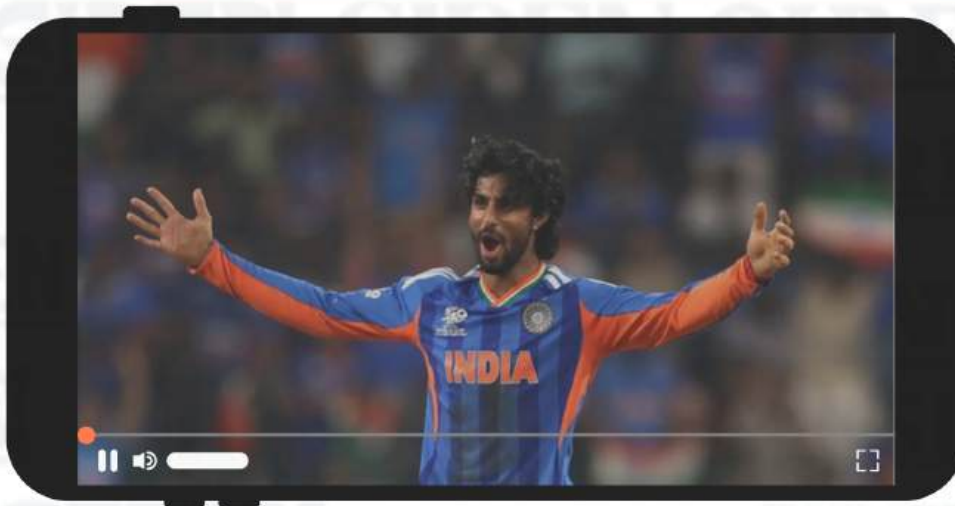




INDIA TURN THE HEAT

Sports - Aaron

A Classic Rivalry, A Classic Win



In a rivalry that predates many of our textbooks and is twice as dramatic, India has once again shown why they are the heavyweight champions of high-pressure cricket. In their latest match against Pakistan, India not only won but also delivered a masterclass performance, transforming a tense showdown into a triumphant celebration.

This was not just a cricket match. This was another installment in a saga that has been playing out over the decades, from the Sharjah thrillers to the World Cup blockbusters. This time, the clash took place during the ICC T20 World Cup group stage, with both teams fighting to keep their campaign alive. And as has been the tradition, India has maintained their unbeaten record against Pakistan in ICC tournaments.

The match started with the kind of tension that you could cut with a stump. Pakistan's bowlers came in steaming, and while Abhishek Sharma fell early for a duck, Ishan Kishan responded with a bat that looked like it was plugged into a power outlet. His explosive 77 off 40 balls, featuring ten fours and three sixes, single-handedly built India's platform and forced Pakistan onto the back foot. Tilak Varma's steady 25 and Suryakumar Yadav's composed 32 kept the innings stable, while Shivam Dube's 27 off 17 balls added late momentum. And when Rinku Singh smashed a six and a four in just four balls, India's finishing kick was complete.

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But it wasn't just India making the highlights reel. Pakistan had their moments, though they came in flashes rather than full spells. Saim Ayub was the only bowler who truly dented India's top order, removing Kishan, Tilak, and Hardik. Shaheen Shah Afridi's lone wicket came in the final over, not the opening spell, dismissing Axar Patel. Usman Khan, not Rizwan, kept wicket, contributing to the run-out of Shivam Dube. Pakistan's fielders threw themselves around with grit, cutting off boundaries and saving crucial runs, but India's batting momentum proved too strong to contain.



And then came the bowling from the Indian side. Oh, the bowling. The Indian fast bowlers didn't just hit the deck hard; they hit the Pakistani hopes even harder. Jasprit Bumrah dismissed Babar Azam with a ball that jagged back in and clipped the stumps, sending the crowd into a frenzy. Mohammed Siraj's pace shook the middle order, and Hardik Pandya's clever short-ball variations forced awkward fend-offs. Kuldeep Yadav tied the middle overs into knots, and Ravindra Jadeja's fielding was electric, as if someone had pressed fast-forward on him. Wickets tumbled like unbalanced bales, and each one sent the crowd into a frenzy of noise.



India vs. Pakistan matches have always been the cricketing equivalent of a blockbuster film release—high stakes, high stars, and high drama. And, of course, a pinch of friendly fire. Indian supporters chuckled that the Pakistani batting order seemed to be attempting to get home before the traffic jammed up the roads, while Pakistani supporters were convinced that India had simply gotten lucky... again. And that, of course, is the magic of this particular rivalry—both teams talk big, both teams think big, and only one team goes home with their head held high.



This time, India went home with a smile that could be seen from outer space.



With the final wicket down, the stadium erupted. Fans danced, flags waved, and somewhere in the distance, a commentator was probably saying something profound about destiny. India didn't just win, they owned the moment. And in a rivalry where every ball is a plot twist, this victory will be etched as another chapter in the glorious story of Indian cricket.



THE MAGICAL FOUNDATION OF MODERN DAY CHEMISTRY



Alchemists have always been known in the media as magicians who create potions and bend the laws of creation itself. Famous fictional characters that practice this pursuit include Nicholas Flamel from the Harry Potter series or Victor Frankenstein from Mary Shelley's hit gothic novel Frankenstein. Most people however, don't realize that alchemy is so much more than a fantasy, it is the predecessor and father of modern day chemistry. Alchemists have paved the way for countless areas of science and this archaic study is the birthplace of the chemical sciences as we know them.

Infamously, the goal of many alchemists throughout earlier history (between 1350 and 1650) has been to convert base metallic elements like lead or copper into precious metals like silver or gold. These attempts boiled down to two core principals: transmutation (conversion and purification of base metals) and chrysopoeia (artificial creation of gold.) The aforementioned philosopher's stone was believed to be the missing fragment to complete the reaction. At the time there was no sound evidence to counter the belief of alchemists so many monarchs looking to expand their wealth would provide alchemists with the laboratory facilities necessary to conduct transmutational experiments. These experiments typically involved a specialised furnace and an extremely distinct sequence of chemicals to be added which would be written in nearly illegible script to maintain confidentiality.

Practitioners of this study had an insurmountable number of ambitious objectives but the main proprietor of these goals was the creation of a coveted substance named the philosopher's stone. This was a legendary, mythical alchemical substance believed to possess powers to bend the very fabric of existence as it was known. Since its existence was only a fallacy that travelled between countless cultures and continued to develop into a more complex myth over time there is not one single accurate physical description. It is often said to be orange or red when ground into a powder. Or in a solid form, an intermediate between red and purple, transparent and glass-like. It was also rumoured to have fantastical properties such as a weight heavier than gold and a total resistance to combustion. In short, the philosopher's stone was the main driver of all alchemical research.

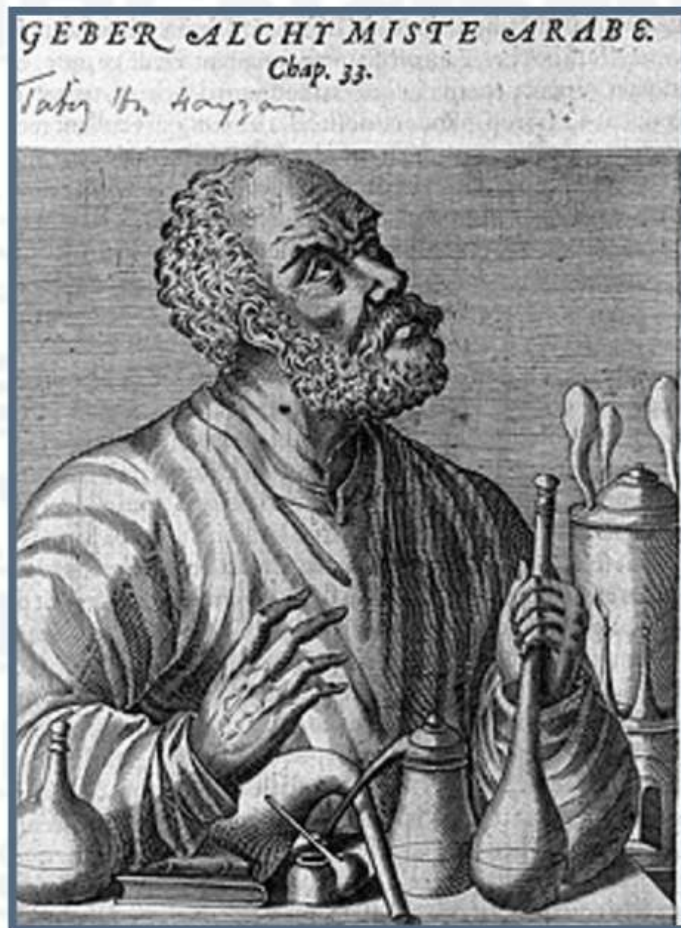
Nowadays, we know that these efforts were entirely futile as modern day physics and chemistry work in tandem to disprove the beliefs of our alchemical predecessors. Despite this, in 1980, Nobel laureate Glenn Seaborg and his team at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory successfully performed chrysopoeia by converting an infinitesimally small mass of bismuth to gold via using a particle accelerator to knock protons and neutrons out of the bismuth nuclei. The actual amount of gold produced was extremely minute and the cost per ounce was estimated to be approximately a quadrillion dollars per ounce so the economical application was next to zero. However, this successful experiment was a revolutionary step in the world of nuclear physics and molecular chemistry and it paved the way for many similar subsequent trials.

Furthermore, alchemists during their prime years in history also focused heavily on the human body and spirit, pushing their own limits to achieve unrealistic goals. Many commonly used phrases have obscure origins, in this case the phrase "magnum opus" was coined by alchemists in the first century AD. This was the final peak stage of self actualisation a vast majority of practitioners aimed for. It involved a variety of stages that consisted of grueling laboratorial work that would lead an aspiring alchemist to reach their three most important goals in life: successful transmutations, creating a cure-all for any disease that affects society and producing an elixir of immortality. This universal cure was referred to as the panacea, its function being identical to the role of its namesake the Greek goddess Panacea, who was the goddess of universal remedy. The panacea and elixir of life were intended to work hand in hand to reach the pinnacle of human existence, living indefinitely and living free of all illness.



The father of alchemy and by association modern day chemistry was a was a pioneering 8th-century Persian polymath named Abū Mūsā Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, commonly known as Geber. He discovered important compounds like sulfuric and nitric acid and created fundamental laboratory processes including distillation, crystallization, and purification which later served to be the foundations subsequent alchemists/chemists built upon. He laid the groundwork for modern chemistry in both the Islamic world and Europe. Throughout history a plethora of middle eastern and Muslim scholars have founded the skeletal structure of countless scientific fields. Alongside polymath Geber, another famous scientist who dabbled in the art of alchemy included Isaac Newton himself. He actively experimented, attempting to find the Philosopher's Stone to transmute base metals, viewing alchemy as a systematic, experimental science.

Now, let's delve into how such a rich history and mythical world of fantastical concepts became the chemistry we learn in classrooms, utilize for pharmaceutical interventions and apply in agriculture. From the 17th century onwards, alchemy slowly began metamorphosing from a mystical, secretive magic-esque practice to a rational, experimental, and transparent scientific method. What began as solely focusing on philosophical transformation started being viewed through a more logical and critical lens that focused on the sound understanding of chemicals and their behaviours. Robert Boyle is now considered the father of modern chemistry due to his contributions during this shift in ideology. He wrote *The Sceptical Chymist* (1661), a text which challenged the foundational theories of alchemy provided by the archaic figures of the past and advocated for a rigorous, experimental approach. Challenging what many believed to be the basis of chemical composition led to more questions arising and it snowballed into alchemy slowly becoming obsolete. Over time, more logical answers were given to these questions and the fundamentals were joined together into what is now known as chemistry.



Alchemy may no longer be in practice but there is an inexplicable beauty in getting to understand how the sciences that play such a vital role in our everyday lives came to be. Chemistry is the study of matter itself and knowing it blossoms from somewhere so magical makes it all the more fun!



THE RETURN OF THE TRADWIFE

MEDIA - MINNA

Scroll long enough and you'll find her: linen dresses and freshly done hair, arranging peonies in a ceramic vase. Sunlight pools on floral wallpaper and polished kitchen countertops, and a loaf of sourdough rests behind a stove. #softlife #homemaking

The image is almost hypnotic, but it sits strangely with a generation raised on independence. To some, it feels like comfort. To others, it feels like taking a step backwards.

In an era where women are finally getting the freedom they fought so hard and dear for, defined by female CEOs and 'girl boss' branding, why are so many young women romanticising domestic submission?

But what exactly is a **Tradwife**? More than the sourdough and soft lighting, the movement promotes a model of marriage built almost entirely on male provision and female submission. Whilst homemaking itself is neither radical nor regressive, the tradwife ideology presents it in a way that celebrates male authority and frames female deference as empowerment; deference to a man, a hierarchy, tradition.

This begs the question then: if the revival of these traditional gender roles takes women fifty years backwards in terms of freedom, then why are so many of the youngest generation, raised on an independence that wasn't given to those before them, choosing just that? And isn't the fact that these women are choosing to become trad wives automatically empowering?

Part of this answer may lie less in politics and more in psychology. In a world where instability reigns, the trad wife movement brings about something radical in 2026: certainty.

RELATABLE SHENANIGANS VOLUME 4 - MAESHA

Free

Lesson:



Single

Lesson:



Double

Lesson:



Triple

Lesson:



MAESHAQ

History has seen that in periods of social and economic instability, society tends to drift towards tradition rather than away from it, exemplified by the iconic 1950s housewife in a post-WW2 era. Thus, domestic submission speaks to the craving for safety in the familiarity of clearly defined roles, away from the chaos the rest of the world has to offer.

There is also a powerful allure in being 'chosen', selected and provided for, defined within a structure rather than forced to build one yourself. For women from many non-western countries, homemaking was never framed as regression, but as social, financial and societal security, safer than going out of your way to carve female independence in societies that hadn't been designed to support it. Here, domesticity becomes strategic and brings forth an entirely new question: is a choice shaped by economic exhaustion or fear of instability the same as a choice born from genuine liberation?

In that sense, the rebirth of the trad wife may be less a rejection of liberation and more a reaction to the pressure of its cost. For a generation taught that financial and social independence meant endless opportunities, constant ambition was framed as freedom, adding yet another layer to this movement: fatigue. Many young women grew up hearing their mothers say "You can do anything", a sentence born from love and the memory of doors once closed. Over time, however, that encouragement may have hardened into expectation. "You can do anything" became "You must do everything". Build the career. Outperform. Become entirely self-sufficient. And so they did just that, depending on the fantasy that had been built for them, believing it would lead to stability and fulfillment. Yet rising living costs, economic instability, and the discovery that a dual-income household still isn't very comfortable in this day, have complicated that dream.

And so these women turned to the same lives of domestic submission their mothers had had before them, seeking the stability and fulfillment they'd been promised

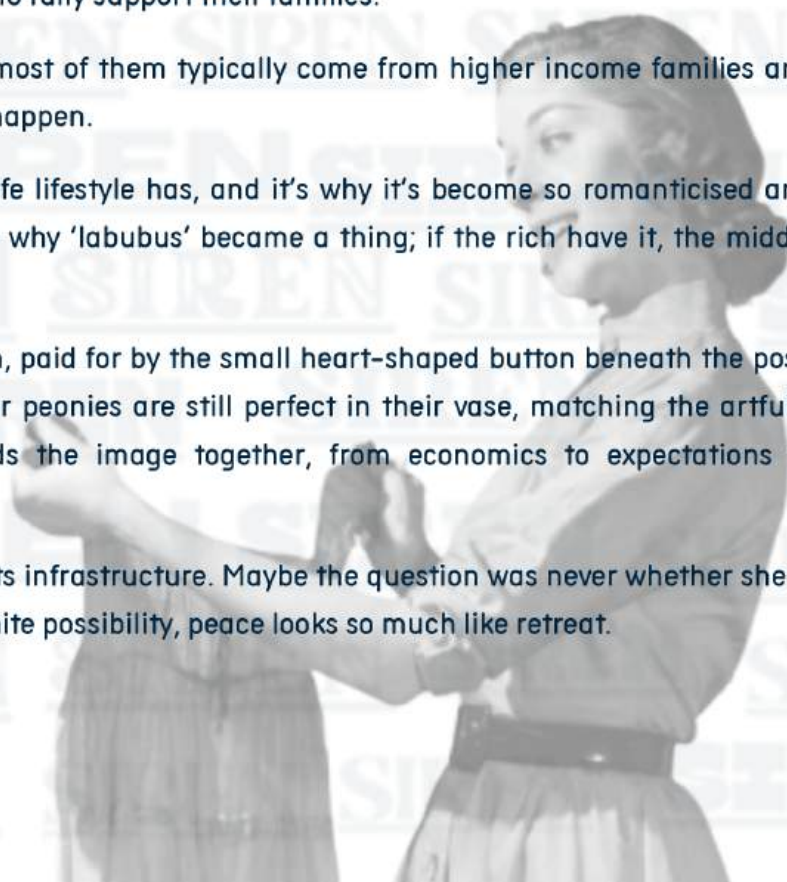
How would these women feel, then, to discover that stability in domesticity, too, is a lie. Not many middle class households can even afford this single-income lifestyle that assumes childcare and healthcare are both covered, all these organic products are affordable, and that there's still somehow money to spare for the flowery curtains and dresses. What actually happens is that a lot of these influencer trad wives on social media earn money through the monetisation of their content in order to be able to fully support their families.

As for the ones that don't monetise their content, most of them typically come from higher income families and have this safety net to fall back on should anything happen.

This forms part of the great appeal that the tradwife lifestyle has, and it's why it's become so romanticised and closely associated with luxury. It's the same reason why 'labubus' became a thing; if the rich have it, the middle class want it.

And so, she stands in her brightly lit flowery kitchen, paid for by the small heart-shaped button beneath the post. Her hair still catches the sunlight as she walks, her peonies are still perfect in their vase, matching the artfully selected wallpaper. But it's clear now what holds the image together, from economics to expectations to exhaustion to privilege.

The soft beauty of the image is still there, but so is its infrastructure. Maybe the question was never whether she is empowered or regressed, but why, in this age of infinite possibility, peace looks so much like retreat.



ORANGE

HAZE SCHOOL:
ATHARV 🍰



The rise and fall of an unrestricted ego

"Hierarchy is a system in which members of a society are ranked. It's one of the many things that people revolt against."

Orange Haze, the film that won the student vote for the Directors Of Sheffield film competition. It's not just a film about staying at the top. It's a visceral breakdown of what happens when an ego is left unkempt in positions of power.

Almost the entirety of the film is a monologue of the main character, Kyra Castellum – student rank 1/139. The 'model student'. After the intro and montage, the movie cuts to Kyra searching through her emails, eventually stumbling upon a picture of her and the movie's 'antagonist', Ophelia Liberatas – student rank 2/139. "Silver". The rivalry is made clear from the very beginning. Kyra wishes only to uphold her rank as the top student.

Ophelia is the friendly face of the film. Everyone's friends with her, yet Kyra sees something we don't. She can see right through the friendly face, or so it seems. Her "stupid, plastic smile" and "fake, manicured nails" aren't a good enough facade for our main character, Kyra. "Pathetic" looms over the screen. Initially a word used to describe Ophelia, it's made evident that Kyra, is in fact, the one who's pathetic, by overstaying its time into another montage of her and her belongings. A subtle trick that speaks volumes about her character.

The day of the exam. Kyra can be seen writing in her journal. "Why does she show up in every thought? Every angle?"; "Why her?"; "Is she better?"; "Why is she better?"; "I have to be better"; "She's much better at everything". It's clear her ego, the so-called "refuge", is now crumbling down. While Radiohead's Creep plays, Ophelia walks into Kyra, who is seen wallowing in her sorrow on the school floor. "I'm a creep, I'm a weirdo, what the hell am I doing here, I don't belong here" – the inner monologue of Kyra is depicted musically.

Ophelia then hands her a drawing of a bird next to a flower. Symbolism for joy and peace, yet a pathetic, patronising gesture to Kyra. Ophelia meets a silent "thanks", walks away, remains oblivious to the bitterness Kyra faces in her own head. Through well-placed environmental storytelling, the world "Failure" can be seen behind Kyra, with arrows pointing right at her. Ophelia looks over at her, feeling sorry for her, yet it's the last straw for Kyra. She leaves prematurely, showing us another part of her inner monologue – "Seriously? How could you mess that up???" Everything is then made obvious. A simple misfortune of a broken zipper pushes Kyra over the edge, into a mental breakdown. The dishevelled hair, the hyperventilation – everything is going wrong for her.

Kyra seeks one thing, and one thing only. Power. Originality. Yet, she has only that to her name. Her banality is ironic by the fact that her personality is shown through one objective – she’s exceptionally unremarkable and painfully one dimensional.

Yet the one thing she strives for is moving away from her. She has nothing to show for herself. Her fears predicted this – Kyra steps into the zeroth dimension. “I wish I was special”.

Her eyes won’t dry and her face won’t settle. Her failures are advertised to the whole world. The one people gawk at with begrudging admiration is left in shambles, jealous of her adversary yet helpless to do anything about it.

All isn’t lost, however. The one thing that can save her is the one thing she hates – the one she strives to be better than.

Ophelia walks up to her one last time in the film. The first time Kyra is seen audibly interacting with Ophelia is when she’s bathed in orange light. Symbolic of warmth and optimism. Kyra’s inner demons quickly wash away in the sight of Ophelia – all it took to stop hating her was to level with her.

Orange Haze teaches us to keep our ego in check and masters it using the simple, yet effective filmmaking phrase of “show, don’t tell”. The environmental storytelling, the music, even the colours tell us more than any dialogue could in six minutes.

A form of Kyra resides in all of us. We all strive to be perfect at something – an unattainable feat. A trip, a broken pencil, a stuck zipper, the most minor, almost mundane aspects about someone’s life add up in our simple, predictable, human minds, leading to a crumbling sensation. Perfection isn’t an achievement, but a lost cause that we simply fail to understand it to be so.



CLAVICULAR GETS FRAME MOGGED: A DEEP DIVE INTO LOOKSMAXXING COMMUNITIES

OPINION:
REEM

In early February 2026 influencer Branden Peters, better known as Clav or Clavicular, found himself amidst a tragic cortisol-spiking incident when he got brutally “frame-mogged” by the ASU (Arizona State University) frat leader, Varis Gilaj. The “looksmaxxing” community was left in shambles after this controversy raised questions regarding whether Clav deserved the frame-mog as he was “jestermaxxing” in the club the day before or whether this was a premeditated attempt to dethrone Clav as the looksmaxxing star.

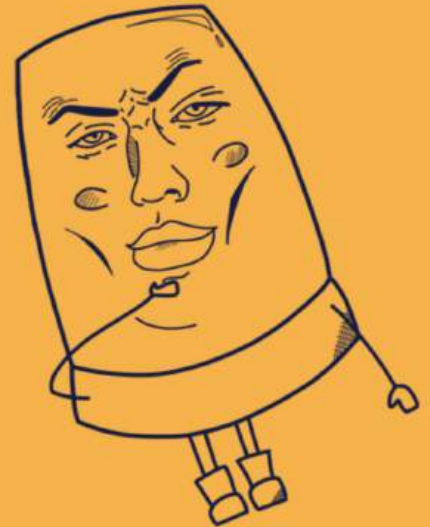


If you're employed or chronically offline you might be asking yourself what this could possibly mean. For starters, looksmaxxing is a term that originally stems from online incel communities from the 2010s, it refers to the process of maximizing one's own physical appearance using unconventional and harmful means. The term was popularized on platforms such as TikTok in late 2023 where many young men started adopting this lifestyle (mainly for clout) and influencing others to join them. Clavicular is one of the most infamous examples of looksmaxxers, he's known for being a “hardmaxxer”, someone who uses and promotes practices extreme self harming methods to fit into the standards of looksmaxxers, such as using drugs to stay in shape or smashing his jawbone with a hammer for a more “masculine” and “chiseled” look.

Looksmaxxing is undoubtedly a toxic and all around harmful community that exploits the insecurities of young men for their own gain, there is nothing one can say about them that hasn't been said by almost everyone else. But what caused this resurgence in its popularity? And why are young people adopting their lingo and getting sucked into this lifestyle when it's so obviously unhealthy and detrimental to their mental and physical wellbeing? To understand the rise of the community you have to be familiar with internet culture. Online communities have long since capitalised on people's insecurities, from unrealistic beauty expectations to terms that are specifically designed to decrease your self esteem, so looksmaxxing isn't technically a new concept. However, it's been repackaged into an aesthetically pleasing experience. A way to achieve your “true potential” rather than another marketing campaign that plays on people's self esteem and promotes the idea of physical perfection.

Looksmaxxing did not resurface because of its beneficial or positive impact, it's a visually appealing device used to lure in vulnerable individuals into "incel" communities. They use pseudo scientific terms like the "canthal tilt" or "facial harmony" to try and convince you that this is normal and even healthy behaviour, but it's not. There is no scientific evidence that backs up any of their claims or views, so you might be wondering how people even fall into this rabbit hole.

As mentioned before, looksmaxxing lures in vulnerable individuals with claims that the more attractive you are the better people treat you. The Halo Effect, or better known as pretty privilege, is a cognitive bias that causes people to associate physical attractiveness with positive traits like intelligence, competence, and moral worth, making it an effective marketing strategy that is often utilized in branding. Looksmaxxing exploits this bias by encouraging people to "optimize" themselves, to basically market themselves to be more desirable to society. What they fail to acknowledge though is the fact that humans are not commodities, and reducing their identity to a performance metric is not a substitute for their lack of personality.



There are many values that looksmaxxers uphold, many of which are built on misogyny and racism. Physical optimisation is tied to ideals that push a eurocentric beauty standard and in which women are villainised, objectified, and blamed for the "male loneliness epidemic". From a sociological point of view, looksmaxxing could be described as a deviant online subculture that has emerged from the perceived loss of social power among young men. It operates as a compensatory identity and could be better understood as a wider response to the loss of the traditional markers of masculinity, such as financial stability, this is a breeding ground for the resurgence in toxic masculinity and it teaches young men to equate looks with character stripping them of basic human empathy. This is not only dangerous in an individualistic sense it also pushes eugenicist thinking where physical traits are framed as indicators of genetic superiority and moral values. Looksmaxxing perpetuates cycles of hate and discrimination under the guise of self-improvement, essentially it upholds social hierarchies and fosters ignorance among impressionable teenagers.

This hyper-fixation with physical maximalization is a pipeline into a fascist worldview and should be acknowledged as such. In extreme cases, looksmaxxing could be a gateway to gender-based violence, as more and more men are glamourizing and idolizing the perpetrators and distorting reality to justify those actions. So while satirizing and 'memeifying' looksmaxxing may be funny it does not erase the hateful and harmful nature of this movement and it allows its proponents to get away with their actions, it is important that looksmaxxing is recognized as the dystopian agenda that it is.

FROM PRODIGY TO PRECEDENT:

ILIA MALININ, ALYSA LIU AND THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATIONS



SPORTS - MINNA YR 11

In the months that lead up to the 2026 Winter Olympics, two very different stories were quietly forming amidst the same sheet of ice. One had been loud, prophetic, almost suffocating with its certainty. The other? Much steadier, less sensational, but no less formidable. By the time the games began Ilia Malinin had been cast as the men's figure skating's inevitable champion, whilst Alysa Liu entered the women's event as a strong contender defined more by composure than coronation.

Malinin's placement was framed as destiny. The prodigy who'd turned physics into some sort of performance act. The alleged 'Quad God' who landed the first ratified quad Axel and essentially redefined technical ambition as though it were simply yet another day of the week. Broadcasters replayed his historic jumps with reverence, analysts debated not on whether or not he'd win but rather, by how much. In a stage where unpredictability is usually the only guarantee, Malinin was positioned as the exception, a skater who had supposedly outgrown even uncertainty itself.

Liu, meanwhile, generated less prophecy and more quiet belief. A 'former' prodigy who had returned post-retirement as a composed competitor, she carried expectation without spectacle. There were no headlines declaring her inevitable gold, no sweeping declarations of technical revolution attached to her name. And yet, as the event unfolded, it would be her strong narrative, and not some sort of prophecy, that proved most durable.

And then came the result the rewrote it all: The skater they'd all dubbed as untouchable, Ilia Malinin, had gone from project #GoldenAndSetForFirst to a whopping eighth place.

The number itself was jarring, the shift in the media's tone was even more revealing. In the span of just one evening, inevitability turned into some form of interrogation. The same outlet that had anointed Malinin as the future of the sport, pivoted towards dissecting his strategy. Was his layout too ambitious? Did he rely too heavily on base value? Should he have attempted to scale back? The narrative that'd once elevated him moved very quickly onto analysing the debris.

Truth be told, Malinin's rise was almost inseparable from the technical rat race that's been defining the past decade's worth of Olympic events. Scoring systems had begun gravitating towards rewarding difficulty, programs grew denser with more ultra-C elements. Base value became a lethal weapon. In such a difficult environment, Malinin did not merely participate; he thrived. His layouts already read like manifestos for pushing the ceiling ever higher, all he had to do was land more quad lutzs, quad flips, and showcase more of his infamous quad axels all with excellent technique.

It was an exhilarating form of skating, yet again, it was equally as unforgiving.

when your program is built on maximizing base value, your margin for error significantly shrinks. A slight under-rotation is no longer a mere minor deduction but a dramatic numerical setback. A popped jump doesn't just disrupt your momentum, but your structure too. The higher he technical risk, the sharper the consequences faced when execution falters. The pressure that comes from the Olympics further magnifies that volatility.

The games differ from just every other ordinary competition, not just in scale but in weight. Athletes don't just skate solely against opponents, you skate against high expectations. Malinin entered the Olympic arena carrying not only his own ambition a drive, but the heavy burden put upon him by the media, federations and fans that'd all been essentially thrown onto his back. He was positioned as the embodiment of skating's next era, proof that the sport could evolve upwards in terms of difficulty.

But alas, sport greatly resists against prophecy.

The errors he made were not catastrophic by all means, they were merely human. A jump that landed slightly off axis, a landing not completely secured. They were the kind of imperfections that we usually turned a blind eye on when it came to lower-stake events. At the Olympics though? Those imperfections accumulated rapidly. Clean, balanced programs from the competitors became the ideal. It was no longer ambition that determined the standings but flawless execution.

Technical innovation is what drives figure skating forward, right? Without it, progress significantly stalls. And yet innovation alone doesn't guarantee anybody success. Programs must also survive scrutiny. Athletes must withstand expectations as well.

The speed at which the media narratives flipped from celebration to critique as well highlights yet another lethal dynamic at play: the volatility of mythmaking. Elevating a skating as the inevitable victor leaves little to no room for nuance. When one's victory is framed as destiny, anything less reads as failure. Eighth place (under ordinary circumstances) is a competitive finish in a deep Olympic field. But under the weight of inevitability? It becomes a shock.

It's worth remembering though, that Olympic legacies are rarely paved through within a single night. History is filled with champions who've endured early setbacks before their eventual growth. In the case of Malinin, the 2026 results may serve not as a verdict but more as a recalibration and a sort of reality check.

An honourable mention in this discussion turns towards skaters who've previously navigated the path between ambition and execution.



Figures such as (MY GOAT) Yuzuru Hanyu are frequently brought up in discussions, not as to diminish contemporary athletes, but as to showcase how technical progression and program cohesion are able to coexist harmoniously in the highest level. It all ties back to an enduring truth, that greatness in figure skating is rarely ever one-dimensional.

If the men's figure skating event this year felt like a reckoning, then the women's felt akin to that of some form of restoration. Whilst the spotlight in the buildup had burned almost exclusively towards Malinin, Alysa Liu quietly delivered the type of performance that had reminded audiences as to why Olympic figure skating still captivated many beyond technical brinkmanship. Her gold medal wasn't framed as inevitable like Malinin's. It was earned the old-fashioned way; through composure and programs that felt complete from the first note to it's final pose.

Liu's victory and final placement of gold underscored a compelling contrast. Whilst the men's event raised questions about sustainability and escalation, the women's emphasised balance. The technical content was quite formidable, but didn't overwhelm the program's architecture, it was integrated cohesively rather than stacked as a form of spectacle which in turn resulted in skating that felt difficult but not desperate, ambitious yet equal parts grounded.

Malinin's technical prowess remains undeniable and his capacity to push boundaries remains intact. What changed was not his talent but rather the narrative surrounding it. The Olympics had merely stripped away the illusion of certainty clouding him and reintroduced its base element of unpredictability, the element that truly made the sport compelling.

If anything, the result might even ultimately deepen his legacy. Dominance without adversity can appear effortless but then again, dominance forged through setbacks carries an even greater resonance. The question now is not whether Malinin can land the hardest jumps but if he's going to be able to adapt, refine and balance risks in pursuit of future championship titles.

The 2026 Winter Olympics didn't dismantle the Quad God. They just simply reminded the skating world that no athlete, regardless of how technically advanced they are, is immune to the sport's fundamental reality, and that's the fact that the blade must always meet the ice cleanly, every single time. Inevitability is a powerful headline, but always remember, it's rarely ever a sustainable one.



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TRILLION DOLLAR CRASH: IS THE "AI BUBBLE" POPPING?



TECH - AYUSH

\$ YOU WAKE UP AND FIND OUT THAT YOU LOST 600 BILLION DOLLARS.

All that money, gone in a single day.

The above figure is so enormous that it does not even sound like it's possible to lose that much in that little time, but NVIDIA has already experienced the same in early 2025. NVIDIA is a technology giant, known to produce computer chips that drive Artificial Intelligence. They were not the only ones who became losers. The world technology market had lost almost 1 Trillion dollars in the span of a few days. That is 1 Trillion dollars, yes, you read that right.

The last several years have seen AI being the buzzword. Wall Street dubbed a handful of companies the Magnificent Seven such as Microsoft, Alphabet, Meta, and NVIDIA as frontrunners in AI; they appeared invulnerable. They pumped hundreds of billions into AI hoping that it would transform everything from the way we do our homework to the way doctor cure diseases.

All that hype met its end swiftly. The big question that financial pundits are arguing about is: Do we live in an AI bubble? Is it finally starting to pop?



*Editors note, no idea why did Soren became hyper realistic inside the bubble. Not questioning it though

THE MATH ISN'T MATHING

Billionaires and investors are panicking, to find out why, you have to know what a financial bubble is. A bubble occurs when the value of a thing, be that a stock, a house or a new technology, becomes a lot higher than its true, real-world price, under the influence of hype and FOMO (fear of missing out). Eventually, the reality hits and the hype passes, and the bubble bursts leading to collapse of their prices.

The fact test that the AI industry is taking is enormous. To have a simple example of this, imagine that you take a loan to invest \$500,000 in establishing a world-class bakery. You install the finest ovens, the most costly ingredients and hire the finest bakers. Despite all that, by the end of the year, you are only selling cupcakes to the value of \$12 per dozen. You would have been bankrupt.

This is what is going on in Silicon Valley but to an extreme extent. Technological firms are investing up to \$500 billion annually on the establishment of large data centers, acquisition of high-cost chips and the employment of the best engineers to work on AI. Nevertheless, the reality of consumer AI which includes the real money getting collected due to individuals subscribing to AI services is only making 12 billion per year. Coming back to our analogy, the cupcake sales have not yet even come close to the kitchen costs. The tech companies are borrowing in huge amounts to do this, the highest-earning of them accumulating \$108 billion in new debt during 2025 alone.



During a short time, the tech giants decided to dismiss the poor math due to the belief that their enormous AI models were invincible. But in January 2025, a gigantic plot twist caused a tremor in the technological world.

One of the Chinese tech companies released an AI chatbot called DeepSeek. It was smart and robust like the most efficient AI models created by OpenAI and Google, and there was a twist to it: it was created and run at an extremely low price.

This caused a huge wave in Wall Street. The investors then abruptly noticed that the hundreds of billions of dollars the tech giants were pumping into AI infrastructure were a monumental waste of resources. Why did a competitor company come up with the same product at a tenth of the price?

THE HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF: DOT-COM CRASH 2.0?



When you have a chat with a millennial or Gen X about the stock market, you are likely to hear about the so-called "Dot-Com Bubble" popping in the year 2000. The internet was the new cool kid in the block in those days. People poured millions of dollars to literally any company that attached the suffix ".com" to the end of their name, even though they did not receive any money. The bubble burst, and a number of companies became bankrupt over a single night when people realized that these websites were not actually generating any income.

But will the new "AI bubble" cause the death of the economy, just like its predecessor did? Not exactly. The fact that the leading companies in the AI revolution today, including Apple, Microsoft, and Google, are already among the most profitable and rich companies in the history of humanity, is the first that is different. They are selling iPhones, search ads and software for billions of dollars. When they blow it with AI, they will not become bankrupt as the companies of the 2000s. Rather than a big bang, economists state that the bursting AI bubble will take the form of a slow leak. The latter companies will only be forced to silently cease spending such a substantial amount of money on AI and to reduce their futuristic claims.

But the real losers when the AI bubble bursts are not going to be the tech giants. The losers are going to be all the little companies that are living on the hype train. Think about all the companies that decided to put a chatbot on their gardening website. Think of all the companies that decided to launch yet another productivity tool based on artificial intelligence, which has no customer base. It wasn't Microsoft or Amazon that went out of business when the dot-com bubble burst. It was all the little websites that had no revenue and no plan. The world of AI today is almost identical to that. In the first quarter of 2025, almost 58% of all global venture capital investments were made into AI companies. These are companies that have sky-high valuations and no real profit. In fact, a study conducted by MIT in 2025 found that 95% of companies that are investing in generative AI had no real returns. The companies that are currently burning through investors' money to compete with companies that have infinite resources and infrastructure are the ones that are standing on thin ice. When the music stops, they are going to vanish. Just as they did two decades ago.



CONCLUSION

Finally, Artificial Intelligence is not a sham, and it is not going to disappear. It will keep on altering the way we live, work and learn. But the age of AI infinite money glitch is officially ended. The bubble has been bumped, and the tech giants are ultimately being forced to pay the price.

OVERCONSUMPTION

AN EXPONENTIALLY DANGEROUS PROBLEM



MEDIA- AALIYAH

If you've spent any time on social media, you may have noticed a common pattern in recent years. People showing large collections of hygiene products or videos of different item recommendations showing up on your algorithm every few hours. These kinds of videos make us want more than we have, influencing us to buy 25 different types of body products just to smell "clean". But what is this phenomenon? And why is this now becoming a larger issue.

Overconsumption is described as an excessive accumulation of any good and services. Recently, overconsumption has been shown online, possibly influencing younger audiences to buy new things to keep up with trends. In history, trends typically phase in and out slowly, typically last around a decade. This is why most eras in history, like the 1840s to the 2000s have a specific style and aesthetic. However in the 2020s, it seems that trends change rapidly, lasting only about a few months. It could be caused by our shortened attention spans, as we consume and become more accustomed to shorter forms of media like tiktok.

The biggest problem raised from overconsumption are environmental concerns. As new trends come in, products that used to be seen as trendy don't hold that status. So what do people do? Most of the time, they throw them away. Most products that are made as a result of trends typically aren't made from sustainable materials. Instead, companies try to cut costs by using cheaper materials like polyester and other plastics. The issue with this, is that these materials aren't biodegradable.

They'll either get dumped in landfills, which takes up space, or get incinerated, which causes gases like carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide to spread into the atmosphere.

Overconsumption also creates a toxic culture towards trends and people who don't follow them. Social media is extremely diverse, and some people may not always have the means to keep up with trends, like younger audiences or people who don't have the financial means. The glamourization of overconsumption may lead these groups to spend immense amounts of money they don't have, or lower their self-esteem because they aren't able to keep up. It also creates a toxic environment in people's real life, leading to bullying and exclusion.



Another issue is that it chemically changes your brain to constantly chase instant gratification. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter in our brains that is typically associated with happiness and pleasure. As stated, overconsumption can be traced to the rise of short form media, and our ability to consume more in less time. This causes our dopamine to spike, and we'll want to keep recreating that feeling. That's when we start chasing things that can make us feel that same buzz at the same time, and sometimes even quicker. This causes our attention spans to shrink, making it harder for us to concentrate on longer tasks or media. It has gone to the point where social media addiction has become a real problem psychologists are trying to understand.

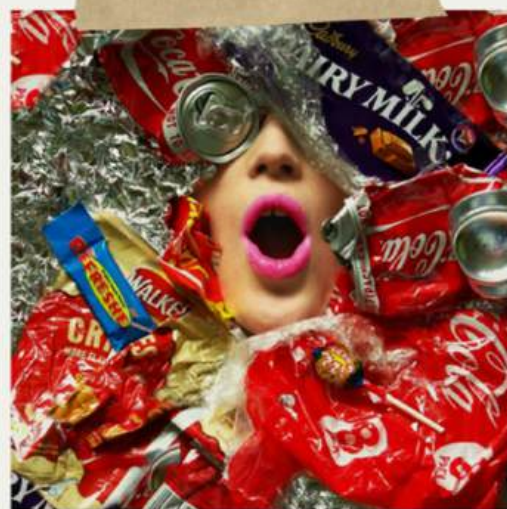
You may think now that you can't do much, maybe because you're just one tiny part of a large consumer basis, or because you think you're helpless in these kinds of situations. But, there are things you as a consumer can do to fix these problems. One big action is simply lowering your consumption. Think about the products or services you buy, are they a necessity or just something you want? However, buying things you want isn't an issue. But you need to evaluate whether you actually like something or if you like it because it's trendy. One way to do this is waiting some time before you buy something, whether it's two weeks or one month. This gives you more than enough time to reflect on whether you actually want something and if it would actually be worth it. Understanding whether things are wants or a need also helps with the culture around overconsumption. More people understanding that they don't need to follow every trend that comes out discourages overconsuming. This means that people who can't follow these trends are less likely to be isolated from others.

Another solution is lowering your consumption of shorter media. It is difficult to lower your screentime all together initially, but consuming less short-form content trains your brain to focus for longer. This helps us combat our short attention spans and encourages us to deeply engage in things we consume. Additionally, consuming books, movies, and articles allows us to gain more knowledge and develop well-rounded opinions.

Overconsumption is on the rise to be a problem in contemporary media, however because it is so new, there's still things we can do to change that. It is possible for us to expand our attention span, knowledge and connection with the things we buy and watch. It's important to understand that being a small portion or the larger scale of media consumers shouldn't stop you from acting to make changes to improve our society.



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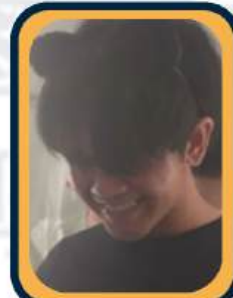
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