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### The Curious Case of Andrew Tate: The Fallacy of Deplatforming

There are few figures as polarizing & controversial in the modern era as that of Andrew Tate. Though many see Tate's quick rise to fame as little more than a grown man pandering to the most immature desires of a young, male population in the West, others see him as a symptom of more significant social issues finally coming to light. Social media conglomerates such as Twitter, Meta, TikTok, and YouTube have taken notice of Tate's meteoric rise, and as of August 2022, he has been suspended from all of the above. Though some may argue the actions against Tate were well justified, it is clear that banning him from social media is a fool's errand. Tate's ban took place as a result of technicality of dubious legitimacy, it is a clear violation of the principles of free speech, and banning him from social media may even make his message more poignant.

Until just a few days ago, Tate was extremely popular on virtually every social platform commercially available today. His largest account was his Instagram, with 4.7 million followers at the time of its removal ("Andrew Tate Banned"). Tate's Instagram mainly consisted of photos of him with luxury automobiles, women, and hypermasculine activities such as shooting firearms. Most of his social and political commentary remained on his YouTube channel, with a small army of fans re-uploading his content to platforms such as TikTok. Tate, however, was banned from Meta on a technicality that he violated their "dangerous individuals and organizations" policy ("Andrew Tate Banned"). The policy aims to eliminate individuals "that

proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence to have a presence on Facebook" ("Dangerous Individuals"). It is arguable that Tate's rhetoric, while inflammatory, was hardly the "violence" that this policy aims to stamp out, particularly whenever members of ISIS are still relatively active on Meta platforms. The Telegraph reported in 2019 that ISIS uses Instagram "to promote jihad and incite support for terror attacks on the West" (Hymas). When considering all of the above, Tate's ban from Meta is most flimsy, as the policy he supposedly "violated" aims to stop terrorism, not a professional kickboxer posting opinionated lifestyle content. Beyond Meta's actions alone, it is evident that eliminating someone like Tate from modern discourse presents an ethical issue regarding the right to free speech.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution is frequently called upon when social media de-platforming occurs. The Amendment, while not necessarily applicable to the activities of a private organization like Meta or Google, does highlight a crucial aspect of the American cultural milieu. Cancel culture, as it is known, has become a hot topic within modern discourse, with many stating that those who cancel out messages that they find disturbing are creating a generation of citizens who are coddled and unfamiliar with how to deal with a dissenting opinion. This "coddling," as Jonathan Haidt puts it, creates a populace where people lack resilience. Haidt states, "A culture that allows the concept of 'safety' to creep so far...is a culture that encourages people to systematically protect one another from the very experiences they need to become strong and healthy" (Haidt, 72). To this, one could argue that Tate's opinions about finance, gender roles, and male culture are an essential counterweight that makes up the modern zeitgeist and that if they genuinely were so vile, then it should be the public themselves that decides against them. Building on this point is the idea that banning specific individuals only legitimizes their message and makes them much stronger.

A crucial aspect of Tate's rhetoric is the notion of escaping a society that he claims aligns against men. Tate often compares the 2001 film *The Matrix* and the modern era, stating that men are oppressed and extracted from by modern governments, and perhaps even women. Tate compares himself and the film's character Morpheus, the man in charge of "unplugging" the protagonist Neo from the false world in which he lives ("Andrew Tate Is Finally"). Being that this is the narrative that Tate has put forth for so long, it is evident that a secondary message exists within his rhetoric that the establishment aligns against him. One could very much argue that, from a philosophical perspective, Tate is a martyr in a Trumpian sense, who was also banned from Facebook and Twitter in 2020. Despite this, Trump remains the Republican frontrunner in the United States for the 2024 election, with his ban simply furthering the notion that he is a messiah figure working against a "deep state" swamp that wishes to crush his movement. Tate espouses many of the same traditionalist, far-right leanings of Trump supporters, and it would hardly be out of the question to state that he will likely pounce on this opportunity to further his message and perhaps even continue to grow in popularity.

Though Andrew Tate may no longer have any social presence whatsoever, one is hard pressed to say that this is the last that will be heard from him. Though he may be banned from social media, it is nearly impossible to ban a person from creating content entirely, which he will assuredly continue to do. Though banning Tate from social media may seem like a logical enough action at first glance, it is clear that these actions will likely produce the opposite of the desired outcome of the modern technocratic establishment. Tate's ban was done under the guise of illegitimate use of company policies, presents ethical issues regarding the right to speak freely, and works to further his message that he is indeed a messiah figure that a shadowy cabal wishes to crush. Though the events of August 2022 have created a multitude of issues for this outspoken

figure, one can be assured that the internet currently sits on the edge of its collective seats in intense anticipation for the next action in the curious case of Andrew Tate.

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## References

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