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The Savior of Humankind – Andrew Tate

A reflexive thematic analysis with focus on what discourse social media phenomenon Andrew Tate construct through his public utterances, and how he uses this discourse to convince young men to adopt his worldview

Cathrine Lyngholm Klattrup

Abstract

Background: Every day, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of men, visit social media sites in search of wisdom and understanding about what it means to be a male in the 21st century. **Purpose:** This study investigates popular and influential social media phenomenon Andrew Tate's discursive construction of reality through his public utterances, and how he uses this discourse to convince young men to adopt his worldview. **Research methods:** This is a qualitative study on the foundation of three YouTube videos containing hourlong material of Andrew Tate's utterances. To analyze the data, the study used a reflexive thematic analysis approach with a focus on critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, the study used Hegemonic Masculinity Theory, Conspiracy Theory and Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation to elaborate the underlying mechanisms at stake. **Themes:** (1) *This is what is wrong with the world* containing subthemes: (1a) *De-humanizing women*, and (1b) *Undermining men to recruit them*; and (2) *This is how the Real World is and should be* containing subthemes: (2a) *The Real World*, and (2b) *The Savior*. **Conclusion:** The discourse that social media phenomenon Andrew Tate constructs through his public utterances reveals a narrative that supports harmful gender norms, reinforces male superiority, and manipulates young men to adopt his illusion of a reality where he possesses expert knowledge about the functioning of the world and how to save it from the oppression of humankind. By utilizing enactive experience, modeling, and direct tuition, he reinforces his appeals to the inner desires and insecurities of young men, effectively leveraging their existential and social motives to compel them to follow his controversial and conspiracy-laden worldview.

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Introduction

"Every day, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of men, visit these sites in search of wisdom and understanding about what it means to be a male in the 21st century, particularly in the face of a culture irrevocably changed by feminism."

(Ian Ironwood's definition of "The Manoshere" in Cannito & Camoletto, 2022, p. 593).

This article offers an elaboration of the popular social media phenomenon Andrew Tate's public utterances which construct a discourse where he presents a default in the human world that needs to be taken care of, and also, he is the prophet who possesses impossibly accessible knowledge for the selected few to teach the world in order to create paradise for men on Earth. Therefore, it becomes paramount to follow him.

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of especially adolescents worldwide, with usage increasing from 0.97 billion in 2010 to 3.40 billion in 2019, and to 4.20 billion users since the Covid pandemic. Furthermore, adolescent social media users spend around three hours per day on social media (Keles, Grealish & leamy, 2023; Vannuccia, 2020). According to Vannuccia et al. (2020), online and offline context are strongly interconnected. Offline developmental issues related to identity, autonomy, peer relationships, and sexuality are hypothesized to be brought to the social media context through the co-construction model presented by Subrahmayam et al. (2006) (Subrahmayam, Smahel & Greenfield, 2006; Vannuccia, 2020).

Additionally, problematic internet use (PIU) has been linked to executive function (EF) deficits suggesting that problematic use of the internet and social media may influence impulse control leading to an inhibition deficit (Reed, 2020). In addition, a meta-study (Vannuccia et al., 2020) found a coherence between the use of social media and engagement in risky behavior, including risky sexual behavior (Vannuccia, 2020).

The technological affordances of social media and the possibility of anonymity enable contributors to create fantasy personas, liberating them from physical limitations, and facilitate hostile and often illegal performances of masculinity, which are effectively impossible to regulate online. Social media also creates homogenization of specific rhetoric, which facilitates the spread of ideas and information across groups, platforms, and geographical boundaries. For instance, the new anti-feminist politics and extreme misogyny have been found to spread more easily on social media (Ging, 2017).

Although social media has been associated with negative effects, it can also have some beneficial effects, such as enabling easier connection and communication with new people, which may facilitate

social and emotional support. This is particularly important for adolescents who require social connectedness and a sense of belonging (Keles, Grealish & Leamy, 2023).

This sense of belonging may for some be found in the online community "The Manosphere".

The Manosphere

The manosphere is a loose confederacy of interest groups comprising men's rights activists which has established complex connections with a range of interconnected organizations, communities, and subcultures, disseminating misogynistic and antifeminist positions (Cannito & Camoletto, 2022; Ging, 2017; Van Valkenburgh, 2018). A central part of the politics of the manosphere is the concept of the Red Pill. This analogy, derived from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, purports to awaken men to feminism's misandry and brainwashing, and it is the key concept that unites the different communities of the manosphere (Ging, 2017; Van Valkenburgh, 2018).

On social platforms advocating the Red Pill, there is a sidebar containing links to recommended reading material on topics related to dating, relationships, and self-empowerment. The Red Pill's sidebar posits men's exploitation by women and suggests that feminism disguises the truth of male exploitation and oppression (Van Valkenburgh, 2018). The "online heart of modern misogyny" (the Red Pill) (Van Valkenburgh, 2018) interprets heterosexual relationships as a marketplace where every human being has a sexual market value (SMV). The discourse in the manosphere posits a hypergamic vision of sex and the existence of a hierarchy among men based on their sexual success with women; at the top are Alpha males, followed by Betas and Omegas (Cannito & Camoletto, 2022).

Additionally, collective narcissism is an important concept to consider when examining the manosphere and the Red Pill community. Collective narcissism is defined as "a belief that one's own group (the in-group) is exceptional and entitled to special recognition and privileged treatment, but it is not sufficiently recognized by others" (de Zavela et al., 2009; Rottweiler, Clemmow & Gill, 2021).

Male collective narcissism is associated with viewing women as a threatening out-group resulting in less empathy and greater hostile sexism towards women (Rottweiler, Clemmow & Gill, 2021). Perceived threats on masculine identity and group status have been linked to engagement in violent hypermasculine behaviors, feelings of injustice and victimhood, as well as a strong desire for women's (sexual) subjugation. Additionally, a sense of frustrated entitlement and superiority may transform shame, anger, and perceived injustices into a desire for revenge against women (Rottweiler, Clemmow & Gill, 2021). Hypermasculinity, which involves frequent physical violence, excitement-

seeking, and sexually calloused attitudes towards women, is a significant predictor of rape-supportive attitudes (Obierefu & Ojedokun, 2019).

Alpha and Beta males

The political rhetoric of the manosphere is dominated by evolutionary psychology, which relies on genetic determinism to explain male and female behaviors related to sexual selection. However, the use of evolutionary psychology in the manosphere is limited to the superficial interpretation of theories that support their beliefs, such as the idea that women are irrational and hypergamous (Ging, 2017).

The manosphere's theories about alpha and beta masculinities are based on genetic determinism and suggest that women are inherently promiscuous, seeking out alpha males for sex and genetics but settling for and exploiting beta males for their money and emotional support (Cannito & Camoletto, 2022; Ging, 2017; Van Valkenburgh, 2018). Beta males are viewed as weak and less manly, forced to trade power and intimacy for sex resulting in a passive, powerless position in relation to women (Cannito & Camoletto, 2022). However, there is no consensus about the alpha-beta analogy. While some argue that men, having swallowed the red pill, should reject their beta status and strive to achieve alpha masculinity, others argue that the concept has been hijacked by feminists and some subcultures on social media reject alpha masculinity altogether (Ging, 2017).

Popular social media phenomenon Andrew Tate perceive himself as a top alpha male in society.

Andrew Tate

Andrew Tate was born in Washington D.C., United States on December 1, 1986, but raised in London, United Kingdom. He describes himself as a British four-time World Kickboxing Champion, former reality TV personality, entrepreneur, and social media influencer. Additionally, Tate is also known for his controversial opinions on a variety of topics, including relationships, masculinity, and politics. He has a large social media following (Appendix 1).

As an entrepreneur, Tate has created an online platform, *The Real World[1]*, which is an online training program and community that provides courses, coaching, and support to help people to gain the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to succeed in life and achieve their goals.

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[1] https://therealworld.co/?campaign=Cobratate&keyword=e-the%20real.world-&device=c&ad=644867951727&position=&utm_medium=cpc&loc=1005329-&utm_content=70514636-148198218907-644867951727&subid=gclid(CjwKCAjwvdajBhBEEiwAeMh1U21iq4G0QfXDWqEnVdjX4PwR6XUV8A2zcrvaFVy

This introduction leads to the development of following research question.

Research question

"What discourse does social media phenomenon Andrew Tate construct through his public utterances, and how does he use this discourse to convince young men to adopt his worldview?"

This research question is interesting to study because Andrew Tate is a popular public figure both on social media and in the social internet community "The manosphere" where probably millions of men every day search for knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a male in the 21st century (Cannito & Camoletto, 2022). Furthermore, this study focuses on *young men* because studies show that emerging adults experience their twenties as a time of importance and frequent changes as various possibilities in relationships and worldviews are explored. Thus, this period in life may be considered a period where most people have made life choices that have enduring ramifications (Arnett, 2000; Knudsen, Pedersen, Engelbrekt & Jensen de López, 2019). Therefore, young men may be more prone to adopt Andrew Tate's controversial worldviews. This study focuses on the reality, Tate constructs in his public utterances, and how this discourse is used to attract young men. Thus, there will not be a characteristic of Tate's personal characteristics.

Theoretical approach

To answer my research question, I have chosen Hegemonic Masculinity Theory, Conspiracy Theory and Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation because together they create the foundation of an in-depth understanding of the discourse, Andrew Tate constructs through his utterances, and how this discourse convinces young men to join his worldviews.

Unequal gender relations

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a specific form of masculinity that legitimizes unequal gender relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity (Messerschmidt, 2019), and is understood as patterns of practice that allows men's dominance over women to continue (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The achievement of hegemonic masculinity is largely through cultural

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ascendancy – discursive persuasion – that encourages all to consent to, coalesce around, and embody unequal gender relations (Messerschmidt, 2019).

Gender relations are structured through power inequalities, and emphasized femininity is essential to understanding how this feminized form adapts to masculine power (Messerschmidt, 2019). In addition, masculinity is inherently relational, existing only in contrast to femininity (Yang, 2020). Also, gender relations are historical and subject to change, and hegemonic masculinities come into existence in specific circumstances (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Yang, 2020). Gender hegemony functions to obscure unequal gender relations while effectively permeating public and private life, encouraging all to endorse, unite around, and embody such unequal gender relations. Finally, Messerschmidt (2019) draws attention to the significance of distinguishing between "hegemonic" and "dominant" masculinities, as not all dominant forms of masculinity legitimize men's power over women (Messerschmidt, 2019). I assess hegemonic masculinity theory as an importing contributor to my analysis because it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the construction of societal norms, expectations, and power dynamics that shape unequal relationships among individuals.

In addition to the understanding of the construction of unequal gender relations, it is relevant to investigate Tate's utterances with a focus on how gender norms are developed in human beings.

Gender norms

According to West (2015), society is gendered and organized around the division of biological sex into gendered binaries of man and women (West, 2015). The Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation, proposed by Kay Busey and Albert Bandura, explains the psychosocial determinants and mechanisms by which society socializes male and female infants into masculine and feminine adults (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Thus, this is a theory that focuses on the span of gender development from infant to adult, not on specific age-related changes in behavior and thinking (Grusec, 1992). The theory argues that although some gender differences are biologically founded, most of the stereotypical attributes and roles linked to gender arise more from cultural design than from biological endowment (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This aligns with the notion that sex is biological and gender is socially and psychologically constructed, referring to the given roles, behaviors, and characteristics deemed appropriate for either a man or a woman, as determined by social norms (West, 2015).

Gender development is understood through tradic reciprocal causation, where personal factors, behavior patterns, and environmental events all play a role as interacting determinants that influence each other in a bidirectional manner (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; West, 2015). The three primary modes through which gender development is influenced are *modeling*, *enactive experience*, and *direct tuition* (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Both Hegemonic Theory and The Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation provide a theoretical foundation of the understanding of unequal gender relations and gender norms in Andrew Tate's utterances. Additionally, Conspiracy Theory provides us with an understanding of how he is able to convince young men to follow his controversial online community.

Searching for meaning

Conspiracy theories are attempts to explain significant social and political events with claims of secret plots by powerful actors (Douglas et al., 2019; Franks et. al., 2017). They and other forms of misinformation flourish on social media (Bangerter, Wagner-Egger & Delouvée, 2020) because people are likely to become trapped in digital "echo chambers" where they only engage with ideologically like-mined participants (Birchall & Knight, 2022). People are drawn to these conspiracy theories and echo chambers because they promise to satisfy important social psychological motives such as the desire for understanding, accuracy, control, security, and a positive self-image (Douglas et al., 2019). The appeal of conspiracy theories can be linked to *epistemic motives*, *existential motives*, and *social motives*. Finally, conspiracy theories are prevalent among individuals who feel powerless, anxious, or existentially distressed (Biddlestone et al., 2020; Douglas et al., 2019; Van Prooijen, J., Klein, O., & Đordevic, 2020).

Together, these three theories will provide us with an in-depth understanding of what discourse social media phenomenon Andrew Tate constructs through his public utterances, and how he uses this discourse to convince young men to join his community.

In the following section, I will elaborate you on my methodological reflections.

Method

Design and procedure

This study adopts a qualitative research paradigm, employing a critical realism ontology and contextualist epistemology (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). This study draws

upon the principles of Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2012; Gee & Handford, 2012) to generate themes as a framework for the critical discourse analysis. My intention with this study is to generate themes that seek to achieve a deeper, more nuanced comprehension of the content present in Andrew Tate's public utterances.

The choice of a qualitative research design was made in order to provide a comprehensive, contextualized, and nuanced analysis of Tate's controversial statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). Furthermore, this study follows an abductive approach which includes both bottom-up, data-driven and theory-driven, top-down elements (Haig, 2008). The aim of this study is to contribute to a rich tapestry of knowledge about how powerful public figures, like Tate, construct their discourse to convince people to adopt their worldview.

Data
I have chosen YouTube videos as subjects for this thesis. They are described in Table 1.

Table 1. Chosen YouTube videos

Name and date	Views	Protagonist	Interviewer/antagonist	Link
EMERGENCY MEETING - THE MATRIX ATTACKS published on the 28th of August 2022	47.867 (April 3rd 2023)	Andrew Tate	Tristan Tate Andrew Tate's brother, former kickboxer, internet personality and so on.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VOM_f2UcEo
How To Be The "Bad Boy" Women Love (w/ Andrew Tate) published the 20th of January 2020	705.439 (April 3rd 2023)	Andrew Tate	Max "Tripp" Kramer: Tripp Advice: 1.000.000 subscribers on YouTube on April 3rd 2023. Dating coach IG: trippadvice (128.000 followers on April 3rd 2023) https://www.instagram.com/trippadvice/?hl=da	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJhU54fLTGo
ANDREW TATES MOST ICONIC INTERVIEW ON MONEY, MASCULINITY & WOMEN ft LAYAH HEILPERN published the 21st of January 2022	4.8 m (April 3rd 2023)	Andrew Tate	Layah Heilpern 373.000 subscribers on YouTube on April 3rd 2023. Bitcoin investor, marketing consultant, author and so on. IG: layahheilpern (85.600 followers on April 3rd 2023) https://www.instagram.com/layahheilpern/?hl=da	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZ6FhDfa9UY

YouTube is an online video-sharing platform where users can upload, share, view, and comment on videos. YouTube was chosen as the platform for this study because 1) it is one of the largest social media platforms, with over 2 billion monthly active users, which makes it a prominent destination for online socialization, 2) videos are easily accessible and public available which makes them legal to analyze for research purposes, and 3) it is possible to assess the videos' popularity through the number of their views.

The videos have been selected on the basis of the following criteria, view Table 2.

Table 2: Selection Criteria
1. Andrew Tate must be the main speaker
2. The content must include Andrew Tate's opinions on women, the relationship between men and women, and the difference in men.
3. The quality of the video has to be good.
4. The video shall have over 40,000 views.
5. The videos shall provide a diverse insight to his utterances.
6. The videos shall be from half an hour to 1.5 hours.

Criteria 1) is because Andrew Tate is the man in focus of my research, 2) is because he has been cancelled by social media companies due to his misogynistic and gender controversial public utterances, 3) is so that I am able to hear him at all times making sure that I am able to transcribe the videos into text, 4) is because the videos has to have reached a fair amount of people in order for me to assess if the specific utterances in these YouTube videos are popular, 5) is because I would like to see and hear his different ways of explaining his worldview in order to manage context bias, and 6) is because I want to be able to determine and analyze those of his utterances that are consistent throughout his public utterances.

Aligned with the contextualist epistemology, I chose to analyze the spoken discourse from video data because I wanted to be able to contextualize Tate's statements in the exact settings that he has chosen to present his worldview in. The visual video material has served as a foundation for my fundamental understanding of Andrew Tate and his utterances and will not be elaborated further in this article[2]. Also, video material is the most available data on the internet, where Andrew Tate invites his audience into his controversial utterances.

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[2] Important visual notions are elaborated in Appendix 1.

Data analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis is chosen as it aligns with the study's epistemology and values a subjective, situated, aware, and inquisitive researcher. The study aims to produce situated, and subjective knowledge that contributes to the understanding of the research question.

In addition to the framework, discourse analysis is used as a method for analysis as it explores language in use, the meanings we assign to it, and the actions we carry out when we use it in specific contexts. Language is not only used to convey meaning but to accomplish actions, goals, and purposes (Gee & Handford, 2012). Within the discourse analysis paradigm, I will focus on the critical discourse analysis which is a type of discourse analysis that integrates the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies, emphasizing the interplay between discourse and other social factors, such as power dynamics and ideologies (Fairclough, 2012).

Reflexive thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis share a foundational belief that social reality is conceptually mediated and constructed through language and discourse. This perspective recognizes that social events and practices do not exist independently of the interpreters (Fairclough, 2012). Thus, reflexive thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis acknowledge the interplay between language, discourse, and social reality, recognizing that multiple factors shape meaning-making.

I began my analytic process by familiarizing myself with the data and identifying multiple potential points of interest for analysis. Through my coding process, I created a total of 295 codes, aiming to identify subtle variations within the dataset. To make the analysis more manageable, I initially grouped the codes into clusters. From there, I analyzed the codes and identified two overarching themes and four corresponding subthemes. I then carefully reviewed the data to ensure that these themes accurately represented the content of the utterances. Once I finalized the selection of the two themes and four subthemes, I proceeded to name them. Throughout this naming process, I intentionally avoided using generic summaries and instead opted for creative names that truly captured the essence of the analysis.

Analysis

This study contributes to the field of psychological science by providing a detailed analysis of the discourse created by Andrew Tate through his public statements, and how he utilizes this discourse to attract young men to adopt his worldview. Through my reflexive thematic data analysis, I developed two main themes: *This is what is wrong with the world* and *This is how the Real World is*

and should be, along with four subthemes: *De-humanizing Women, Undermining Men to Recruit Them, The Real World,* and *The Savior.*

This is what is wrong with the world

To begin with, I will provide you with a brief summary of this overall theme containing two subthemes. This summary is based on my codes.

The first subtheme *De-humanizing women* is about Andrew Tate's utterances and statements containing a variety of sexist and objectifying beliefs about women. These include the assertion that women are cognitively and emotionally underdeveloped like children, that their only motivation in life is fun and attention, and that they are only worth anything if they provide sexual loyalty. Tate also states that men should have authority over women. Other troubling beliefs include the notion that all women are the same, and that women who criticize Tate are objectively ugly. Overall, the analysis contains numerous examples of objectification, misogyny, and a general disregard for women as equal and autonomous individuals.

Additionally, Tate has made utterances *Undermining men* that functions as a *recruitment strategy*. He contends that a man's qualities and attributes, such as hard work, intelligence, good networking skills, and stress management, are what make him attractive to woman. Tate asserts that using positive insults can motivate people to better themselves, and he emphasizes that men must be mindful of not diminishing their own value while sparking emotions in women. He furthermore argues, that only men who have engaged in fair fights with other men are "real men" and that cowardice among men is the root cause of humankind's suffering. He asserts that men are controlled and manipulated by feminism and women and that weakness is not acceptable for men. Finally, Tate asserts that only "real men" deserve respect and happiness.

Firstly, a presentation of my in-depth analysis of the theme *de-humanizing women* with a focus on the discourse will be presented.

De-humanizing Women

The following quote is an utterance about how men should and shouldn't be in a relationship:

"You can do anything you want to a woman except bore her and this is absolutely a fact of life you look at these girls who stay in these abusive relationships I'm not going say anything crazy

(…) there's something about certain toxic relationships even women enjoy, this is the reality of nature of human nature (…)."

In this utterance, Tate directly tuitions a power dynamic that places women in a subordinate position and perpetuates harmful gender norms. His hegemonic suggestion that men have the agency and control to do anything they want to women, except bore them, implies an entitlement over women's lives. Also, his utterance implies that emotional manipulation is the reality of human nature. This deterministic way of argumentation may be a strategy to convince young men that he is an expert. Also, it justifies his controversial opinions because he abdicates responsibility by saying that it is "absolutely a fact of life", which eliminates the possibility of dialogue and perspective. By making these statements, Tate encourages young men to carry on hegemonic masculinity by endorsing, unite around, and embody unequal gender relations.

Aligned with the previous quote, Tate states:

"WOMEN DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT!"

In this utterance, Tate positions women as lacking self-awareness and agency in knowing their own desires and preferences. It diminishes women's autonomy and reinforces a notion of male superiority and knowledge. This projection of Tate's own beliefs unto his audience is a part of his epistemic motive to convince young men that he understands the complex phenomenon of women better than them and that they should join his community to learn more. By generalizing women into this indecisive and irrational group, he makes them the out-group whereas his own supporters are the in-group.

This next quote reflects Tate's thoughts about travelling with women:

"Imagine you had to travel around the world and you had to take a three-year-old with you - you'd be like where's my three-year-old has it ate? I have to make sure they're safe, got to bring all their stuff, it's exactly the same with the chick (…) Yeah so women are effectively children."

Tate uses enactive experience to portray women as incapable and in need of constant care and supervision by comparing them to children both explicitly and by using an analogy. This infantilization undermines women's agency and independence and it may function as a social motive to strengthen collective narcissism in his in-group by appealing to young men's possible need to feel superior. He suggests that women are dependent on men which reduces their value by equating them with less capable beings. This power imbalances and the discursive use of "it" to describe women through the analogy of a three-year-old child objectifies them as possessions. By doing this, Tate provides a positive self-image of men as the only gender who is capable of being powerful, rational and in control, which is a conspiracy method to endorse young men into believing in Tate's worldview. Also, by using deterministic utterances as "women are effectively children", Tate signals self-confidence in a way that may be desirable for young men who feel existential powerless or anxious in this world which is a way of modelling how "real men" should behave.

In addition to the power imbalance and objectification of women, Tate has made the following statement:

> "if I said to my girl: can you make me a cup of coffee? She said no. I just find that extremely disrespectful (…) responsibility and authority are linked and this link has been broken if you're responsible for someone or something you have authority over someone or something (…) captain of a ship has responsibility for that ship so he has authority over everything on the ship (…)"

Tate's position towards being in a relationship constructs a world where responsibility and authority is closely connected. By juxtaposing women and an object (a ship/something), Tate uses an analogy as direct tuition to convince his audience that his statement is correct. It is challenging to argue that a captain should not have authority over his ship, therefore it becomes challenging to argue that men should not have authority over women. Also, he equals women setting boundaries and extreme disrespects which underlines the severity of women not obeying men and this may construct a greater barrier between the two genders. This use of his public voice helps to initiate young men in what he believes is wrong with the world.

Aligned is an utterance where Tate states that women cannot protect themselves, and men who supports equal rights between the two genders cannot either.

"If a woman gets in trouble, they call men like me. If someone's assaulting a woman on the street, you call men like me. (…) These male feminists can't protect women. (…) All these people who have said that I'm misogynist have no interest in the truth."

Tate emphasizes the idea that "real men" (not feminists) are responsible for protecting women, highlighting the dismissal of male feminists. This discourse constructs a world where men like Tate are "real men" and the saviors of women. For men who feels powerless and in search of a meaning with life, this reduction of women into helpless victims in need of male intervention constructs a world where young men may feel that their existence has meaning. It is both an existential and social motive to attract young men to adopt his worldview and be part of his in-group where he is the role-model of how real men should be. Also, Tate ends his misogynistic argumentation with a statement saying that if people interpret him as a misogynist, they have no interest in the truth. This argumentation indicates both that there only is one overall truth in the world and that he has special access to knowledge about that truth which he will provide his followers with.

Speaking about what is wrong with the world, Tate does not interpret himself as the bad guy:

"They say, Andrew, yeah, everything you said is true. You're right. It's hard to be a man, but you're the one making it worse (…). That's not true. Do you know who tells men that they need to be stronger and not allowed to be weak? Women… (…) Women set the rules (…)."

Until now, Tate has de-humanized women. In this utterance, he argues that women set the rules. The implication that men are discouraged from expressing vulnerability or weakness as women will not choose them is a narrative where he assigns men's unhappiness to women, making women responsible for all his controversial and misogynistic opinions while adopting a victimhood narrative and deflecting responsibility himself. This may be a strategy for Tate to justify his controversial public utterances and convince young men that he is not evil.

I will elaborate further on what discourse social media phenomenon Andrew Tate construct through his utterances and how he uses this discourse to attract young men in the following presentation of my analysis in the subtheme: *Undermining men as a way of recruiting them*.

Undermining Men to Recruit Them

This subtheme is different from the previous subtheme *de-humanizing women* because Tate uses his de-humanizing of women to attract men into following his worldview and to justify his undermining of men who, in Tate's eyes, are not "real men". This justification functions for him to devalue men in a way that they get the desire to want to be like him. In this way, he is able to recruit them for his training program. First, he undermines them and then he provides them with knowledge on where they can learn how to be "real men".

In the following quote Tate undermines a person, who has been critical to his utterances:

> "Who the fuck is this guy. This guy is a genuine incredible threat to women. On top of it all, he's objectively unattractive (…) when you look up any kind of sexual predator, they're unattractive people. "

Tate's usage of demeaning language in his derogatory and offensive statement belittles the person in question which constructs collective narcissism segregating his in-group from the "others". The implication that a man's appearance reflects his morality is an undermining argumentation used as a strategy to attract young men with existential motives to become better versions of themselves in the search of a relationship with a woman. Furthermore, the establishment of a connection between a man's appearance and the behavior of sexual predators may speak into young men's possible low self-esteem and fear of being opted out, and that fear can lead to the recruitment of these young men. Additionally, the notion that an objective scale of attractiveness exists may be a strategy for Tate to convince young men that he is the bearer of the answers on how to save men from public alienation.

Also, Tate further states that a man's physical appearance is a reflection of the man's ability to master self-control:

"If you can't control what you put in your own mouth (…). You have so little self-control and women see that on you and they know that you have no self-control. You're probably a danger to them. You can't control your emotions. You can't control what you eat. "

Through this shaming language and deterministic argumentation, Tate signals that he is an expert in lifestyle, and he implies that those who struggle with weight management lack self-control in all aspects of their lives. He uses this and accusing language like "you can't" and "you're" in his construction of a world where he knows everything about everyone from their appearance. This undermining may be a strategy for Tate to alienate and later convince young men that they need his help to be able to master self-control and to become "real men" worthy of women's attention because they are left with existential and social motives to be fulfilled by a role-model like Tate himself.

Furthermore, Tate states that these men do not deserve happiness:

"(…) that's the reality so most you men out here don't even deserve happiness (…) you know you don't deserve it because you're a coward and you're lazy and you're weak, you don't deserve happiness it's good you're unhappy - that's your own mind telling you, you need to do more (…)."

Tate's suggestion that unhappy men do not deserve happiness, and that they are cowards, lazy, and weak may be a strategy to make them feel powerless, anxious, or existentially distressed. By stating "you know you don't deserve it", he manipulates unhappy young men into believing that it is their own fault that they are unhappy in this world. This may be a strategy to make these young men feel so useless that they get existentially motivated to follow his beliefs and become part of his community in order to feel better about themselves. By simplistically linking feelings of unhappiness to laziness or lack of effort, Tate convinces young men that they are the only ones responsible for their mental health, and therefore they are the only ones who are able to do something about it. Also, stating "that's the reality", he both indicates that he knows the complexity of how the Real World functions, and he justifies his belittlement of these unhappy men.

Additionally, Tate states that all men are cowards and pussies:

"We suffer from modern society and all of its problems… Suffers from the fact that we are plagued by monumental cowardice amongst the male population. All men are cowards. (…) Everyone's a pussy. EVERYBODY! (…)"

Tate's dramatic and provocative statements claiming that "we suffer" and "we are plagued" are discourses that underlines Tate's superiority and complex knowledge on "what is wrong with the world" – a reality that he is willing to tuition young men about in order for them to change it. The lack of nuance in his perspective constructs a certainty in his utterance, making young men less critical to his statements, but it also contradicts previous statements. His generalized utterances "all men are cowards" and "everyone's a pussy" fails to include "real men" which may indicate that he uses deterministic language with a focus on targeting young men who deep inside does not feel like "real men". When targeting young men, who already feel like cowards, Tate is more likely to recruit them because they have an existential motive to wanting to learn from him.

Besides undermining men, he also gives advice:

"Your attention has no value so the way you give it value is 1) becoming a higher value man, another way is you have to make sure your attention has value - you don't throw it away."

Tate constructs a discourse of attention as a commodity with value. He suggests that attention can be assigned value based on the qualities or status of the person giving it, treating it as a resource to be strategically managed. This perspective prioritizes the pursuit of becoming a "higher value man" and it centers on self-improvement and personal gain, which he is able to directly tuition and also teach through modelling. Furthermore, Tate suggests allocating attention selectively based on a perceived hierarchy of value, reinforcing social and hegemonic hierarchies which potentially may function as a way of distinguishing between in-group and out-group making his community more desirable to enter.

To learn more about Tate's knowledge, apply to his PhD program:

"I have my PhD program: Pimping Hoes Degree (…) that teaches basically how I got girls, how I met girls, how I got girls to like me, how I got girls to fall in love with me, to work on webcam

for me because that's what I did, my MO was: find girls, make them love me and make them

work for me and that's how I got rich (…).”

Besides the intention of recruiting men, this utterance reveals a power dynamic where Tate asserts control and positions himself as someone who manipulates and exploits women through his PhD program. He uses an academic acronym to name his program in order to construct the illusion that it is of higher scientific value. This may convince his audience that he is an expert in his utterances. Also, he uses de-humanizing language and enactive experience as a discursive way of heightening his ethos as a way of convincing his audience that he is the bearer of expert knowledge on how to attract the company of a woman and how to get rich.

Summary

The analysis of the overall theme: *This is what is wrong with the world* and its two subthemes: *de-humanizing women* and *undermining men to recruit them* examines the discourse constructed within Andrew Tate's utterances, and how he uses this discourse to attract young men.

In this critical examination it becomes evident that Tate constructs a discourse that communicates harmful gender norms, reinforces male superiority, and manipulates young men by utilizing various techniques such as deterministic argumentation style, appealing to young men's inner desires and insecurities by harnessing their existential and social motives to join his worldview. Also, he uses modelling, enactive experience, and direct tuition to back up his argumentation.

This is how the Real World is and should be

To begin with, I will provide you with a brief summary of this overall theme containing two subthemes. This summary is based on my codes.

The first subtheme *The Real World* is about Tate's utterances containing a collection of his opinions on how the real world is and how it should be. Tate suggests that social status is important and that successful people are polygamous. Furthermore, he believes that life is a competition, and "real men" need to suffer in order to learn about life. He emphasizes the importance of respect and suggests that men should not take part in household chores and care for children; instead, they should be on the streets, earning money, and fighting battles. Tate also believes that a relationship is not equal, and a leader must be present for it to work. Finally, Tate suggests that a good father must live

a lifestyle that his son wants to emulate, and this lifestyle is only good enough if it is outside of the household.

Additionally, Tate has made utterances that positions himself as *The Savior* of humankind. Tate sees himself as a highly successful and intelligent man who is not afraid to speak his mind. He believes that people who criticize him are jealous of his success and that he is a gift to men's mental health. He positions himself as a soldier in a war-like situation, spreading his knowledge through interviews and podcasts. Tate believes that he cannot be controlled by anyone, and he is focused on making a huge impact on history and creating clones of himself. Furthermore, he believes that he is a man of God and sees himself as a generous and responsible gentleman who loves and protects women. He is determined to fight for his free speech and help men who suffers in this world.

Firstly, a presentation of my in-depth analysis of the theme *The Real World* with a focus on the discourse will be presented.

The Real World

Andrew Tate has made a statement juxtaposing misogyny and realism:

> "A lot of misogyny is just realism you know like if you're a realist then to some degree you're going to be a sexist."

By equalizing misogyny and realism, Tate justifies his controversial utterances about how he believes the real world is. By doing this he constructs a discourse of hegemonic masculinity and a world where it is preferable to be sexist. In this way, Tate uses motivated reasoning to attract those who have an existing predisposition for misogynistic opinions in order to attract them to join his community. Also, this juxtaposing may function as an appeal to the young men who finds it attractive to be realists because it contains a discursive connotation that signals desirable cognitive abilities, such as rational thinking style.

In addition, Tate believes that there is an existence of an objective truth:

> "The problem is these people have no truth and they have no interest in the objective truth (…)."

Tate creates a contrast between his community's perceived out-group "these people", who are portrayed as lacking truth, and himself (and his community), who claims to possess knowledge about an objective truth. By doing this, he constructs a discourse of a reality where he has knowledge that others do not have access to and this creates collective narcissism which may provide young men with a desire to be part of his in-group.

Tate wants to communicate his expert knowledge about the objective truth to his audience by talking about different aspects of human lives e.g., relationships, gender inequalities, traditional ways of living and so on. The following quote is his utterance about his knowledge as to women having contact with other men while being in a relationship:

> "(…) or a girl talking to other guys while she has a boyfriend (…) To me that's absolute disrespect, you're with me and you love me and you want to text this dude all day (…) it's only a matter of time till she sucks some other dick anyway I mean this is the harsh reality of the world."

By criticizing the modern world's acceptance of a girl talking to other guys while being in a relationship and calling this behavior disrespectful, Tate may tap into young men's possible insecurity and jealousy in their relationship. This can be a strategy to make these young men feel seen and mirrored in him. Also, he uses enactive experience arguments by referring to himself which constructs a consensus within his community about it being ok to not wanting one's girlfriend to have contact with other men. By reducing and objectifying women, their actions and their choices of sexual encounters, Tate perpetuates the notion that women's fidelity is solely dependent on the man's ability to control their behavior, encouraging young men to obtain an unequal power dynamic in their relationship. This may attract young men who feel powerless an anxious in their relationship, giving them an existential motive to follow his approaches. Also, the quote presents the described scenario as the "harsh reality of the world" which rejects any nuance or dialogue about the issue.

Another thing that Tate knows about how the world is and should be is the best way of being a father:

"But a father doesn't have to be around this is a big mistake (…) the idea that a father needs to sit around like a second mother to make a child healthy is a fallacy. In fact, I'd say it's detrimental to the child (…) you need to be a role model, you need to be a superhuman (…)."

Tate's utterance criticizes the idea that a father should fulfill a caregiving role similar to that of a mother, suggesting that it is "a fallacy" and "detrimental" to the child's well-being. He constructs this discourse to justify his worldview, and to convince his audience that they must join his community because he has the ability to see through society's propaganda. Additionally, this discourse also suggests that Tate has expert knowledge about child-development which helps him convince his audience that his statements are accurate. Furthermore, his use of positive language as "superhero" and "role model" taps into a popular societal narrative about probably every father's social motive and desire to be a great father to their children. It may be a way of hitting a soft spot in his audience while still communicating his conspiracies about society.

Personally, he is doing important work in the world everyday:

"ALL I DO IS FIGHT! MY LIFE IS A FIGHT! WHAT DO YOU MEAN I'M NOT FIGHTING A BATTLE? I'M FIGHTING A BATTLE AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF HUMANKIND!"

By stating "I'M FIGHTING A BATTLE AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF HUMANKIND!" Tate expands his struggle from a personal to a societal level emphasizing the importance of him spreading his knowledge out into the world. By using utterances like "oppression of humankind", he constructs a sense of shared struggle which may be an inclusion strategy to attract young men who desires order and understanding of this world, who feel powerless, anxious, or existentially distressed. Furthermore, Tate's usage of raised voice, repetition, and strong language with the words "FIGHT," and "OPPRESSION" conveys a sense of intensity and conviction. This rhetorical style serves to emphasize Tate's commitment and passion for his cause, seeking to evoke emotional responses from the audience in order to attract them and convince them to join his worldview.

Tate believes that he is the savior of humankind, and that there are more likeminded that follows him:

"There's a large contingent of men out there (…) who don't want to be told they're toxic because they want to go to the gym, who want to drive nice cars who want to have money and want to have hot chicks. AND THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH US. "

In this utterance, Tate highlights a specific group of men supporting his lifestyle and worldview justifying his in-group collective narcissism. By creating this discourse, Tate asserts that there is nothing inherently wrong with men that follow his worldview and denies any negative labels or intentions ascribed to them. The statement "THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH US" may act as a rejection of out-group attempts to start a dialogue that challenges his understanding and interpretation of the world he constructs through his public utterances.

This analysis of the subtheme *The Real World* indicates that Andrew Tate believes that he has secret knowledge about the world, that he is the one who sees the world as it really is, and that he will be the savior of humankind. I will analyze this positioning in the following subtheme: *The Savior.*

The Savior
Being the savior of humankind means creating an illusion of having a close connection with God:

"(…) Even though I am a man of God and I try and keep myself close to Christ (…)"

Tate's utterance contains an appeal to morality by constructing his identity as a "man of God" and his attempt to maintain closeness to Christ. This positioning suggests that his perspective is influenced by his alleged religious beliefs and may imply a moral authority or righteousness albeit the utterance seems a bit sarcastic. This discourse positions Tate as a man with a higher value and mission on earth which may induce young men into thinking that he is a leader with a worldview worth following.

Also, Tate is able to make any girl loyal because he has ambition:

"In the Red Pill Twitter there's this view of women that they're ultra-hypergamous (…) in my experience if a woman can see you have ambition (…) then she'll be fine (…) when I was a struggling fighter and I couldn't pay the rent I was banging girls left right and center and they were loving and they were loyal to me…"

In this utterance, Tate constructs a discourse and a reality where women are attracted to ambitious and successful men like himself. This makes him the "Top Alpha G" because no one can question his professional, personal, and influential success. Therefore, he uses his enactive experience and modelling by stating "in my experience", and direct tuition to promote his community and worldview in order to attract young men who lacks success in their personal and professional lives. Also, by using argumentation as "I was banging left right and center", Tate may appeal to some young men's existential and social motives to learn from his advice. Furthermore, the notion about women normally being ultra-hypergamous and him being able to make girls loyal to him may be a strategy suggesting that he has expert knowledge on how to control women's sexual desires, and that he will teach every young man who wants to learn.

Besides being a man of God and a man with ambition who has the ability to make a woman stay loyal to him, Tate also perceives himself as being God's gift to men's mental health:

"I am the best thing that's happened to men's mental health in recent times."

He begins this utterance with a strong assertion of authority by claiming to be "the best thing" for men's mental health as an attempt to assert influence and control over the discourse surrounding men's mental health. This positioning of himself as an authoritative figure who assumes a significant role on Earth may be a strategy to position himself as a competent leader. Also, he frames men's mental health as a significant issue which implies that a generalized existential problem for men really exists, and that he is uniquely positioned to address it effectively which is an epistemic way of convincing his audience to join him. By positioning himself as a positive influence, he potentially constructs a dichotomy where he is portrayed as the solution to his constructed problem; the savior.

Because Tate is such a high value man in society, he wants to father many sons:

"My bloodline (…) I don't know if I'm going to have 20 sons with 20 women? (…) My ideal life like if I could just design it, I'd have three or four sons in Moscow, three or four sons in Kazakhstan, maybe two or three sons in Mongolia (…) they'd all be training hard becoming warriors of Earth all carry the last name Tate"

Tate constructs a discourse where his genes are crucially important for the world's survival. The elaboration of his intention to have a large number of children with multiple partners in order to create "warriors of Earth" indicates that he has a strong narcissistic desire to feel unique and to create a social in-group where he feels strongly connected. This construction of a high self-esteem may attract young men with the same desires. Also, this discourse reflects a patriarchal and hegemonic power dynamic, where he positions himself as a central figure with the ability to be the leader of a huge amount of people. When analyzing this utterance, I get the association with religious communities where members want to spread their knowledge into the world with the ambition to create order and meaning. This may be a strategy to signal a strong in-group that is ready to take in new members.

This analysis clarifies that Tate perceives himself as a man of God, one of the greatest men on the face of the planet, and the savior of humankind. If societal structures, such as big-tech companies, try to stop him, they cannot:

> "They thought they could cancel the top G (…). THEY FIRED THE BULLET THAT NEVER FAILS. It bounced off of my skin AND HERE I AM. I still emerge more powerful than ever before."

With this utterance, Tate constructs a power dynamic discourse where he positions himself as "the top G" who cannot be canceled or silenced. He clarifies that attempts to undermine or discredit him will be met with absolute resilience. Also, by using figurative language stating that the bullet aimed at him "bounced off," he portrays himself as impervious and unstoppable. This is a discursive way of argumentation that convinces his audience that he is unnaturally powerful and that hardship and attempts to stop his influence in this world only will make him more powerful. No one is and will ever be able to stop Andrew Tate, and therefore it is better to join him. Also, conspiracy theory argues, that individuals who feel powerless, anxious and existentially distressed are more likely to join conspiracy beliefs about the world. Therefore, Tate's positioning of himself as more powerful than societal structures may be attractive for some young men.

Lastly, Tate states, that he is a cooperative individual who would have listened if the system has just asked him nicely:

"I didn't want to be canceled. (…) I wanted to speak for men's issues. I thought it was a place for open discourse. I thought I was allowed to have an opinion and we can make the world a better place. (…) I love women. I protect women. (…) You decided all the millions of men who think like me are worth fucking nothing. (…) I have soldiers and we're going to penetrate The Matrix."

This is a manipulation strategy to create a greater distance between society as the out-group and his special community as the in-group. This is a way of explicitly creating a discourse of collective narcissism to attract young men into joining this powerful, diplomatic and desirable mission to "make the world a better place". Also, he constructs a discourse of himself as a victim who feels unfairly excluded and silenced as well as inherently cooperative which may be a manipulations strategy to make people view him as a fair and decent man, rejecting all postulates about him being misogynistic, hostile and unreasonable. If young men decide to join his worldview, support his activities and be taught how to be "real men", they become "soldiers" who saves the world from the dangerous societal structure called "The Matrix".

Summary
The analysis of the overall theme: *This is how the Real World is and should be* and its two subthemes: *The Real World* and *The Savior* examines the discourse constructed within Andrew Tate's utterances, and how he uses this discourse to attract young men to adopt his worldview.

    This critical analysis reveals that Tate employs a discourse that promotes an illusion of him being the bearer of expert knowledge about how the world actually functions and how to save it from the oppression of humankind. His use of enactive experience, modeling, and direct tuition support his appeals to the inner desires and insecurities of young men, using their existential, and social motives to compel them into following his controversial and conspiracy worldview.

In the following section, I will elaborate on what I have analyzed and interpreted to being the overall narrative of social media phenomenon Andrew Tate's appeal to the world. Furthermore, I will discuss the design, the methodology, validity, and reliability of this study.

Overall narrative of the analysis and a discussion on implications of further research

This study contributes to the scientific field of psychology by providing an in-depth analysis of what discourse social media phenomenon Andrew Tate construct through his public utterances, and how he uses this discourse to attract young men to adopt his worldview. Through my reflexive thematic data analysis, I developed two overall themes: *This is what is wrong with the world* and *This is how the Real World is and should be*, and four subthemes: *De-humanizing Women, Undermining Men to Recruit Them, The Real World,* and *The Savior.*

Throughout my work with Andrew Tate's public utterances, an overall narrative has been formed. By pointing out and arguing that there is something wrong with this world, Tate creates a narrative of an existential and essential problem with how the world is currently structured which may be detrimental and lead to the ending of the world for men's mental health, if he and his followers does not fix it. Additionally, he then presents his audience with his interpretation of how the real world is and should be to convince people to follow his divine mission on this Earth. Like in extremist religious communities, Tate presents a default in the human world that needs to be taken care of, and also, he is the prophet who possesses impossibly accessible knowledge for the selected few to teach the world in order to create paradise for men on Earth. Therefore, it becomes paramount to follow him.

In order to develop my study, I have benefited from my choices regarding methodology because they have provided me with the framework to create an in-depth exploration of what discourse social media phenomena Andrew Tate constructs through his public utterances and how he uses this discourse to attract the support of young men, a contextual understanding of the data and flexibility in the data collection. The study provides a rich understanding of Andrew Tate's opinions, perspectives and worldviews through his controversial utterances. Furthermore, the critical discourse analysis enables the examination of Andrew Tate's language and discourse. It is particular useful for investigating how language perpetuates or challenges social norms and constructs. Some may view this methodology as being too subjective, because the analysis relies on my interpretations and judgment which may affect the reliability of my findings. However, according to Braun and Clarke, a situated and subjective researcher is an asset to the analysis not a bias (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, qualitative research is time-consuming due to the volume of the data and the need for meticulous analysis and interpretation. This have been a challenge for my study because I have had limited time to complete it due to it being a Master's thesis.

To answer my research question, I chose Hegemonic Masculinity Theory, Conspiracy Theory and Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation to elaborate Tate's utterances because together they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding societal norms, power dynamics that shape inequal relationships, the cognitive processes and social influences involved in gender development which facilitates the identification of underlying mechanisms that contribute to the acceptance of conspiracy theories in this context. However, even though these theories provide valuable insights, they may oversimplify the complexity of gender and human behavior. Human experience and behaviors are multi-faceted and influenced by various factors beyond the scope of these theories. This may be a bias of the study, and implications of further research should be to further elaborate on the nuances of Andrew Tate's utterances, physical appearance in his videos and behavior in the social media sphere in order to dig deeper in this complex phenomenon.

Qualitative studies have limited generalizability which makes it challenging to generalize the findings to generalist terms such as noting that Andrew Tate is a misogynist or dangerous but this is not really a goal anyway. The purpose of this study is to offer a rich, contextualized exploration of this phenomenon that contributes to existing understandings with the goal of adding to the complex tapestry that researchers are collectively weaving in psychological research.

Conclusion

The discourse that social media phenomenon Andrew Tate constructs through his public utterances reveals a narrative that supports harmful gender norms, reinforce male superiority, and manipulates young men to adopt his illusion of a reality where he possesses expert knowledge about the functioning of the world and how to save it from the oppression of humankind. By utilizing enactive experience, modeling, and direct tuition, he reinforces his appeals to the inner desires and insecurities of young men, effectively leveraging their existential and social motives to compel them to follow his controversial and conspiracy-laden worldview.

Overall, this critical analysis sheds light on the problematic nature of Tate's discourse, highlighting its propagation of harmful gender norms, reinforcement of male superiority, and manipulation of vulnerable individuals.

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The framework (cape)

This section of my Master's Thesis will provide you with an elaboration of methodology and theory.

Research question

"What discourse does social media phenomenon Andrew Tate construct through his public utterances, and how does he use this discourse to convince young men to adopt his worldviews?"

Methodology

This thesis is based on an ontology of critical realism and an epistemology of contextualism, which provide a foundation for understanding reality and knowledge production. Reality is seen as existing independently of a researcher's ideas and descriptions, but mediated by language and culture. Although there is only one singular reality, different perspectives, interpretations, and representations are possible (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Andrew Tate's perception of reality is shaped by his concepts, which are expressed in the language he uses and the culture he lives in.

The purpose of the master's thesis is to provide a coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in Andrew Tate's account, that speaks to a situated reality. The master thesis argues that Andrew Tate cannot be meaningfully studied in isolation from the context he lives in, as it gives meaning to his life.

Ontology refers to theories about nature of reality or being, while epistemology refers to theories about the nature of knowledge production. This master's thesis follows a critical realism ontology, which suggests that the material world has an ontological status independent of human representations, language and discourse. The research takes a critical realist position in reflexive thematic analysis, understanding data as a mediated reflection of reality (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

With a critical realism ontology follows an epistemology of contextualism, which emphasizes the ambiguous, context-contingent nature of language and meaning. Knowledge produced through research is viewed as situated, partial, and subjective, shaped by the researcher's values and practices. The researcher and the data are coproducing meaning, with results depending on the context of the research and the interpretative engagement of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Language is viewed as creating meaning and reality, rather than simply reflecting it, and treated as social and symbolic. This master's thesis follows constructionist conceptualizations of language, where meaning is seen as more malleable and flexible, created in and through language use (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Method

A qualitative study

In order to best address the research question, this thesis has been developed within the qualitative methodical paradigm (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). The primary objective of this research of this research is to produce contextualized and situated knowledge that is focused on meaning. The orientation of qualitative research towards truth is consistent with the ontology of this thesis in that it is situated or life-embedded, partial, and multiple. As researcher, it is essential to act as a situated interpreter of meaning, a subjective storyteller. Thus, subjectivity is not only unproblematic but is and asset, particularly if reflexivity is engaged with. The goal is to gain a rich, in-depth understanding of the research question that contributes to knowledge and is part of a rich tapestry of understanding (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

Reflexive Thematic Analysis

The methical framework of the analysis is reflexive thematic analysis developed and explained by Braun & Clarke (2022). It is a sturdy and easily accessible method for those who are new to qualitative research. Furthermore, reflexive thematic analysis is not a methodology but rather a technique for developing, analyzing, and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset. While there are various versions and approaches to performing thematic analysis, reflexive thematic analysis has been selected as the preferred approach for this thesis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

A reflexive researcher and qualitative sensibility

Braun and Clarke (2022) contend that valuing a researcher who is subjective, situated, aware, and inquisitive, a reflexive researcher, is a crucial attribute of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As psychology students, we are taught to view subjectivity as a bias that poses a challenge because it interferes with objectivity. However, in reflexive thematic analysis, subjectivity is essential in conducting a thorough and meaningful analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

In the following table (Box 1.1), ten core assumptions of reflexive analysis are presented:

Box 1.1

Ten core assumptions of reflexive TA

1. Researcher subjectivity is the primary tool for reflexive TA, as knowledge generation is inherently subjective and situated. Your subjectivity is not a problem to be managed or controlled, to be gotten rid of, but should be understood and treated as a *resource* for doing analysis (Gough & Madill, 2012). This means the notion of **researcher bias**, which implies the possibility of unbiased or objective knowledge generation, and the potential to control such bias, make little sense within reflexive TA.
2. Analysis and interpretation of data cannot be accurate or objective, but they can be weaker (e.g. unconvincing, underdeveloped, shallow, superficial) or stronger (e.g. compelling, insightful, thoughtful, rich, complex, deep, nuanced).
3. Good coding can be achieved alone, or through collaboration – *if* **collaborative coding** is used to enhance understanding, interpretation and reflexivity, rather than to reach a con-sensus about data coding.
4. Good quality codes and themes result from dual processes of: (a) immersion and depth of engagement; and (b) giving the developing analysis some distance. The latter usually takes time and is often achieved through taking a break from the process.
5. Themes are patterns anchored by a shared idea, meaning or concept. They are *not* sum-maries of everything about a topic.
6. Themes are analytic *outputs* – they are built from codes (which are also analytic outputs) and cannot be identified ahead of the analytic process.
7. Themes do not passively '**emerge**' from data but are actively produced by the researcher through their systematic engagement with, and all they bring to, the dataset.
8. Data analysis is *always* underpinned by theoretical assumptions, and these assumptions need to be acknowledged and reflected on.
9. Reflexivity is *key* to good quality analysis; researchers must strive to understand and 'own their perspectives' (Elliott, Fischer, & Rennie, 1999).
10. Data analysis is conceptualised as an art not a science; creativity is central to the process, situated within a framework of rigour.

(Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 8).

Reflexivity

In research, reflexivity refers to the process of the researcher examining their own biases and situatedness in relation to the research being conducted. This includes taking responsibility for the potential impact of the researcher's presence on the data being collected and the interpretation of it. As such, reflexivity challenges the traditional view of knowledge production as objective and independent of the researcher producing it (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This is why reflexive thematic analysis goes well with the epistemology of this study, contextualization.

According to British psychologist Sue Wilkinson (1988), reflexivity can be divided into three types: *personal reflexivity*, which explores how the researcher's values shape the knowledge produced; *functional reflexivity,* which examines how the methods and design aspects of the study shape knowledge production; and *disciplinary reflexivity,* which considers how academic disciplines shape knowledge production (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The six phases

Reflexive thematic analysis contains of six phases but it is important to note that these phases do not constitute the method in its entirety. Rather, these phases are part of the process used to work with and make sense of the data, which is itself embedded within a larger set of values, assumptions, and practices that make up the method (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The six phases are; 1) Familiarizing oneself with the dataset, which includes becoming deeply and intimately familiar with one's dataset; 2) Coding, which includes working systematically with one's dataset with the focus on identifying segments of data that appear potentially interesting; 3) Generating initial themes, which include the identification of shared patterns of meaning in the dataset; 4) Developing and reviewing themes, which includes checking that themes make sense in relation to both the coded extracts, and then the full dataset; 5) Refining, defining and naming themes, which includes a fine-tuning of the analysis and settling on themes; and 6) Writing up, which include writhing the whole article (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

It is essential to recognize that the phases of reflexive thematic analysis are not rigidly defined rules to be followed step by step. Instead, it is common to move back and forth between phases during the analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In terms of reporting the analysis, Braun & Clarke suggest using first-person active voice language, in contrast to the traditional third-person passive voice of scholarly reporting. However, it is important to note that the conventions for reporting the analysis may vary depending on the intended audience and purpose of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Semantic or latent coding

In this study, two distinct levels of coding, semantic and latent, have been utilized. Semantic coding involves data-driven and descriptive codes that explore meaning on the surface level of the data, capturing explicitly expressed meaning. On the other hand, latent coding involves researcher-driven and conceptual codes that focus on deeper, more implicit or abstract level of meaning that may not be immediately apparent in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

It is worth noting that semantic and latent coding are not dichotomous, but rather represent opposite ends of a continuum of approaches to analyzing data. Both types of coding can be used in conjunction with the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis to fully explore the meaning and depth of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Experiential or critical
According to Braun & Clarke (2022), there are two main qualitative frameworks: experiential and critical. *Experiential* research aims to capture and explore people's perspectives and understanding, while *critical* research focusses on interrogating and unpacking meaning around a particular topic or issue (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

This study employs a critical framework that emphasizes a focus on meaning-making, construction, and negotiating. It seeks to unpack patterns of meaning, particularly focused on the effects and functions of specific language and meaning use. Language is not seen as a means to convey truth or reality in critical research, but rather as an integral part of the way truth and reality are constructed (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

View of language
In this thesis, language is viewed as something active, as creating meaning and reality, rather than simply reflecting it (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, this thesis follows the constructionist conceptualizations of language treating it as social and meaning as more malleable and flexible. Meaning is created in and through language, and in and through language use, the ways people talk and write about things. Language is understood as symbolic, powerful, and active, rather than neutral and passive (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Themes
Braun and Clarke (2022) define a theme as a uniting idea that captures a wide range of data and exhibits conceptual coherence, as opposed to a mere summary of topics. Each theme has its own central organizing concept, and the analytical task is to explore the expression of shared or similar meanings across different contexts (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

It is essential to recognize that themes are not built solely on repeated expressions of an idea within a single dataset. Rather, they are developed through patterns across datasets. Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that themes do not need to encompass every aspect of the data, but rather tell a relevant story about the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

According to Braun and Clarke, a successful thematic analysis is characterized by themes that are focused on a central idea or argument, exhibit richness and diversity in their manifestation within the dataset, are not excessively fragmented or multilayered, and are distinctive, with clear boundaries and no merging with other themes. These themes come together to weave a coherent story that addresses the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Finally, it is crucial to select informative, concise, and catchy names for the themes. By following these guidelines, researchers can insure a robust and meaningful thematic analysis (Bran & Clarke, 2022).

The *making an argument model*

The introduction section of a research article typically includes a literature review that justifies the study's focus by identifying what is unknown. However, Braun and Clarke argue that this *establishing a gap* model reproduces a positivist-empiricist notion of research as a quest for truth. This approach does not align well with qualitative research, which produces localized and contextualized knowledge. Nevertheless, editors, reviewers, and examiners often demand this approach. Instead, Braun and Clarke suggest adopting a *making an argument* model that recognizes how qualitative research can offer a rich, contextualized exploration of a topic that contributes to existing understandings. The goal is not to fill an empty void of knowledge, but rather to add to the complex tapestry of understanding that researchers are collectively weaving (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Discourse analysis

People do not make meaning just as individuals. They do so as parts of social groups which agree in, or negotiate norms and values about how language ought to be used and what things ought to mean. The main importance of discourse analysis lies in the fact that, through speaking and writing in the world, we make the world meaningful in certain ways and not in others. We shape, produce, and reproduce the world through language in use. In turn the world we shape and help to create works in certain ways to shape us as humans. This mutual shaping process can have profound consequences for people's lives (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 5).

Discourse analysis is a research method that explores language in use, the meanings we assign to it, and the actions we carry out when we use it in specifiv contexts (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1). It examines language above the level of sentences and utterances to understand how they combine to create meaning coherence, and achieve purpose (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1). Discourse analysis is

useful for studying pragmatics, which refers to context-specific meanings of language, and the study of texts, which refers to how utterances and sentences pattern together to create meaning across multiple utterances and sentences (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1).

According to Gee and Handford (2012), language is not only used to convey meaning but to accomplish actions, goals, and purposes. In analyzing language, it is essential to distinguish between utterance-type meaning and utterance-token meaning. The former refers to the general range of possible meanings of a word, phrase, or structure, while the latter refers to its situated meaning, which is the specific meaning it takes on in the actual context of use (Gee & Handford, 2012). For instance, the word "rock" can have different meanings; it can be small, red and square like a brick, or it can be big, grey and round like a rock from a cliff. Next, the word "rock" in the sentence "you are my rock" means being someone's emotional support and stability.

Discourse analysis can undertake two tasks: (1) *The utterance-type meaning task* and (2) *The utterance-token meaning task.* The first focuses on the study of correlations between form and function in language at the level of general meanings, while the second task focuses on the study of correlation between form and function in language at the level of situated meanings. "Form" refers to morphemes, words etc., and "function" refers to meanings or the communicative purpose a form carries out (Gee & Handford, 2012).

The present Master's thesis focuses on the second task of discourse analysis, which involves analyzing the situated meanings of language forms in specific contexts. To do so, it is essential to study the context in which language is used. However, using the utterance-token meaning as focus of analysis arise *the frame problem* when working with the issue of validity because any aspect of a specific context can influence the meaning of an utterance (Gee & Handford, 2012). The frame problem refers to the fact that the context is indefinitely large, ranging from local matters such as tone of voice to people's beliefs to historical, institutional, and cultural settings. Therefore, the interpretation of an utterance is vulnerable to changing as the context widens (Gee & Handford, 2012). The frame problem can be both a problem and a tool because it helps identifying information and values that are being left unsaid or effaced in a piece of language (Gee & Handford, 2012).

Discourse analysis includes examining language in the context of society, culture, history, institutions, identity formation, politics, power, and all the other areas language helps us to create, and there are many different types of discourse analysis. In this Master's thesis, critical discourse analysis will be used to tie the language used by Andrew Tate to socially, or culturally sententious issues and in intervening in these issues (Gee & Handford, 2012).

Critical Discourse analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis that integrates the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies, emphasizing the interplay between discourse and other social factors, such as power dynamics, ideologies, institutions, and social identities (Fairclough, 2012). This distinctive dimension to critical social analysis adds to its *explanatory* and *normative critique* (Fairclough, 2012). Explanatory critique refers to explaining existing realities by showing them to be effects of structures or mechanisms. Normative critique evaluates existing realities considering the extent to which they match up to various values fundamental for societies (Fairclough, 2012).

The analysis of discourse within critical social analysis is separated from forms of social analysis that are not critical, emphasizing existing social realities as humanly produced constraints that in certain respects reduce human flourishing and increase human suffering (Fairclough, 2012). Discourses are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world that can be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors (Fairclough, 2012). Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, and how they are used to communicate meaning. A semiotic system is an interrelated collection of signs or symbols that can be deployed to construct more complex meanings – each separate semiotic system is a resource for making meanings (Lemke, 2012).

Theoretical approaches

Hegemonic Masculinity

Raewyn Connell conceptualized hegemonic masculinity as a specific form of masculinity that legitimates unequal gender relations between men and women, masculinity and femineity. It is a relational concept that is defined in terms of the logic of unequal gender relations, and its meaning and essence is revealed through the legitimation of a relationship of subordination and superordination. Hegemonic masculinity has no meaning outside its relationship to emphasized femineity and nonhegemonic masculinities. The achievement of hegemonic masculinity is largely through cultural ascendancy – discursive persuasion – that encourages all to consent to, coalesce around, and embody unequal gender relations (Messerschmidt, 2019).

For Connell, gender relations are structured through power inequalities, and emphasized femininity is essential to understanding how this feminized form adapts to masculine power. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to four specific nonhegemonic masculinities, complicit, subordinate, marginalized, and protest masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2019).

Gender relations are historical and subject to change, and hegemonic masculinities come into existence in specific circumstances and are open to historical change. There could be a struggle for hegemony whereby older types of hegemonic masculinity might be displaced by newer forms. This element of optimism suggests that a more humane, less oppressive means of being masculine might become prevalent as part of a process leading towards an abolition of gender hierarchies (Messerschmidt, 2019).

However, a failed attempt to criticize hegemonic masculinity is by the consideration of the concept on alleged discrete and distinct "bearers" of hegemonic masculinity rather than recognizing that all participants constituting an unequal gender relationship are collective orchestrators of hegemonic masculinity (Messerschmidt, 2019).

The reformulated model incorporates a more holistic grasp of gender inequality that recognizes the agency of subordinated groups as much as the power of hegemonic groups, as well as the mutual conditioning or intersectionality of gender with such other social inequalities as class, race, age, sexuality, and nation. It includes a more sophisticated treatment of embodiment in hegemonic and nonhegemonic masculinities, as well as conceptualizations of how hegemonic masculinity may be challenged, contested, and thus changed. Finally, instead of recognizing simply hegemonic masculinity at only the society wide level, the reformulated model suggests that scholars analyze empirically existing hegemonic masculinities at three levels: local, regional, and global (Messerschmidt, 2019).

Gender hegemony functions to obscure unequal gender relations while effectively permeating public and private life, encouraging all to endorse, unite around, and embody such unequal gender relations. Although hegemonic masculinities today are diverse, gender inequality is often broadly accepted and unquestioned due to the ubiquity of hegemonic masculinities. The amplification of the reformulated model demonstrates that the quotidian prevalence of hegemonic masculinities widely disseminates the cultural knowledge people utilize to guide their gendered social action. The variety of hegemonic masculinities provides models of relations between men and women, masculinity and femininity. Certain scholars continue to ignore the foundation of hegemonic masculinity as the legitimation of unequal gender relations by equating the concept with fixed masculinity characteristics or solely with certain groups of men. Contemporary scholarly work further suggests the significance of distinguishing between "hegemonic" and "dominant" masculinities, as not all dominant forms of masculinity legitimize men's power over women (Messerschmidt, 2019).

Conspiracy theory

Douglas et al. (2019) defines conspiracy theories as secret plots by powerful actors attempting to gain political or economic power, violate rights, infringe upon established agreements, withhold secrets, or alter institutions (Douglas et. al, 2019).

Conspiracy theories are attempts to explain significant social and political events with claims of secret plots by powerful actors. There may be a tendency towards conspiracy thinking where people prefer conspiracy explanations due to biases against powerful groups and official accounts (Biddlestone et al., 2020). While conspiracy theories are not always mutually supportive and often contradict each other, people may be drawn to them because they promise to satisfy important social psychological motives such as the desire for understanding, accuracy, control, security, and a positive self-image (Douglas et al., 2019).

The phenomenon of conspiracy theories has attracted a great deal of attention in psychology due to their broad, internally consistent explanations that allow individuals to preserve their beliefs in the face of uncertainty and contradiction (Douglas et al., 2019).

Epistemic motives

Research suggest that belief in conspiracy theories is particularly strong under conditions of uncertainty and when people perceive patterns in randomness. In addition, conspiracy beliefs are more prevalent among individuals who consistently seek patterns and meaning in their environment, such as believers in paranormal and supernatural phenomena. People who overestimate their ability to understand complex causal phenomena are also prone to conspiracy beliefs (Douglas et al., 2019).

Conspiracy theories have been linked to a variety of cognitive processes, including the need for cognitive closure, feelings of boredom, biased assimilation of information, projection of one's own personal beliefs onto others, and the conjunction fallacy. Interestingly, research has also shown that belief in conspiracy theories may be associated with lower levels of intelligence and a tendency to accept epistemically unwarranted beliefs (Douglas et al., 2019).

Studies have also found that conspiracy beliefs are linked to lower levels of rational thinking style and that conspiracy theories appeal to individuals who seek accuracy and/or meaning but may lack the cognitive tools or experience difficulties finding accuracy and meaning through more rational means. Overall, Douglas et al. (2019) suggests that conspiracy theories may appeal to individuals who have a desire for order and understanding in an unpredictable and chaotic world (Douglas et al, 2019).

Existential motives

When individuals' existential needs are threatened, they may turn to conspiracy theories as a means of compensation. This is because conspiracy theories offer an alternative to official narratives, which can allow people to feel as though they possess a better understanding of the situation (Douglas et al., 2019).

Research indicates that people who feel powerless, anxious, or existentially distressed are more likely to believe in conspiracy theories. Additionally, there is a correlation between conspiracy beliefs and a sense of alienation from the political system, as well as a feeling of personal unrest and a lack of understanding of the social world. However, studies have shown that strengthening people's sense of control can reduce their belief in conspiracy theories (Douglas et al., 2019). Furthermore, conspiracy theories might provide a buffer against threats to the social system in which people live. In summary, conspiracy theories can provide a sense of control, meaning, and understanding for individuals who feel powerless or threatened in some way (Douglas et al., 2019).

Social motives

People need to maintain a positive self-image which can lead to the endorsement of conspiracy theories. This is evident in studies that show a link between conspiracy beliefs and narcissism, the need to feel unique, and a strong identification with one's social group. Conspiracy theories may allow individuals to feel special, have rare information, and maintain a positive view of their group (Biddlestone et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant for low-status social groups who may use conspiracy theories to explain their disadvantaged position (Douglas et al., 2019). Research also suggests that situational threats and crisis situations can increase the likelihood of strong group attachment and foster conspiracy beliefs. However, while conspiracy theories may offer a way to cope with psychological needs, research suggests that they may do more harm than good. It is important to consider the political, social, and historical contexts that make conspiracy theories plausible and to explore the consequences of endorsing such theories (Douglas et al., 2019).

Political factors

The dynamics of politics share similarities with other social conflicts, as competition is present and power is unequally distributed among groups. In such high-stakes situations, conspiracy theories often emerge, especially when individuals experience psychological states associated with such beliefs, including low political trust, feelings of powerlessness, uncertainty, and unpredictability.

Political events that stimulate these psychological states can further strengthen conspiracy beliefs (Douglas et al., 2019).

Motivated reasoning

In recent years, research has increasingly focused on the impact of individual's underlying ideologies on their interpretation of information. One explanation for this phenomenon is motivated reasoning, whereby individuals interpret information in a way that supports their pre-existing beliefs and worldviews (Douglas et al., 2019). The literature suggests that conspiracy theories must align with a person's existing set of predispositions in order to be adopted (Douglas et al., 2019).

Motives to communicate conspiracy theories

The motive behind the communication of conspiracy theories is a challenging task to separate from the motive to believe in conspiracy theories. While psychological, social, and political factors that lead to the belief in conspiracy theories are likely to shape the communication of conspiracy theories, many researchers overlook any divergence (Douglas et al., 2019).

There are some social and political factors. Important social events like protests lead to the prevalence of conspiracy talk. A study analyzing the communication pattern of these accounts found that perceptions of threat were associated with greater expressions of conspiracy theories, and people proposed conspiracy theories in line with their political arguments. Conspiracy theorizing may be used to construct causal arguments about intergroup relations and to dispute dominant ideological assumptions about political legitimacy and social hierarchy (Douglas et al., 2019).

Conspiracy theories serve various functions, including coping with collective trauma, disputing dominant political and ideological assumptions, justifying exclusionary politics, creating the conditions for extremism and political violence, and demanding more sincere political communication (Douglas et al., 2019).

The internet and social media

In recent years, political scientists Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum have argued that there is a "new conspiracism" arguing that, roughly in tandem with the flourishing of social media, a new conspiracism has emerged that replaces evidence and explanation with mere assertion and rumor (Birchall & Knight, 2022). The role of the internet in promoting the spread of conspiracy theories has been subject of concern (Douglas et al., 2019) maybe especially because the new conspiracism requires partisan affirmation and repetition over considered reflection (Birchall & Knight, 2022).

The internet has been found to foster distinct and polarized online communities, which are crucial to understanding the dynamics of conspiracy communication. These polarized communities make it difficult to have rational and civil communication, and communication threads between communities tend to become more negative as they persist (Douglas et al., 2019). Furthermore, conspiracy users are often uncritical and endorse even deliberately false and highly implausible material.

The role of the internet in promoting the spread of conspiracy theories is complex. While the internet may facilitate the dissemination of conspiracy theories, it may also limit their coherence and invite instant refutation. Although conspiracy theories do spread on the internet, they tend to stay within communities that make rational and civil communication difficult (Birchall & Knight, 2022; Douglas et al., 2019).

Theoretical background of The Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation

Social learning theory was originally an attempt by Robert Sears and others to combine psychoanalytic and stimulus-response learning theory into a comprehensive explanation for human behavior. Albert Bandura abandoned the psychoanalytic and drive features of the approach, instead emphasizing cognitive and information processing capacities that mediate social behavior, and in 1986 Bandura relabeled his approach "social cognitive theory" (Grusec, 1992).

Kay Bussey and Albert Bandura offer their thoughts and research about gender development in the *social cognitive theory of gender development and differentiation* (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The theory addresses the psychosocial determinants and mechanisms by which society socializes male and female infants into masculine and feminine adults. Thus, this theory deals with the span from infant to adult concerned with how children and adults operate cognitively on their social experiences, not focusing on specific age-related changes in development (Crusec, 1992). They argue that gender differentiation is particularly important because many of the attributes and roles selectively promoted in males and females tend to be differentially valued, with those ascribed to males generally being regarded as more desirable, effectual, and of higher status. Although some gender differences are biologically founded, most of the stereotypic attributes and roles linked to gender arise more from cultural design than from biological endowment (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

There are different dimensions of theories trying to explain gender development. One dimension concerns the relative importance placed on different determinants of gender, including psychological, biological, and sociostructural factors. Psychologically-oriented theories tend to focus on intrapsychic processes that govern gender development. In contrast, sociological theories emphasize

the impact of sociostructural factors on gender role development and functioning. Biologically-oriented theories suggest that gender differences are rooted in the different biological roles played by males and females in reproduction (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The nature of gender transmission models is a second dimension of gender development theories. Psychological theories emphasize the cognitive construction of gender conceptions and behaviors within the familial transmission model, which was influenced by Freud's emphasis on the adoption of gender roles through identification. Behavioristic theories also highlight the role of parents in shaping gender-linked conduct. Biological determinants theories suggest familial genes as the transmission agent of gender differentiation across generations. Sociological theories emphasize the social construction of gender roles at the institutional level. In contrast, social cognitive theory integrates psychological and sociostructural determinants, favoring a multifaceted social transmission model rather than mainly a familial one. According to this perspective, gender conceptions and behaviors result from a broad network of social influences both within families and in societal systems encountered in everyday life (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The third dimension of gender development theories concern the temporal scope of the analysis. Psychological theories typically focus on gender development in early childhood, while sociocultural changes require a broader perspective on appropriate gender conduct throughout the lifespan. Most theories of gender development have either been concerned with the early years of development or focused on adults, whereas sociocognitive theory takes a life-course perspective. Thus, the sociocognitive determinants of gender orientations will span the entire age range. Additionally, the theory encompasses cognitive, social, affective, and motivational processes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation

The Social Cognitive Theory recognizes the importance of evolutionary factors in human adaptions and change, but it rejects the idea that social behavior is solely the result of evolved biology. Instead, it acknowledges that social and technological innovations create new environmental selection pressures for adaptiveness that affect biological evolution. This means that complex environmental innovations have led to the evolution of specialized biological systems for functional consciousness, thought, language, and symbolic communication. It's important to note that human evolution provides bodily structures and biological potentialities, but it doesn't dictate behavior. Instead, sociostructural influences operate through these biological resources to construct and regulate human behavior for various purposes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

A view that is solely based on biology and ignores other factors has issues not only with accommodating cultural diversity but also with the swift pace of social change. Biological selection takes a long time to bring about changes, whereas societies have been rapidly changing in terms of sexual norms, family structures, social and occupational roles, and institutional practices. In the past, much of the gender differentiation was due to the biological need for a woman to bear and care for children for a significant part of their lives. However, with advances in medical care and household labor-saving technologies, infant mortality rates and family size have decreased. As a result, women now spend only a small portion of their expanded life spans on childbearing and rearing (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

According to Social Cognitive Theory, gender development is not solely influenced by environmental forces or intrapsychic processes that are disconnected from social factors. Instead, gender development is understood through tradic reciprocal causation (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The model of triadic reciprocal causation proposes that personal factors, such as cognitive, affective, and biological events, behavior patterns, and environmental events all play a role as interacting determinants that influence each other in a bidirectional manner. The personal contribution includes gender-related beliefs, standards for behavior and judgment, and self-regulatory influences. Behavior, in this context, refers to activity patterns that are typically linked to gender. Lastly, the environmental factor encompasses the various social influence encountered in daily life (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

According to social cognitive theory, gender development is influenced by three primary modes, and the way in which individuals cognitively process the information conveyed through these modes (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The first mode is *modeling*, where individuals observe and learn gender-related behaviors and roles from people in their immediate environment, such as parents, peers, and individuals in various social, educational, and occupational contexts. The media also plays a significant role in providing models of gendered conduct (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The second mode is *enactive experience*, which involves understanding the gender-related consequences of one's actions. Gender-linked behavior is typically subject to social sanctions in most societies, and people develop views about what behaviors are appropriate for each gender based on evaluative social reactions (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The third mode of influence is *direct tuition*, which provides information about different styles of conduct in their linkage to gender. This mode of influence is often used to generalize the informativeness of specific modeled exemplars and particular behavioral outcome experiences (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

According to Bussey and Bandura, modeling is a highly pervasive and influential means of transmitting values, attitudes, and patterns of thought and behavior. Contrary to popular beliefs, modeling is not just about mimicking responses. Instead, it involves the conveyance of rules and structures that underlie generative behavior. Abstract modeling enables higher-level learning, where observers can extract rules and structures underlying modeled activities to generate new patterns of behavior that conform to structural properties while extending beyond what they've seen or heard. Social cognitive theory characterizes this process of learning from exemplars as modeling rather than imitation, which is typically associated with merely mimicking specific actions (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Children tend to model their behavior after those who command social power and have a similar sex status. By observing others achieve valued outcomes for their efforts, children develop outcome expectancies that motivate them to secure similar benefits for comparable performances. Seeing others punished for engaging in certain activities, on the other hand, can install negative outcome expectations that discourage such behavior (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

Modeling is a significant social mechanism that replicates behavioral patterns, social roles, and sociostructural arrangements across generations. However, it also contributes to cultural evolution by creating new blends of characteristics from different models. Gender roles and behavior van be influenced through direct tutoring as well as modeling and social evaluative reactions. Children are exposed to gender-linked behavior in various forms of media, where males are portrayed as directive and pursuing engaging careers, while females are shown as emotional and confined to domestic roles or low-status jobs. This exposure to stereotypical gender role modeling in the media can have significant impact on children's development of gender role conception (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

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