and hardship as necessary and valuable components of success, aligning himself with meritocratic ideals and reinforcing hierarchical power dynamics where those who succeed through hardship are valued more highly. These ideologies are combined in Tate's rhetoric to create a worldview where: success is defined primarily in terms of wealth and power; the individual is solely responsible for their success or failure while systemic factors are ignored or dismissed; competition is valued over cooperation; and self-reliance is seen as the highest virtue. This perspective can be appealing as it offers a simple, actionable worldview. However, it is also deeply problematic as it ignores systemic inequalities, the value of community and cooperation, and the complex interplay of factors that contribute to success or failure. By placing sole responsibility on the individual, this perspective ignores deeply entrenched societal inequalities based on race, gender, class, sexuality and other factors. This worldview can be used to justify vast societal inequalities as simply the natural result of differences in individual effort and merit, ignoring systemic factors and luck. Additionally, such perspectives can be used to justify a lack of compassion for those who are struggling. When individuals who face systemic barriers inevitably struggle, they may internalize the idea that their failures are entirely their own fault, which can lead to negative emotions and a sense of worthlessness. Defining success primarily in terms of wealth and power neglects other important aspects of a fulfilling life, such as relationships, personal growth, and community involvement. This can lead to an imbalanced and potentially unfulfilling pursuit of material gains, prioritization of competition over cooperation, and unethical behaviour in the pursuit of personal goals. The emphasis on self-reliance ignores the crucial role that family, friends, mentors, and communities play in personal development and success, potentially leading to isolation and burnout. By focusing solely on individual responsibility, this perspective discourages collective action to address societal problems, potentially hindering social progress. The emphasis on relentless self-improvement and competition can be exploited by those in power to extract more labour and commitment from individuals, potentially leading to systemic inequalities. Finally, the idea that anyone can achieve anything through sheer will and effort is unrealistic and can set people up for disappointment and self-recrimination. While personal responsibility and ambition are in themselves positive traits, this extreme, individualistic and capitalistic worldview can lead to a harsh, unempathetic society with high levels of stress, inequality, and dissatisfaction. Tate fails to recognize the complex interplay of

individual and societal factors that contribute to success and well-being, and which can ultimately be detrimental both to individuals and to society as a whole.

4.3.3. Misogyny

Tate's discourse contains several elements that promote misogynistic views and reinforce negative stereotypes about women:

- (1) “(... If I want a bitch I'll get her, (...)”
- (2) “(... making as much money as they can, getting the best guns, getting strong, getting some hoes, (...)”
- (3) “All these women that you just put me on with are born with value, they're pretty already, they're gorgeous already, they're good looking enough, even if they're a five someone's gonna give a fuck they exist, because someone wants to fuck them.”
- (4) “Leave the feelings to the girls. Right, that's what we do, we act. We're men of action, we get things done.”

Tate refers to women in derogatory terms, such as “hoes” and “bitches”, and argues that women's value is based on their appearance, while men must earn their value. Similarly, women are reduced to sexual objects and mentioned in the context of sexual conquest, rather than portrayed as equal partners or individuals with their own agency. Tate also reinforces negative stereotypes by portraying women as overly emotional and submissive, and men as collected and dominant. These elements create a narrative that demeans women, reduces their value to their physical appearance and sexual availability, and promotes a worldview where men are the superior and dominant gender. This kind of rhetoric can contribute to harmful attitudes towards women and reinforce misogynistic beliefs among Tate's audience. Reducing women to their physical appearance and sexual availability denies their full humanity, intellect, and diverse contributions to society. Personal value, intelligence, capabilities, and potential for achievement are not determined by gender, and this worldview justifies and reinforces systemic gender inequality, hindering progress towards equal opportunities and rights. Furthermore, Tate's statements encourage unhealthy, imbalanced relationships based on dominance rather than mutual respect and partnership, and promote a lack of empathy and understanding between genders. Tate fails to acknowledge the vast diversity among both women and men, imposing a simplistic and false binary that perpetuates outdated and damaging stereotypes about both

genders. As a result, individual expression and development are limited, and men and women are forced to conform to narrow, often harmful, definitions of masculinity and femininity. Such views obstruct efforts to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society; and in the most dangerous contexts it can be used to justify violence and sexual abuse against women.

Tate's misogynistic narrative can be deeply harmful to individuals and society as a whole. It perpetuates inequality, limits human potential, and contradicts principles of human dignity. Promoting such views can have far-reaching negative consequences across personal, social, economic, and political spheres. A more accurate and beneficial approach recognizes the equal worth and potential of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Conclusion

This study has illustrated that Andrew Tate employs a sophisticated array of linguistic and rhetorical strategies to promote a worldview that is deeply rooted in values of traditional masculinity, neoliberalism, meritocracy, and misogyny.

Through a thorough textual analysis, I have identified several key elements of Tate's discourse:

- syntactic elements that create an authoritative tone,
- use of emotive and aggressive language to elicit emotionally charged reactions,
- use of absolutist language and contrastive structures to present ideas as indisputable truths,
- use of repetition and rhetorical questions to reinforce key points,
- use of hyperbole and metaphors to make arguments more compelling, and
- use of informal style and personal anecdotes to appear trustworthy and relatable.

These linguistic strategies are employed within a broader context of discursive practices that involve the repackaging and distribution of Tate's content across multiple platforms, often through a framework of motivational material. This approach has proven effective in expanding Tate's reach and influence, even in the face of platform bans.

The social practice analysis reveals that Tate's rhetoric reflects and reinforces several problematic ideologies:

- a rigid and harmful notion of masculinity,
- neoliberal values that overemphasise individual responsibility and ignore systemic inequalities, and
- misogynistic views that demean women and promote unhealthy gender dynamics.

While Tate's perspective may resonate with some individuals, it ultimately promotes a harmful and reductive worldview that ignores the complexity of human experience, reinforces damaging stereotypes, and contributes to personal and societal problems. This research underscores the need for critical examination of influential online content and its potential impacts, and highlights the challenges of content moderation in the digital age. Future studies could explore the long-term effects of exposure to such content on audience beliefs and behaviours, as well as investigate effective strategies for promoting more inclusive and healthy perspectives on masculinity, success, and gender relations.

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