

How a 'manosphere' influencer is selling extreme masculinity to young men

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

An online search of "how to be a man" leads to nearly 130 million hits and over 12 million videos. Many of these promise hacks or some "big secret" to attain the pinnacle of masculinity. Spend enough time looking through this content and you will inevitably encounter Andrew Tate.

Apparently the [most Googled public figure in 2022](#), Tate was removed from a range of platforms in August due to claims he promoted extreme misogynistic views. Tate is also accused of being at the vanguard of radicalizing young men and endorsing male supremacy, with [parents and educators concerned](#) about his influence on young men and their views on masculinity.

U.S.-born Tate was raised in the U.K. and competed as a kickboxer before appearing on Big Brother in 2016. After a video surfaced of Tate hitting a woman with a belt, producers removed him from the show on the grounds of domestic abuse. Tate refutes this version of events, saying the activities filmed were consensual and that he was removed for the [safety of the other housemates](#).

Like many reality television stars, Tate then found social media fame. Promoting a jet-set lifestyle—fast cars, private planes, expensive cigars and [attractive women](#)—Tate advocates a traditional form of masculinity that exploits notions of the male protector, provider and patriarch, and [values conspicuous consumption](#).

He has gone on record to say that women are [like children](#), a man's [property](#), [a liability](#), corrupted by sex, [lazy](#) and [stupid](#). He has claimed that men become weak and uncompetitive if they live with women, that depression isn't real, and that success is defined by how much power one has over other people. He has also been accused of being [homophobic](#) and [racist](#).

In August 2022, Tate was banned from [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#). Tate has since [denied](#) being misogynistic, saying he was simply playing a [comedic character](#) and that his views were deliberately misconstrued, misinterpreted, or taken out of context. This it-was-just-a-joke defense is a tried and tested method of deflecting criticism and defending misogyny. Linguist Bethan Benwell has studied the use of

[irony in men's lifestyle magazines](#), finding that it allows speakers to espouse controversial views without taking responsibility.

But it's difficult to square Tate's explanations for his behavior with what he actually says. A cursory review of almost any of his content highlights an incredibly worrying mindset where gender is concerned, in some cases openly promoting [coercive control and domestic abuse](#).

King of the mansphere

Tate has become a leading voice of the mansphere, a digital space where men talk about "men's issues" like fitness and health, dating, relationships, finances, divorce, fathers' rights, and more. While these are important topics to offer help and support on, the mansphere is also a space where anti-women and anti-feminist ideologies have taken root, bolstered by a belief in the inherent superiority of men.

Shifting gender relations and changing familial and domestic patterns have led more young men to feel what sociologist Michael Kimmel calls ["aggrieved entitlement"](#)—a state of anger and fear that they are losing their [social status](#) and privilege.

In my own [research](#), I have found that aggrieved entitlement goes hand in hand with men presenting themselves as victims of a global assault on masculinity. My analysis of mansphere spaces on Reddit, for example, shows that men think they are emasculated, disposable, disrespected, discarded or even totally forgotten. It is easy to see, then, how Tate's message becomes a call to reclaim "lost" masculinity and reassert masculine authority over others.

Many worry that Tate's audience is [being indoctrinated](#) into an extremist and dangerous form of masculinity. As journalist Caitlin Cooper [points out](#):

"Tate is not empowering young men, he is radicalizing them. Young men are learning that, if they express emotion they are weak, if they do not have girlfriends they are failures, and if they do not receive female subservience they are not adequately reaping the benefits of manhood."

For some young men and [boys](#), resisting this siren call, wrapped up as it is in a discourse of self-improvement and led by a cult-of-personality figure like Tate, can be a struggle. Through social media, Tate's beliefs have become part of mainstream discourse, and countering these views is not straightforward. Tate peddles a beguiling image of male dominance and all the (supposed) benefits and advantages such a thing affords.

What can be done

A number of organizations have developed resources to help parents, teachers and other adults to talk to young men showing signs of potential radicalization. The charity [Hope not Hate](#) has published advice on how to combat radicalization in schools, while the [Challenging Male Supremacy](#) project and the [Institute for Research on Male Supremacism](#) has a range of resources about the dangers of male supremacism. Educators, teachers, parents and friends need to challenge male supremacist views when they hear them and offer positive models of behavior for young men to aspire to.

Social media platforms also need to do much more to counteract the dissemination of problematic views advocated by Tate and others like him. YouTube, for example, still hosts countless videos of Tate, and it's not difficult to find other examples on TikTok and Twitter. Of most concern is how new content is curated for viewers. Watch one video and inevitably similar content will be promoted to a user's front page. Because I had to watch Tate's interviews and podcasts to write this article, the YouTube and Facebook algorithms are now actively pushing

more of his videos to my account.

Some might decry [social media](#) intervention as censorship or "cancel culture," but there is [evidence to suggest](#) that [deplatforming hate speech](#) is an effective countermeasure against its viral spread.

For those of us who study misogyny and sexism, there is always a concern that we are drawing attention to the more insidious elements of online discussions that would be better off left untouched. But if we want to understand how Tate and the manosphere fit into our society, engaging with his content is a necessary evil. And maybe if we as academics do it, then the general public won't have to.

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