



A Boring Moral Panic

The benign world of Looksmaxxing

In the fallout from Louis Theroux's *Inside The Manosphere*, a familiar pattern repeats. Another cycle of outrage is being set in motion. Another niche that's ready to be dragged into the spotlight.

Looksmaxxing.

There are many movements that are worth being concerned about, and I suppose Looksmaxxing is one of them. Make no mistake the noise around this phenomenon has weight, yet I am here to ease the concern - it really does sound more exciting than it actually is. Cutting through the noise and pageantry, the myth it seems is bigger than the banal reality.

Looksmaxxing is a movement that finds disenfranchised men and encourages obsession with physical appearance, measuring progress through a mathematical algorithm they believe defines perfection.

These men focus on many methods to achieve this; optimising body fat, muscle, skin, and even bone structure in pursuit of a mathematised ideal. At its more extreme edges, this includes procedures like 'bone smashing', where blunt force trauma is used with the hope of reshaping the face.

All of this may sound radical and extreme, yet it feels strangely familiar.

Something about Looksmaxxing just screams of the same attitudes towards masculinity that I grew up surrounded by in the 90's - Insane bodily expectations treated as permanence in a world that guarantees age and decay. This time however, the men promoting this stuff are assuring that it's all backed by 'science' - without realising that every regime that has come before has used the same playbook rationale.

These self-proclaimed gurus act as if they have figured out how to turn attraction into a solvable equation.

I suppose these gents are ignorant to the phrase; 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.' Then again, they all don't strike me as the philosophical type - they just borrow its tropes.

Looksmaxxing is hardly sounding like a revolution. It's more like body dysmorphia on steroids, injecting additional dangerous drugs and committing self-harm with a desperation to meet a higher level of existence. History has proven that these efforts tend to result in futility.

The appeal of this new system for young men is simply an illusion of control painted by a false narrative that the world we live in gives preferential treatment to attractive people. Those with this philosophy are simply missing the point.

Attraction isn't a series of inputs that if you control closely will guarantee particular outcomes that determine how others will perceive you. One person's ugly, is another's unique fascination. Attraction also doesn't award merits that boost your competitiveness.

Looksmaxxing subjectively can create some "attractive" (emphasis on the air quotes) men, but it mainly produces men that are totally interchangeable. No true unique qualities left, because they blind themselves with an obsession with

physicality, when as people we are a mixture of dynamic qualities, and it takes all of them to become a success.

You can optimise appearance endlessly - but it won't add character, charisma, or empathy - the absence of which leads to lesser connections, ultimately diminishing meaningful opportunities. If the goal is to simply get rich based on your looks, then Looksmaxxing may just get someone there - but they'll find poverty in the material relationships that accompany it.

Looksmaxxing and those in the community do have a discipline that I cannot deny I admire - having a fitness routine. It's one of the only real qualities I can commend it for, but only as far as I agree we should have some form of regular exercise.

Despite the looks and discipline, the movement doesn't seem to imbue its participants with any real presence. It's almost as though they're investing all their time into optimising qualities that are rendering them to be simply forgettable.

One case in point would be the world's number one Looksmaxxer; Clavicular.

This young man presents himself as the logical endpoint of this new movement. He attracts millions of views and translates that into significant income. The irony is that it's framed as helping others, when in reality it encourages passive consumption over participation.

Another closed matrix.

I haven't had the distinct pleasure of meeting or speaking to Clavicular, so I could be missing a brilliance that might just exist behind the online persona, but I can't help but feel underwhelmed whenever I hear him talking. Despite the mythology - and an appearance I'll concede is physically exceptional - he resolutely remains very average.

His aesthetic has been engineered, with presence missing the upgrade.

Recently I've seen a pattern emerge that shows how unimpressed the mainstream are about Clavicular and his Looksmaxxing peers - by way of the interviews where dear old Clav often concludes with a repeated grievance; "No one is asking me a single question about Looksmaxxing." (sic).

This is flatly untrue. Every interviewer I have observed has asked questions about Looksmaxxing. Andrew Callaghan of Channel 5 on YouTube must have asked dozens of questions trying to make sense of this niche world.

The issue it seems isn't the absence of questions on Looksmaxxing, it's that they are void of the content he is hoping to hear.

The questions asked aren't following his desired script - those that show admiration, coupled with a need to join the world of Looksmaxxing.

Perhaps he is lost to the caveat that exists in this new age of attention economy; that exposure/trending doesn't equal interest.

Clavicular doesn't seem willing to accept that, to most people, this world simply doesn't register. Despite its perceived threat, it has little real impact.

Making it a very boring moral panic.

Deep down, I believe Clavicular must realise this, as he is building his whole brand by latching onto extreme and controversial figures in the manosphere - Justin Waller, Andrew Tate, Myron Gaines and Nick Fuentes. He protests that he is not a political figure, and that his content differs from these actors, yet he inadvertently still platforms their views - I can only assume to click farm and monetise their reach.

Surely if his Looksmaxxing content stood on its own merit, then he wouldn't need to invest in time with these figures - riding their algorithmic momentum.

Where the panic does have some substance is in addressing the end goal of Looksmaxxing. The spiritual term that has been

adopted; **ascension**. Becoming so attractive that you move to a higher echelon of society and being.

The problem is that when a self-improvement system borrows language such as this, it moves away from a radical gym and nutrition routine into something ideological.

Language like this is similar to narratives adopted by closed belief systems such as Heaven's Gate - change may be incremental but the ending becomes absolute and possibly fatal.

Looksmaxxing just isn't as frightening as people are hyping it up to be though. It's just an old physical insecurity, but dressed up in sharper lighting, with improved scientific terminology and streamed for hours on end.

A new frontier that is just a rehash of the same old cycle.

A grift that promises disenfranchised young men that the answer to their loneliness is to simply look good - instead of picking up life skills that will serve them in all arenas they find themselves in.

If there's any achievement from my time studying the looksmaxxing world, it's this; it can make a hammer-smashed face feel like a relief.

And even this closing line feels pedestrian...

Doc

Editor's note:

Mid-session at his local gym, the doctor encountered a group already deep in the Looksmaxxing fold.

They were fluent in the language. Up to date on Clavicular's controversies - if not his pharmacology.

"We just use smelling salts," one said, offering a whiff before the next set.

The doctor politely obliged. A sharp burn through the sinuses, exchanged for a new personal best.

Somewhere between the sting and the lift, it became clear: the substances may not be for optimisation at all - but for enduring the monotony of the conversations around it.