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Question: Can an understanding of how consumer behaviour has evolved, and how our desires to be fashionable have been satiated, help us to understand future fashion and textiles systems that are fairer for people and planet?

Can an understanding of how consumer behaviour has evolved, and how our desires to be fashionable have been satiated, help us to understand future fashion and textiles systems that are fairer for people and planet?

The interrelation between class, clothing, and consumption has been a subject of interest, leading to the question of how this relationship will impact the future in various aspects both socially and environmentally. Section one will involve an analysis of the theories proposed by prominent thinkers, Pierre Bourdieu and Thorstein Veblen, analysing the relationship between class culture and the importance of material possessions that we hold, leading to an extensive exploration into the theories of consumption. Section two will provide a comprehensive examination of extreme fashion orientated case studies from various sectors including luxury labels, high street brands and e-commerce platforms, where an understanding of why society tends to conform to trends and engage in excessive consumption, will be made. In the third section, the viewpoints of contemporary designers and fashion activists such as Ellen MacArthur and Stella McCartney will be considered. Reflecting upon their key contributions towards the discussion on sustainability and the harmful effects of fast fashion, to gain a full understanding of the social and environmental repercussions of overconsumption. By delving into these theories and conducting a thorough analysis, an understanding of the issues connected to fast fashion that we confront within society, will be attained. This understanding will enable contemporary thinkers and designers to devise a system that is both desirable and distinctive for present and future consumers - a system that would capitalise on individuals' innate tendencies to be inspired by novelty attractiveness of the concept of luxury, while simultaneously ensuring the prevention of any adverse consequences. Through an exploration of various research studies, a conclusion can be drawn about how society can revolutionise its approach to fashion, moving towards a more sustainable future.

Culture plays a substantial role in determining our perception and interactions with the world around us; it influences our beliefs, principles, and attitudes. In design this is even more prominent, where both functionality and visual preferences from colour and pattern selection are examples that illustrate the influential effect that social relationships and cultural traditions have on design.



Figure 1. Painting by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (German, 1805-1873). *The Empress Eugenie Surrounded by her Ladies in Waiting*, 1855.

Pierre Bourdieu's study on consumption and status highlights on the establishment of cultural expectations, values, desires, and necessities. This is shown in his analysis of the connection between social class and consumption practices, 'taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6). Within his work, Bourdieu focuses on the contrasts between two distinct forms of consumer behaviour: the desire for luxury surpasses the need for necessities, suggesting that the inclination towards luxury is more evident in individuals whose preferences are heavily influenced by their material circumstances 'perception of a determined sort which are themselves determined, negatively at least, by the material conditions of existence' (Bourdieu, 1977 p. 126). The influence of Bourdieu's research has resulted in a perspective on consumption that places emphasis on behaviours exhibited by particular classes, while also exploring the differences in consumption practices observed among these groups. His analysis of how culture shapes our perception leads to our acceptance of certain phenomena as normal, despite their true misrecognition, resulting in the belief that our own thoughts and perspectives are the inherent and unquestionable way of perceiving the world.

In his book *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu examines human behaviours and interactions within sociocultural settings, through his central theories of culture capital and habitus he attempts to analyse the relationship between culture and reality, describing how structural conditions and social dynamics within a community can alter and differ an individual's existence. 'Every established order tends to produce the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.115) suggesting that what may have initially seemed random or illogical becomes accepted and unquestioned as the norm, gradually integrated into society and the social order. He argued that having more cultural assets in terms of experience, behaviours and mannerisms are dependent on an individual's upbringings within society. Bourdieu attempts to describe the dynamic connections between the environmental conditions of a society and their impacts, he contended that the cultural assets possessed by individuals are indicative of the value placed on a particular cultural domain, with those from affluent families being more likely to possess such luxury assets.



Figure 2. Victoria & Albert Museum, 2023. *Portrait of woman in bell-shaped skirt, 1860, Britain.*



Figure 3. Photo by W. Clayton, 1865. *Tip girls Wales, 1865.*

Conspicuous consumption is a prevalent practice in society, whereby individuals utilise it as a means to give the impression of affluence, aiming to elevate their social status and garner prestigious recognition. As well as Bourdieu, Thorstein Veblen was one of the early theorists who extensively discussed this concept, his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899, introduced a new perspective on consumer behaviour within the field of economic science. Veblen presented the theory of Leisure class and conspicuous consumption, which asserts that consumer behaviour is heavily influenced by societal structures of class, established rituals, and the desire to imitate the behaviours of those belonging to higher social groups. He argued that the development of these consumption habits and exploitative practices leads to a society characterised by distinct frameworks, where specific social classes begin to emerge. Veblen utilised the term, Leisure class, to describe those who are distinguished by their material wealth and their indulgence in leisurely activities. Members of the upper class, known as the Leisure class, enjoy the privilege of being exempt from engaging in laborious work, 'the upper class are not only exempt, but by prescriptive custom they are debarred, from industrial occupations, the range of employments open to them is rigidly defined as on the higher plane already spoken of' (Veblen, 1912 p.22) thereby showcasing their economic superiority through their lack of financial hardship. This further implies the idea that manual labour, carries a specific connotation, the absence of work wear allowed for decorative clothing and expensive materials to be worn, thereby emphasising the superiority of the Leisure class. This can be perceived as an additional way to underscore the distinction of social status. Veblen highlighted how often the ideals held and embraced by the leisure class, influence the wider society. The upper class is often

regarded as a representation of prosperity and a symbol of success, therefore other social groups emulate their values and behaviours with the aim of attaining a similar status.

Veblen argued that society's most basic norms are founded on the belief that possessions that make one appear wealthy are superior 'the possession of wealth confers honour; it is an invidious distinction' (Tilman, 2015 p. 65). This belief, in turn, gives rise to the conviction that the idea of high cost and luxury are fundamentally better. In his analysis, Veblen places significant emphasis on the crucial function of institutions in facilitating the transformation of collective thoughts within a society. He explores how these evolving ideas impact human behaviour and its implications for social dynamics, highlighting how the measure of societal progress is synonymous with displays of wealth. However, as cultures have advanced and various environmental and social aspects have undergone transformations, notably the substantial surge in population density and the emergence of movements like industrialisation, advancement of society is now propelled by the collaborative responsibility and efforts of all social classes, rather than being limited to the upper class alone. In today's consumerist society, Veblen's research findings hold greater relevance, where the concept of fast fashion and the practice of purchasing to align with emerging trends, remain prevalent across social classes. A growing recognition is emerging within society, wherein there is a willingness to acknowledge the contributions of all classes towards societal progress, rather than solely attributing it to the upper class.

Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and habitus offer a comprehensive depiction of the diverse attributes that emerge within distinct social classes. His primary aim was to understand and question the underlying motivations driving human actions and behaviours, highlighting the factors that shape our thoughts and actions. In contrast, Veblen strongly focused on the symbolic significance of behaviour, extensively examining and scrutinising the interrelationship between the economic consumption trends in correlation with the aristocratic leisure class. He contended that despite exerting significant influence, their actions fail to contribute to the common good and are therefore regarded as minimal and insignificant within a progressive society 'the abjectly poor, and all those whose energies are entirely absorbed by the struggle for daily sustenance, are conservative because they cannot afford the effort of taking thought for the day after tomorrow' (Veblen, 2016, p.132)

Despite their differing perspectives, Bourdieu and Veblen's theories both focus on the study of social structures and community dynamics. Veblen's beliefs centre on the concept of conspicuous consumption and the excessive waste of resources produced due to societies nature to indulge beyond necessity, while Bourdieu's arguments highlight the influence of class on culture and the relationship between desire and necessity. In today's fashion industry this inclination is still apparent, within society it has become natural to gravitate towards excessive indulgence, encompassing both the realms of food and fashion. Consequently, the production of excessive and non-durable products that contribute to the

generation of waste has become pervasive. Through the phenomenon of fast fashion, individuals can now attain the appearance of a luxurious aesthetic without incurring the associated costs, blurring the distinction between high-end and low-end fashion. Despite being aware of the negative environmental and social repercussions, this aspect is often disregarded, this concept aligns with Bourdieu's beliefs regarding the human desire for non-essential items. 'Taste is an acquired disposition to, differentiate and appreciate' (Veblen, 1992 p.14) The allure of these insignificant possessions surpasses the need for essential ones.

The manufacturing of textiles within the fashion industry serves as a prime example of the extensive waste generated through excessive overindulgence, particularly within the fast fashion sector. Fast fashion comprises of rapidly mass-produced garments that are designed to align with the constantly evolving fashion trends prevalent in the mainstream market. In the last decade. In the last decade, the industry has witnessed a significant increase in market consumption 'Clothing sales doubled from 100 to 200 billion units a year, while the average number of times an item was worn decreased by 36% overall' (Mulhern, 2022) indicating that despite the quantity of clothes being produced has doubled, the duration of use for garments has decreased. The concept of fast fashion primarily revolves around the swift manufacturing of inexpensive clothes, this has led to the proliferation of mass-produced, budget friendly goods, enabling consumers to easily purchase larger quantities of clothing at a more frequent rate due to their affordability. Keeping up with the changing trends that are prevalent in today's society has become crucial for many individuals, with a higher number of trends emerging at a faster rate the industry has experienced a significant shift in its reliance on advertising and marketing to further encourage consumer spending. Designers face a significant challenge in attempting to match production levels that align with evolving trends, this notion to over produce to match the needs for mass consumption has far-reaching consequences environmentally and ethically. These repercussions are often overlooked in the pursuit of sustaining the culture of fast fashion. Veblen's argument regarding excess and waste emphasises that society's core values are built upon the belief that possessions symbolising affluence are superior. As individuals, our aspiration to present ourselves in the most favourable light takes precedence over all other factors, thereby capitalizing on our innate tendencies to be enticed by the novelty and attractiveness associated with the concept of luxury.



Figure 4. Fashion Revolution, 2021. *What Happens Next?*

An article from Forbes has stated that Zara, the clothing label is 'on top form in the fast fashion market' (Rozario, 2023), the brand 'has gained a reputation as the ultimate destination for European fashion, with nearly 3000 stores in 96 countries, and billions worth of profit each year' (Dockrill, 2022) establishing itself as the popular choice in the European market. The company received a 'score of 51-60%' from the Fashion Transparency Index, despite its efforts to disclose suppliers during the final production phase. This score was attributed to the fact that production and manufacturing takes place in Spain, a country with a significant risk of labour exploitation. Despite its substantial financial success, Zara has not taken adequate steps to ensure that workers in its supply chain receive a fair and liveable wage. The fashion brand has faced allegations of green washing following its announcement of their new program, Closing the Loop, which seeks to encourage the repair and reuse of clothing. Forbes magazine reported on the criticism the program has received stating 'Leading fashion brand Zara has been accused of green washing after it announced plans to launch a pre-owned initiative strategy' (Hardcastle, 2022). Brands that follow the fast fashion trends of constantly introducing new collections and staying on-trend must prioritize the environmental and ethical consequences of their actions to ensure sustainable and responsible practices. This is crucial in maintaining a culture of sustainable consumption and reducing harm to the environment, 'Zara compressing lead times to as little as 13 days, releasing 300 new styles a week, fashion trends are being captured and sold far quicker than ever before' (Payne, 2012) Brands are needed to both encompass environmental and ethical aspects, in order to sustain the prevailing culture of excessive consumption. To address this issue, designers should adopt sustainable design tools and strategies that prioritize product

longevity, by doing so, designers can effectively reduce the demand for new clothing, thereby transforming the prevailing throwaway culture.

A potentially more sustainable approach would involve minimizing the quantity of styles initially introduced into the production chain. Mother of Pearl is an example of a brand that has proactively adjusted its objectives to embrace a more environmentally sustainable approach, stating that 'as a brand, we have a part to play in securing a future for our planet and minimising the consequences of our actions' (Mother of Pearl, 2023). Notably, the brand has consciously veered away from trend-led designs, opting to prioritize durability and longevity of its products. As a result, the brand has effectively shortened its supply chains, minimise number of suppliers and improved overall quality of the products they sell. Where fast fashion brands like Zara dominate the high street market, Mother of Pearl stands out as a paragon of sustainability and ethics within the fashion industry. The luxury womenswear designer brand places a strong emphasis on utilising eco-friendly materials, with a notable focus on organic cotton and wool, 'Sustainability isn't a one dimensional issue that can be solved by opting for a fabric with green credentials; the final fabric is just the tip of the iceberg and what's looming underneath is rarely considered or examined' (Mother of Pearl, 2023). By incorporating Implementing a rigorous quality control system for the materials employed throughout its supply chain, the brand ensures that the origins of these materials can be traced back to their source, guaranteeing transparency and accountability. This conscious choice of sustainability not only results in the creation of longer lasting products but also minimises the use of harmful chemicals during the production process and therefore the generation of waste is significantly reduced to the lowest feasible extent. Typically shopping on the high street offers greater affordability and accessibility compared to sustainable alternatives. Brands like Zara should take the lead in establishing sustainability as the standard by engaging in practices such as recycling materials, prioritizing the utilization of non-finite resources, minimising waste generated during and after the production process as well as adhering to ethical standards regarding human and animal welfare.



Figure 5. O'Donoghue, S. 2023. *The end of the road for fast fashion? The EU hopes so.*

The rise of online retail stores has significantly enhanced the accessibility of fashion trends to consumers, through online platforms individuals can conveniently access and explore a wide range of clothing options that are readily available for purchase. 'Online purchases of commodities is possible anytime, anywhere with a click of a button, wherein purchasing is tied to frequent style and trend' (Meier, 2022, p. 2053) The affordability, minimal maintenance effort, and low risk factors associated with fast fashion make it an attractive option for consumers. Marketing tactics capitalise on its unparalleled convenience and leverage societal expectations to keep up with current trends. The sector relies on the rapid and low-cost production of garments leading to their inferior quality and eventual disposal in landfills. Shein, the popular online shopping platform, is leading the way in this emerging business strategy. By adopting a distinctive manufacturing model and catering to the insatiable consumer demand for excessive consumption, this company manages to produce a greater quantity of products per day in comparison to renowned high street brands like Zara. 'It's model of manufacturing garments, plus our demand for them, means it churns out up to a staggering 10,000 new products a day, carving out a new category: ultra-fast fashion.' (Williams, 2022) Despite engaging in harmful social and environmental practices, Shein continues to experience a surge in popularity. While some individuals commend the brand for its affordability and inclusivity, others condemn the detrimental effects that its practices have on both individuals and society. It is crucial to acknowledge that the primary motivation behind the success of fast fashion is the pursuit of profit and the accumulation of wealth by those at the top 'We should be under no illusions: ultra-fast fashion has little to do with democratisation and much more to do with profit and wealth' (Williams, 2022) . Consequently, this reinforces the belief that immediate purchases are necessary and discourages the idea of reusing clothing items. The concept of materialism is closely tied to the idea that our worth as individuals is determined by the amount of goods and services we consume. This idea, which is rooted in the theories of consumption developed by Bourdieu and Veblen, highlights the connection between material possessions and social status.

Our society has developed a culture of excessive consumption, we consume more food than necessary and waste a considerable number of resources during production of goods. The popularity of fast fashion has been widely embraced due to its convenience, with a mindset that favours the notion of newness over the importance of placing significance on the principles of skilful craftsmanship and thoughtful upcycling. Veblen's assertions highlight the correlation between acquiring new possessions and the societal message of achievement. This significance of self-presentation in our culture further emphasises the deeply engrained nature of this cognitive pattern within society. We often tend to discard items after using them only a few times, without considering the potential repercussions. While it may not be entirely feasible to eliminate these practices, it is logical to adopt measures that minimise

our carbon-intensive activities in all aspects. As more consumers begin to place a higher value on transparency, seeking information about the source and production has become significant, this emphasis is particularly relevant in the food sector where animal welfare, health, and environmental concerns are at the forefront. 'As fashion works to become more transparent, and consumers want to make better choices, the food industry provides a blueprint' (Cernansky, 2020) to ensure traceability, the meat industry enforces rigorous rules and regulations that require comprehensive documentation enabling easy traceability of the produce back to its original source. However, this greatly contrasts to the fashion industry where similar measures are not enforced. The 2023 Fashion Transparency Index, recently published by Fashion Revolution, highlights the lack of transparency in various crucial areas 'Progress on transparency in the global fashion industry is still too slow among 250 of the world's largest fashion brands and retailers, with brand performance varying greatly' (Fashion Revolution, 2023). The primary objective of this Index is to act as a catalyst in urging and incentivising the largest fashion brands across the globe to adopt a more transparent approach towards their social and environmental initiatives. Transparency plays a fundamental role for achieving substantial and lasting changes within the fashion industry on a global scale 'The overall average score in the Traceability section, however, is 23% with nearly half (45%) of brands telling us little to nothing, scoring just 0-1% overall in this section' (Fashion Revolution, 2023). Without knowing where their products are being made, companies cannot guarantee that they are not contributing to the violation and abuse of human rights and environmental deterioration. The lack of transparency in supply chains allows for the persistence of exploitative and unsafe practices. By openly sharing information, brands allow for scrutiny of their policies ensuring accountability for their claims and creating an avenue for advocating transformative actions.

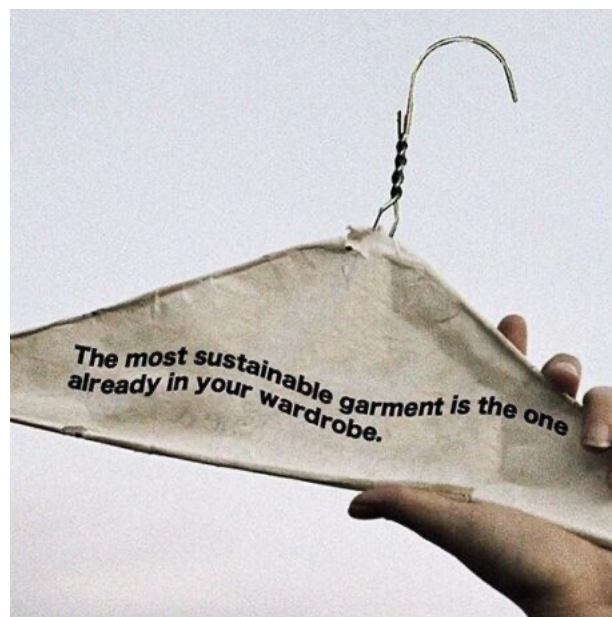


Figure 6. *Fashion Revolution, 2023. The Wellbeing Wardrobe*

Charlie Porter, in his book *Bring No Clothes*, examines the complex relationships between clothing and its impact on society and the environment. By undertaking a comprehensive scrutiny of his own clothing as well as extensively analysing the garments worn by the Bloomsbury Group, a renowned community of artists and thinkers from the twentieth century, Porter examines various perspectives on the intricate connections between clothing and its impact on our collective consciousness. He states, 'we do not prioritize this thinking through clothing, we consider it insignificant yet the clothes we put on each morning can lock us in acquiescence to the structure of power that we find crushing' (Porter, 2023, p. 425) suggesting the idea that textiles and societal influence are intricately linked, with one impacting the other in a significant way. The Bloomsbury group served as a key example of how clothing was used as a symbol to challenge the societal norms prevalent, specifically in the late-Victorian era, 'we need to break any generated assumptions about garments, so we can consider these human these individuals in their clothes and their circumstances.' (Porter, 2023, p. 453) employing clothing as a means of liberation and expression however, simultaneously highlighted that in contrast it can function as a way of reinforcing societal structures.

Porter suggests that these restrictive ideologies deeply ingrained within in society are needed to change, advocating for a new philosophy of living, one that not only acknowledges the sociological importance of textiles but also takes into account their environmental impact and considers the urgent need to address the problems of fast fashion. 'Making clothes has become part of my daily life. Now that I am making my own clothes, I try to source good quality, responsibly made materials, it isn't necessarily cheap, but nor should it be if its makers are to be paid properly. Still, the total cost is piecemeal compared to luxury fashion' (Porter, 2023) he advocates for a transformative shift in the fashion industry, emphasising the importance of being mindful of current environmental circumstances as well as urging both textile manufacturers and consumers to break free from the cycle of fast fashion. By challenging the notion of mindlessly crafted and mass-produced clothing, the book promotes a more conscious approach to fashion that considers the impact on the environment and society. Porter asserts the importance for a transformative ideology that urges us to discard the conventional notion of clothing consumption and embrace new habits such as purchasing second hand, upcycling our pre-existing belongs and embracing the gradual accumulation of a wardrobe through the principles of slow fashion.

Design possesses the capacity to significantly reduce waste and pollution during production, establish sustainable practices, and foster an economy that brings advantages to individuals, enterprises, and the environment. 'We believe that the future of fashion is circular – it will be restorative and regenerative by design and the clothes we love never end up as waste' (McCartney, S. 2017) Stella McCartney, a renowned designer known for her ethical values,

consistently utilises innovative and progressive materials that prioritise minimising environmental impacts and ensuring cruelty-free practices. Embracing the principles of circularity system, McCartney emphasises the importance of sustainability throughout her designs stating that 'As we continue to push boundaries and challenge the status quo we want to evolve' from just reducing our impact to making a positive impact. We want to completely reimagine the fashion industry as we know it and move to a new circular economy' (McCartney, S. 2017). With a firm commitment to transparency, McCartney actively works enhance visibility across her supply chains. To bring about a change in the linear system of excessive consumption, a radical transformation is necessary. This calls for a collaborative effort from all members of the fashion industry, who must demonstrate a level of commitment and innovation.

Similar to the beliefs of McCartney, The Ellen MacArthur Foundation underlines the necessity for transformation and the significance of sustainability by promoting the concept of a circular economy. The foundation highlights crucial measures that enable garments to maintain their longevity. Describing a circular economy as 'a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting.' (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, n.d.) These initiatives are fundamental to the changes required to reach a sustainable future within the fashion industry. It is crucial to consider all the various elements associated with the production of textiles, in addition to consumerism a focus on resource management, manufacturing processes, and material disposal should be taken into account. The circular economy provides us with the necessary tools to effectively manage and address environmental issues and social needs, by embracing the principles of the circular economy we can stimulate economic growth, generate employment opportunities, reduce emissions, waste and pollution.

In *Accelerating Sustainability in Fashion Clothing and Textiles*, the book thoroughly examines the obstacles and potential prospects that the industry is currently encountering is discussed, proposing practical and effective solutions that can help the sector to immediately progress towards sustainability. Drawing upon extensive research and industry expertise, presenting a collection of solutions that effectively address a multitude of challenges. It delves into various areas such as policy formulation, supply chain complexities and material consumption, providing valuable insights into the intricate functions within the sector. 'Four practical design strategies were established to contribute towards empowering the consumer to reuse items, under the themes of care, repair and customisation' (Charter et al., 2023 p. 1987) designers have the ability to create garments that align more effectively with a circular economy, thereby enabling the reprocess of clothing that has been deemed to have reached the end of its use. However, this objective can only be accomplished by increasing public awareness and promoting a shift in consumer behaviour towards proactive

measures in reducing waste. It is crucial for business leaders, designers, and researchers to concentrate on customer expenditure and develop strategies that facilitate sustainable engagement in order to design clothing that seamlessly integrates into a circular system.

Design plays a crucial role in various aspects of product manufacturing and consumption with regards to sustainability. This can be accomplished by addressing users' requirements, making conscientious decisions regarding materials, carefully considering production methods and taking into account the complete lifecycle of the product, including the impact of discarded clothing. Many returned items end up in landfills due to the higher costs, 'when you consider the emissions not just of deliveries but also returns. It costs more to put them back in circulation' (Williams, 2022) while larger companies like Zara and Shein engage in this practice, independent businesses such as Mother of Pearl, appear to prioritise sustainability based on the personal dedication of their designers. Consequently, their moral aspirations may take precedence over maximising profit margins. This concept of individuals in positions of authority holding greater power was reiterated by Veblen, who argued that the influence exerted by those at the top eventually permeates throughout the rest of society.

The desire to achieve a specific aesthetic while upholding sustainability principles is hindered by financial limitations. Despite the prevailing inclination towards this objective, societal norms shaped by consumerism prevent the average working individual from participating in mindful consumption, these limitations restrict the ability to explore alternative options 'The possession of wealth confers honour; it is an invidious distinction' (Tilman, 2015 p.18). The challenge of relinquishing the elevated status associated with urging individuals to refrain from these excessive consumption trends is yet another demographic issue we encounter. 'Beauty is commonly a gratification of our sense of costliness masquerading under the name of beauty' (Veblen, 2016 p.84). In order to facilitate a cultural shift, it is important to incorporate not only methods that encompass good ethical and environmental production, but also those that promote a shift in social behaviour towards sustainable practices. This requires the acceptance of the principles of repurposing and longevity in clothing, while relinquishing the concept of materialism. To foster a cultural transformation, it is crucial to introduce measures that encourage these sustainable behaviours.

The exploration of the connections between class, culture and the ritualistic patterns of consumption within the fast fashion domain necessitates thoughtful deliberation. Fast fashion, characterised by its rapid production and consumption cycles, has become deeply intertwined with social class and cultural practices. The accessibility and affordability of fast fashion have allowed individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in the rapid consumption of on trend clothing. Despite the well documented adverse effects that cheap fast fashion entails, not only in terms of its environmental and social impact, but

also its lack of durability and longevity, society continues to overlook these factors and engage in purchasing such clothing. This has resulted in the development of new cultural norms and ritualistic behaviours within the industry. Clothing has become a medium through which individuals express themselves and shape their identities, consequently, this desire for self-importance through clothing has gained even greater significance. As a society, we should aim to attain the ability to purchase and wear clothes proudly, unburdened by any sense of guilt. Understanding the changeability within sustainability is essential for questioning current practices within the fashion sector. Sustainability is not a static concept but rather a dynamic and evolving one. Designers must embrace the idea that sustainability is not a fixed goal but a continuous process of improvement, by questioning current practices and seeking innovative solutions, this objective can be reached. Brands should place sustainability at the forefront of their objectives, making it a core principle that they must adhere to in terms of ethical and social practices. Consumers should embrace new mindsets and behaviours when it comes to clothing, embracing the values of repurposing and longevity while moving away from materialism. Therefore, the financial implications associated with sustainable clothing would be deemed worthwhile for businesses to invest in. This investment would result in a wider array of choices for consumers to purchase from, ultimately making sustainable clothing more accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds. By aligning brand strategies with sustainability goals and advocating for conscious consumption habits among consumers, we can collaboratively strive for a more sustainable future.

FIGURES LIST –

Figure 1. Winterhalter F. 1805-1873. *The Empress Eugenie Surrounded by her Ladies in Waiting*, 1855. Franklin, H. 2020. *1850-1859 | Fashion History Timeline*. Fitnyc.edu. Available at: <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1850-1859/> (Accessed 10 Dec. 2023)

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Figure 4. Fashion Revolution, 2021. *COP26 and Fashion: What Happens Next?* Fashion Revolution. Available at: <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/cop26-and-fashion-what-happens-next/> (Accessed 10 Dec. 2023)

Figure 5. O'Donoghue, S. 2023. *The end of the road for fast fashion? The EU hopes so.* Euronews. <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2023/08/06/the-end-of-the-road-for-fast-fashion-the-eu-hopes-so> (Accessed 3 Dec. 2023)

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