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“Fast Fashion: The Environment’s Costly Sacrifice to Cheap Fashion”

For centuries, the clothing worn by individuals has served more roles than simply protecting the body from nature's elements, but rather as an indicator of social class. This premise holds historically true: the color of the Chinese Emperor's robe represented untouchable importance, the intricate weave of Japanese kimonos represented social standing, and the number of gowns worn by the African Hausa Community represented wealth (Medvedev). In today's world, fashionable clothing continues to act as a symbol of social class, especially with the increasingly dominant influence of social media (Pearl). The modern fast fashion industry has facilitated clothing's social influence by enabling consumers to purchase fashionable, trendy clothing at an affordable price (Stanton). However, the shift of clothing manufacturing plants overseas by countless fast fashion brands has created distance between clothing sources and the average American consumer. As a result of the separation, many American consumers have a deficient awareness of the ethics behind the clothing they purchase ("The Ugly..."). Specifically, consumers should be more informed about the environmental ethics behind clothing as the "fashion [industry] is the second most polluting industry in the world" (qtd. in Dalton). Moreover, individuals must do their parts to reduce the environmental harm associated with modern fashion. In order to effectively deter the environmental harm caused by the modern fast fashion industry, individuals should curtail their new clothing consumption and support sustainable fashion and recycling programs to ultimately minimize clothing waste.

Fast fashion, pioneering its success through attractive trends at an even more attractive price, has revolutionized the traditional fashion industry. The fundamental incentive of fast fashion merchandise appeals to the markets with flashy, trend setting clothing at a very cheap price (Cline 96). Enticing shoppers with clothing that makes them feel "premium without paying

premium prices,” the success of the fast fashion industry has skyrocketed in recent years (“The Ugly Truth of Fast Fashion”). The exponentially growing influence of online shopping has only bolstered the success of fast fashion, apparent through the “see now, buy now” model. (Pearl). In order to attract consumers with new trends, the fast fashion model diverges from the traditional, four season model to flush the markets with 52 “micro-seasons” a year. An incessant barrage of desirable new clothing trends in weekly increments ensures that customers never tire of a store’s inventory (Stanton). To achieve this constant influx of clothing trends, fast fashion has relied on the success of two indispensable pillars: quick response manufacturing and dynamic assortment. Quick response manufacturing utilizes a stock of cheap raw materials to promptly respond to social trends, mass producing garments for the markets. Dynamic assortment aims to provide an extensive variety of clothing, anticipating the success of at least one trend, to later be mass produced (“The Ugly...”). These dominant, industry revolutionizing practices have overpowered the traditional industry model, which depleted excessive time, money, and resources (Pearl). As a result, fast fashion simply is fashion today. The success of the modern fast fashion industry has usurped the market, revolutionizing the fashion model and becoming the industry norm. Clothing retailers also have an attractive incentive to adopt the fast fashion model, as modern economic prosperity in the fashion industry directly correlates to sheer volume of clothing sales (“The Ugly...”).

Although fast fashion can initially seem appealing, the model constitutes tremendous environmental harm from clothing production to waste. The fundamental environmental issue with the fast fashion model boils down to overconsumption. For example, the worldwide “number of new garments produced annually now exceeds 100 billion, double the amount

produced in 2000” (Chan). This rapid spike in new clothing production has an excessive reliance on detrimental cotton and polyester fabrics (Chan). Cotton, an inherently water intensive crop, and polyester fabrics, which are petroleum by-products, constitute tremendous environmental harm alone (“The Ugly...”). Apart from the fabrics themselves being environmentally harmful, the fashion industry leaves behind an unsightly pollution footprint as well. According to Eco Watch, the fashion industry ranks as the second highest polluting industry, directly following the commercial grade oil extraction and refinery industry (Dalton). The pollution extends to the water sector as well, as the “fashion industry produces 20 percent of global waste water,” (“Putting...”) causing it to be the second largest polluter of clean water (Dalton). Fast fashion’s demand for global overproduction of clothing has direct consequences in the manufacturing sector, yet many fail to consider the long-term, adverse effects of clothing waste. For example, with the rising influence of fast fashion, the average American today buys 68 new pieces of clothing per year, over five times the average amount 30 years ago (“The Ugly...”). A hike in consumer clothing consumption constitutes an inevitable hike in consumer clothing waste as well (Pearl). As a result, the average American discards “about 81 pounds of clothing” waste annually, causing rubber, leather, and textile waste to aggregate to almost 10 percent of all U.S. waste (Gilmore). Over the last 10 years, U.S. post-consumer textile and clothing waste has grown by 40 percent, with trends predicting even more waste with the growing influence of fast fashion (Gilmore). The United Nations Environment Programme understands the gravity of the issue, and calls for a radical shift of global overproduction of clothing and the consumption culture to help reduce the environmental harm fast fashion brings (“Putting...”).

In order to deter the environmental harm caused by modern fashion, individuals should reduce their new clothing consumption by wearing clothes for a longer duration. Mathilde Charpail and Pauline Roul, social advocates who have dedicated their careers to informing the public of the fast fashion industry's environmental impact, argue the most effective method to reduce fashion's environmental harm: simply buy less new clothing. All clothing production—even that manufactured in the greenest methods—constitutes some environmental impact. Purchasing less new clothing could also potentially lower the market demand for clothing manufacturing, reducing the environmental harm due to clothing production (Charpail and Roul). Hasan Minhaj, a social activist and humorist, echoes Charpail and Roul, asserting to not only consume less new clothing, but also wear clothing for a longer duration. Minhaj bolsters his claim with the statistic that “wearing clothing for just nine months longer than average can reduce the carbon footprint for that garment by 30 percent” (“The Ugly...”). Wearing clothing for a longer duration also prevents the need to purchase new clothing as often. In addition to buying less new clothing, extending the longevity of clothing helps reduce fashion's environmental harm. Americans share the misguided ideology that clothing with rips, stains, and defects have reached the end of their life, prompting them to be discarded (Gilmore). However, Elizabeth Cline, an author and expert on consumer culture and fast fashion, rather contends that most clothing problems are mendable. Such problems include, but are “not limited to broken zippers, missing buttons, stains, and minor holes or tears” (Cline 123). Repairing clothing with mendable problems extends its longevity, enabling one to wear the article of clothing longer, thus eliminating the need to buy new clothing and discard the unusable clothing (Cline 123). In accordance with Cline, Charpail and Roul add that avoiding arbitrary and excessive washing of

garments can also help extend the life of clothing (Charpail and Roul). Lengthening the life of clothing and wearing garments longer can help an individual ultimately purchase less new clothing, deterring the environmental harm associated with clothing production.

When the inevitable need for new clothing eventually arises, individuals should support sustainable, environment-conscious brands to reduce environmental harm. It is unrealistic for all individuals to stop buying new clothing outright. Elaborating on this point, Thulsi Narayanasamy, a senior labor rights researcher, disputes that Americans live in a consumption culture with a constant “hunger from consumers,” enabling the fast fashion model to flourish in America (qtd. in Pearl). The American consumption culture paired with the rise of fast fashion weakens the argument for American society to stop buying new clothing altogether. Instead, when individuals need to buy new clothing, they should support sustainable brands and fabrics to minimize environmental harm. Contrary to the environmentally detrimental cotton and polyester fabrics common in fast fashion, sustainable fabrics contain organic cellulosic or protein fibers. Such fabrics are sourced naturally, biodegradable, and expend minute quantities of binding chemicals (Bick et. al). In addition to choosing sustainable fabrics, Csilla Herbszt, sustainable fashion advocate and social influencer, advises to support sustainable brands which practice slow fashion—the antithesis to fast fashion. Herbszt asserts slow fashion as an environment-conscious means of clothing, which incorporates “better production methods to reduce the environmental damage and the textile waste of the fashion industry” (Herbszt). Providing an example of slow fashion as mentioned by Herbszt, environmental health researcher Dr. Luz Claudio, describes how sustainable clothing retailer Patagonia practices slow fashion by averting from fashion trends and short-lived styles. The brand uses recycled materials, such as plastic water bottles, to

transform into fabrics later used for fleeces. In addition to recycled plastics, Patagonia recycles pre-worn cotton t-shirts, reducing the need to grow cotton, an inherently water intensive crop as previously mentioned (Claudio). In agreement with Herbszt and Claudio on the support of sustainable slow fashion, Charpail and Roul further elaborate, claiming that supporting sustainable brands lowers the clientele and demand for fast fashion brands, reducing their clothing production. As society averts from fast fashion brands and pushes an increasing “demand for sustainable clothing, the more [sustainable clothing] will be available,” enabling a wider demographic to make environment-conscious fashion choices (Charpail and Roul). Sustainable clothing diverging from the environmentally taxing fast fashion model takes a step in the right direction towards reducing fashion’s environmental impact.

Supporters of fast fashion may contend that fast fashion grants low-income individuals access to sufficient clothing as sustainable clothing typically costs remarkably more. The facet of the fast fashion model predicated on cheap prices provides an affordable means of clothing for low-income individuals. Flavia Martinez, a student at Amherst College, provides her experience of fast fashion’s supply of clothing within her budget. Martinez further elaborates, describing how “clothing is [now] a camouflage of social class,” and fast fashion enables her to dress according to social classes while on a low budget (Martinez). Martinez’s argument holds merit; sustainable clothing garments are often at drastically higher prices when compared to their fast fashion alternatives. Writer and social worker Gretchen Brown provides evidence of this aforementioned issue, juxtaposing a sweater costing 100 dollars at an ethical retailer, as opposed to a mere five dollars at a fast fashion brand (Brown). Sustainable clothing must adhere to countless nuances such as direct sourcing, recyclability, organic materials, and low waste

production, all of which sum to an expensive cost. Fast fashion garments can avoid such nuances, pushing out copious amounts of clothing at cheap prices.

Despite being cheaper upfront, fast fashion clothing garments, composed of cheap, low quality fabrics, have drastically shorter lifetimes compared to sustainable, slow fashion clothing, ultimately costing the consumer more over the long term. Consumer culture expert Elizabeth Cline contends that “in order to expedite the supply process from design to store shelves, fast fashion retailers often sacrifice craftsmanship and quality control” (Cline 116). Adding to the poor quality Cline mentions, Csilla Herbszt alleges that fast fashion exhibits such low quality, that it “is made to be thrown away after a couple of wears.” She continues, claiming that fast fashion brands intend for their clothes to seem disposable and have short life spans “so [consumers] go back and purchase more” (Herbszt). As a result, financial analyst Kayla Sloan insists on buying high quality, sustainable clothing, albeit more expensive, because “it is inherently made better [than fast fashion] clothing” (Sloan). She elaborates, claiming “It's no secret that the better [clothing] items are made, the longer they're going to last” (Sloan). Individuals should invest in high quality clothing because it lasts longer in comparison to cheap fast fashion, ultimately costing less in the long-run. Csilla Herbszt confirms this premise with a personal example showing the long term economic benefit of investing in high quality, sustainable clothing. Instead of purchasing cheap, fast fashion jeans for 15 dollars lasting only three months in her experience, Herbszt invested in higher quality jeans for 60 dollars lasting three years (Herbszt). Despite spending more upfront, Herbszt spent one-third of the amount with the higher quality clothing as opposed to the fast fashion alternatives over the three year period. In addition, keeping the same article of high quality clothing enabled Herbszt to deter her

fashion related environmental footprint, avoiding the detrimental nuances associated with fast fashion clothing production and waste.

Aside from buying less new clothing and investing in high quality, sustainable clothing when needed, individuals should purchase secondhand clothing or participate in clothing reuse programs to help deter environmental harm. For example, Elizabeth Cline contends that secondhand clothing provides a viable source of clothing without causing the environmental harm associated with producing new garments. She elaborates, claiming that secondhand clothing grants access to “new to you” clothing, engendering similar feelings of excitement associated with new clothing purchases, while avoiding the environmental damage (Cline 221). Hasan Minhaj bolsters Cline’s claim with a statistic, asserting that “if everyone bought one used item instead of a new one, that would be the equivalent of removing half a million cars off the road for a year (“The Ugly...”). Cline also raises another advantage of secondhand clothing, as “reused clothing more efficiently utilizes the longevity” of a garment before it eventually reaches its demise (Cline 222). Secondhand clothing extends beyond one consumer, enabling more people to find use in a garment rather than if it were simply discarded. In addition to Cline and Minhaj’s mutual support of secondhand clothing, Charpail and Roul elaborate on varied alternatives to secondhand clothing. For example, clothing swaps are an “economic and eco-friendly way to refill [one’s] wardrobe” (Charpail and Roul). Clothing Swaps can provide a more reassuring alternative to thrift stores as individuals engage in direct contact with the previous owner of the clothing (Charpail and Roul). Furthermore, the emergence of clothing rental companies opens the door for consumers to wear a particular article of clothing without having to commit to purchasing the garment. Individuals should particularly explore clothing

rental for single use clothing designated for specific events or parties. Paralleling Cline's and Minhaj's descriptions of the reduced environmental harm of secondhand clothing, clothing rental programs similarly help deter fashion environmental harm by reducing the demand for new clothing (Charpail and Roul). When individuals need new sources of clothing, they should buy secondhand, engage in clothing swaps, and participate in clothing rental programs to most effectively diminish their fashion related environmental footprint.

Some consumers may argue that they already help deter environmental harm and support financially struggling individuals by donating secondhand clothing to charities instead of discarding it. Environmentalist Nicholas Gilmore establishes this viewpoint: many Americans "tend to think of clothing donation as a charitable act that should benefit someone living in poverty" (Gilmore). A considerable number of Americans share this ideology as U.S. "charities have received an overwhelming surplus of donations for decades" (Cline 128). However, many fail to consider a major flaw in this thought process; charities can only resell or reuse an infinitesimal fraction of the copious donations they receive (Gilmore). Hasan Minhaj affirms Gilmore's claim with the statistic that just "one Salvation Army Center in New York generates over 18 tons of unwanted clothes every three days" ("The Ugly..."). As a result of the gargantuan, unmanageable quantity of donations centers receive, Minhaj attests that "most donated clothes are bulk sold to developing nations or ends up in the landfill and large scale burn piles" ("The Ugly..."). The problem only seems to deteriorate, as environmental justice researcher and advocate Rachel Bick and her co-authors claim that much of bulk sold clothing in foreign markets goes to waste, being undesirable or simply unusable (Bick et al.). Hasan Minhaj highlights the gravity of the issue of bulk sold clothing to developing nations with the statistic

that “87 percent [of clothing] ends up incinerated or in a landfill” (“The Ugly...”). To make matters even worse, Bick and her co-authors state, “clothing not sold in markets becomes solid waste, clogging rivers, greenways, and parks, and creating the potential for additional environmental health hazards...” (Bick et al.). Although donating clothing seems like a viable solution to clothing waste, the caveats associated with the clothing donation system constitute tremendous environmental harm. Instead, individuals should donate directly to recipients rather than large-scale, commercial charities to reduce clothing related environmental harm.

When clothing eventually reaches the end of its life, individuals should partake in sustainable textile recycling programs to help deter the environmental harm due to clothing waste. Although people should aim to mend and reuse clothing, at some point garments will inevitably reach the end of their usable lifespan, calling for a means of sustainable clothing disposal. Instead of donating heavily worn, almost unusable clothing to charities, which already receive an overwhelming abundance of clothing, individuals should instead donate to reputable clothing recycling companies. Contrary to popular opinion, Elizabeth Cline attests that “there are thousands of secondhand textile processors in the US today, most of which are small scale operations” (Cline 129). For example Cline describes her experience with, Trans-America Trading Co., a third generation textile recycling business in New Jersey. The relatively small-scale company employs under 100 workers, yet they manage to process nearly 17 million pounds of used clothing each year (Cline 129). She also elaborates on brand initiated recycling efforts which provide consumers with more accessible means of clothing recycling. Clothing recycled within a specific brand are generally easier to recycle since the brand knows the composition of fabrics of the garment, which can be recycled into similar fabrics specific to the

brand (Cline 131). Saabira Chaudhuri, a consumer advisor for the *Wall Street Journal*, explains the environmental benefit of recycling clothing: “making new clothes from old would reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and the consumption of oil, which is used to make synthetic fibers” (Chaudhuri). In addition, clothing recycling helps reduce the amount of “fertilizers and water, used to grow cotton,” an inherently water intensive crop as previously mentioned (Chaudhuri). In accordance with Chaudhuri’s support of clothing recycling, Cline attests that “textiles are almost 100% reusable or recyclable,” so “there is no excuse for simply discarding clothing” (Cline 229). Individuals should take the effort to recycle clothing sustainably to deter environmental harm.

Rachel Bick and her co-authors summarize the bottom line to reduce one’s fashion related environmental footprint: “promote global environmental justice by buying high-quality clothing that lasts longer, shopping at second-hand stores, repairing clothing already [owned], and purchasing from retailers with transparent supply chains” (Bick et. al). However, some individuals may feel powerless with multinational fast fashion brands and the American consumption culture dominating the markets. They may believe that they cannot single-handedly make a difference to the environmental harm caused by modern fast fashion. Although clothing retailers hold tremendous potential to instigate change with sustainable fashion initiatives, Dr. Luz Claudio asserts, “the biggest impacts for increasing sustainability in the clothing industry rests with the consumer” (Claudio). Each consumer contributes to the overall fashion industry based on the amount of clothing they purchase and the brands which they support. Individuals ultimately have the power to elicit change, and should do their part to deter the environmental harm caused by the modern fast fashion industry.

Annotated Works Cited

Bick, Rachel, et al. "The global environmental injustice of fast fashion." *Environmental Health: A Global Access Science Source*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2018, p. NA. *Gale OneFile: Environmental Studies and Policy*, <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=PPES&u=jesuiths&id=GALE|A569155838&v=2.1&it=r&sid=PPES&asid=aa0be213>. Accessed 13 Feb. 2020.

In a well researched academic report, Rachel Bick and her co-authors explain the environmental injustices caused by fast fashion. The source goes into detail about the environmental harm present in every stage of the fast fashion industry model. Before clothing production even begins, the materials which make up clothing constitute tremendous environmental harm. In addition, clothing factories release toxins and pollute natural water supplies. Fast fashion has encouraged consumers to view clothing as disposable, catalyzing an enormous spike in clothing waste. The source ends with methods for individuals to reduce environmental harm, such as buying clothes composed of sustainable fibers. Rachel Bick is a global health researcher at the Washington University School of Medicine. Her co-authors, Erika Halsey and Christine C. Ekenga, have similarly relevant credentials pertaining to environmental health. I accessed this source through the "Environmental Studies and Policy" section of the *Gale* database. As this source is an academic report, the authors avoid possible biases. I used this source in a confirmation paragraph about sustainable clothing choices and a counter argument about the caveats associated with clothing donations. Bick and her co-authors also clearly summarize the points of my paper, so I use this source in my conclusion as well.

Brown, Gretchen. "Fast Fashion is Bad for Us. Here's Why We Can't Kick It." *Rewire*, 6 Feb. 2019, www.rewire.org/living/fast-fashion/. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

This source describes the impact that the modern fast fashion industry has had on society. The source begins by describing the traditional fashion model and the importance of brick and mortar stores. However, fast fashion brands prioritized streamlining production, which expedited the traditional model, rooting the success of fast fashion. Fast fashion's success also stems from the cheap prices, appealing especially to low-income individuals. The source's author, Gretchen Brown, is a writer and editor for *Rewire*. The non-profit publication *Rewire* aims to educate adults with thought-provoking content. Although *Rewire* is known to have a left leaning political bias, that bias does not particularly affect the content of this article. I did not rely heavily on this source, yet a helpful statistic about the cheaper price of fast fashion helped me address a counterargument.

Chan, Cheryl. "Reduce, repair and reuse: Advice for lessening 'fast fashion's' environmental impact." *Vancouver Sun*, Post Media 12 Oct. 2019, vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/reduce-repair-and-reuse-advice-for-lessening-fast-fashion-environmental-impact. Accessed 12 Feb. 2020.

This source educates the public with methods to reduce one's fashion related environmental footprint. First, Chan describes the immense environmental harm caused by the fashion industry. As fast fashion has gained popularity, clothing consumption and waste have skyrocketed. For example, the number of new garments produced worldwide each year surpasses 100 billion. With a rise in production, waste has also increased as 92 million tonnes of clothing waste are discarded each year. The source then provides some methods to deter fashion's environmental impact such as consuming less new clothing and shopping at thrift stores. The author, Cheryl Chan, writes for *The Province* and *Vancouver Sun*, with a focus on living sustainably in modern society. The *Vancouver Sun* is a Canadian based news source serving the media since 1902. The source is sponsored by Post Media, a known right leaning media outlet. As a result, the source may have a right leaning bias, but this bias does not affect the truth of the statistics in this article. I mainly used this source in my second narration paragraph about the environmental harm caused by the modern fast fashion industry.

Charpail, Mathilde, and Pauline Roul. "How Can We Reduce Our Fashion Environmental Impact?" *Sustain Your Style*, <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/reducing-our-impact>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2020.

This source takes a very specific stance on how individuals can reduce their clothing related environmental impact. The source asserts one of the most effective methods to reduce one's fashion environmental impact is to simply buy less clothes. All clothing production—even that manufactured in the greenest methods—constitute some environmental impacts. Furthermore, choosing high quality fabrics and avoiding excessive washing can help preserve the longevity of clothing, reducing the need for new clothing. When the need for clothing eventually arises, one should consider purchasing from second hand stores or environmentally sustainable brands to minimize environmental harm. The webpage container *Sustain Your Style* is dedicated to understand the issues concerning the fashion industry's environmental impact. In addition, the organization strives to educate the public towards more sustainable fashion choices. Although this site is not associated with a commonly known website or sponsoring organization, the source includes clear access to references, contact information, and the mission statement. Bias does not play a significant role as *Sustain Your Style* avoids news coverage and journalism campaigns. The source simply compiles prior research to help the public make improved, sustainable fashion choices. I synthesized Charpail and Roul's arguments in three confirmation paragraphs about buying less clothing, supporting sustainable brands, and participating in clothing swaps or rental programs.

Chaudhuri, Saabira. "Fast Fashion Leads to New Recycling Effort." *Wall Street Journal*, 03 Oct 2019. *Sirs Issues Researcher*, [explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2302779578?accountid=630](https://www.explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher/document/2302779578?accountid=630). Accessed 10 Mar. 2020.

This source describes the various recycling efforts spawned by the recent hike in clothing consumption. Chaudhuri in part blames the emerging fast fashion industry for society's practice of buying and discarding more clothing. The increased clothing waste has urged companies to make recycling efforts to reduce environmental harm. Some clothing retailers recycle within the brand as they know the composition of the clothing waste. Other external recyclers transform used clothing into raw materials which can be used for other products. Saabira Chaudhuri writes for the *Wall Street Journal* with an emphasis on environmental health and consumer shopping trends. This source was originally published for the *Wall Street Journal*, a trusted news source since 1889, yet I accessed this article through the *Sirs Issues Researcher* database. Although Chaudhuri has a bias opposing fast fashion, the article focuses on recycling efforts, so the bias is admissible. I used this source in my last confirmation paragraph about the environmental benefits of clothing recycling, and the rationale for people to participate in clothing recycling programs.

Claudio, Luz. "Waste Couture: Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 2007. *Sirs Issue Researcher*, www.explore.proquest.com/sirsissuesresearcher. Accessed 9 Feb. 2020.

In a well written article, Dr. Luz Claudio explores the environmental harm associated with modern fashion. Globalization of multinational corporations and the emerging fast fashion industry have enabled consumers to purchase clothing at very cheap prices, but at an expensive cost to the environment. Every step of the fashion industry constitutes tremendous environmental harm: the fabrics which make up clothing are not sustainable; clothing factories produce pollution and volatile chemical by-products, and discarded clothing clogs up landfills. Claudio finishes with a call to action by challenging the readers to be environment-conscious consumers making sustainable fashion choices. Dr. Luz Claudio is a professor and research scientist of environmental medicine. Her job title and doctorate degree bolster her ethos as a relevant and reputable authority. This source holds credibility being considered a scholarly journal in the *Sirs Issue Researcher* database. I used Claudio's example of sustainable retailer Patagonia in my confirmation paragraph about supporting sustainable brands. In addition, Claudio's claims about consumers having power to elicit change in the fashion industry strengthened the claims in my conclusion.

Cline, Elizabeth L. *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion*. Penguin, 2013.

In a world of ever changing, eye catching fashion trends at attractively low prices, Elizabeth Cline reveals the truth of cheap fashion in her book "Overdressed: The shockingly high cost of cheap fashion." Cline provides a holistic view of the fast fashion industry, detailing the industry model, its success, its inherent issues, and the indirect repercussions affecting other groups. Sparing no details, Cline exposes the industry leading fast fashion retailers Zara, H&M, and Forever 21. She offers alternative solutions to fast fashion as well, the most prominent being buying less clothing, repairing damaged clothing, and shopping second hand clothing. Cline has a clear and defined bias against fast fashion retailers. However this bias is understandable as part of the purpose of her book is to denounce fast fashion retailers and expose their wrongdoings. Regardless of her bias, Elizabeth Cline is incredibly credible being an expert on fast fashion and having published numerous works including this source, a 270 page book on fast fashion. Due to the holistic approach and sheer depth of information Cline shares, this source became very applicable to my paper. This is evident as I corroborated Cline's arguments to reduce fashion's environmental harm in four confirmation paragraphs. I also implemented her explanation of fast fashion in my first narration paragraph.

Dalton, Rosie. "Here Are All The Benefits Of Sustainable Fabrics." *Well Made Clothes*, 2017, www.wellmadeclothes.com/articles/HereAreAllTheBenefitsOfSustainableFabrics/ Accessed 12 Feb. 2020.

Rosie Dalton informs the public about the benefits of sustainable fabrics. Dalton first establishes the need for sustainable fabrics by describing the environmental damage associated with the modern clothing industry. Specifically, Dalton details the environmental issues with clothing fabrics. Next, she juxtaposes the issues with fast fashion fabrics to the benefits of sustainable fabrics. Dalton offers more sustainable fabric alternatives such as organic cotton, and challenges her readers to make more environment-conscious clothing decisions. Rosie Dalton is the editor in chief of fashion related content for *Well Made Clothes*. The website *Well Made Clothes* unites ethical fashion retailers along with numerous articles about fashion and sustainable clothing. As the website is actually a marketplace for sustainable clothing, the article has an evident bias as it supports buying sustainable fabrics. However, this bias does not seem to affect the credibility of this source. I used Dalton's commentary in my two narration paragraphs explaining the fundamentals of fast fashion and the environmental harm it causes.

Gilmore, Nicholas. "Ready-to-Waste: America's Clothing Crisis." *The Saturday Evening Post*, 16 Jan. 2018, www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2018/01/ready-waste-americas-clothing-crisis/. Accessed 8 Jan. 2020.

This source strives to inform readers about the current "clothing crisis" amidst America. The source particularly focuses on clothing waste, including interviews and opinions from experts in the field. Alarming statistics about current clothing waste and anticipated trends provoke the author to call for a "paradigm shift" in clothing consumption. Although *The Saturday Evening Post* is not the most popular source today, it has been running for almost 200 years. The organization is known for bringing in historical context to topical issues, such as fast fashion in this instance. The source is credible as the article had few advertisements, a clear mission and contact page for the website, no explicit bias, and a reputable author. The author cites his research with hyperlinks to specific evidence. I used Gilmore's astonishing statistics and commentary about fashion's environmental harm in my second narration paragraph. Gilmore's arguments of the caveats associated with clothing donation also aided my counter argument about clothing donations.

Herbszt, Csilla. "Is Fast Fashion Clothing Actually Low Quality?" *The Pretty Planeteer*, 14 June 2019, theprettyplaneteer.com/fast-fashion-clothing-low-quality. Accessed 2 Mar. 2020.

In this source, Csilla Herbszt addresses the quality behind fast fashion garments. She identifies some fundamentals in the fast fashion model which inevitably cause fast fashion garments to be of a lesser quality. For example, the cheap fabrics and labor which fast fashion brands take advantage of are not necessarily ideal for high quality products. Herbszt also describes the shift in consumer culture due to fast fashion to purchase many low quality products as opposed to a few, high quality products. Next, Herbszt asserts that purchasing low quality products in fact expends more time and money than higher quality alternatives. As a result, the author encourages the readers to shop sustainable fashion for better quality garments which last longer and cause less environmental harm. Csilla Herbszt is a sustainable fashion advocate and social influencer who has written many pieces about sustainable fashion. She mainly writes for her website *The Pretty Planeteer*, an informational source encouraging people to live sustainably, specifically through environment-conscious fashion choices. I used Herbszt's explanation of slow fashion in a confirmation paragraph about how individuals can combat fast fashion brands. I also used Herbszt's arguments to bolster the opposing viewpoint of my counter argument about the high cost to sustainable clothing.

Martinez, Flavia. "The Benefits Of Fast Fashion For College Students." *Study Breaks Magazine*, 01 Apr. 2017, studybreaks.com/culture/fast-fashion/. Accessed 13 Feb. 2020.

Low-income individual Flavia Martinez describes the redeeming quality of fast fashion: the cheap cost. Martinez acknowledges that fast fashion has many humanitarian and environmental ethical issues. However, Martinez asserts that the attractive low prices upon which the model is based upon enable low-income individuals to purchase clothing too. Furthermore, Martinez contends fashionable clothing at cheap prices help low-income individuals fit in with modern social classes. Fast fashion enables low-income individuals to blur the lines demarcating social classes through access to trendy clothing at affordable prices. Flavia Martinez, a student at Amherst College, has written and published numerous articles with a focus on social awareness. This particular article was published by *Study Breaks Magazine*, a national media source about trending topics and modern culture, run primarily by college students. I used Martinez's commentary to address the counterargument of fast fashion's benefit to low-income individuals.

Medvedev, Katalin. "Social Class and Clothing." *Love to Know*, fashion-history.lovetoknow.com/fashion-history-eras/social-class-clothing. Accessed 10 Mar. 2020.

In this source, Dr. Katalin Medvedev explains why clothing functions as such a major role in modern society. Medvedev provides historical examples of clothing indicating social rank dating back to the thirteenth century. In addition, clothing's role as a class divider was cross cultural, as Medvedev cites examples from China, Japan, Africa, and Europe. Modern society perpetuates the ideology that an individual's clothing conveys information about social standing. As middle and lower classes endeavor to emulate the elite, they take in similar clothing habits such as wearing a garment only a few times before disposing of it to show wealth. Dr. Katalin Medvedev is an associate professor at the University of Georgia with a focus on teaching about fashion culture. Medvedev earned a doctorate degree in cultural aspects of apparel, establishing her relevant authority related to this source. As this source is more explanatory than argumentative and the author's extensive qualifications, Medvedev refrains from a clear bias. I implemented this source for the hook of my paper to show the readers the centenary stress of clothing as an indicator of social class.

Pearl, Diana. "Fast Fashion Reignited in the 2010s. But Will It Last Into the 2020s?" *Adweek*, 27 Dec. 2019,
www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/fast-fashion-reignited-in-the-2010s-but-will-it-last-into-the-2020s/. Accessed 3 Jan. 2020.

The modern fast fashion industry emerged in the 2010s facilitated by the rise of social media influencers and online shipping. The fundamentals upon which the industry are based upon inherently call for higher production, higher sales figures, and inevitably, higher amounts of waste. A focal point of this source is an interview with Thulsi Narayanasamy, a senior labor rights advocate and researcher for the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. Narayanasamy asserts the need for regulation and reform on such a relevant industry. The organization *Adweek*, an American news source covering the brand marketing ecosystem, is a relevant authority as this article concerns the fast fashion marketing industry. *Adweek* has a reputation of highly factual reporting and pragmatic, to-the-point language. *Adweek* is known to stray away from bias and stay neutral on the right-left spectrum. As *Adweek* primarily focuses on the marketing and advertising industry, there are few external or political influences. I used the details of the fast fashion industry model in my narration paragraph and the interview with Thulsi Narayanasamy to describe the American consumption culture in my paper.

"Putting the Brakes on Fast Fashion." *UN Environment*, The United Nations Environment Programme, 12 Nov. 2018,
www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/putting-brakes-fast-fashion. Accessed 9 Feb. 2020.

This source by the United Nations Environment Programme aims to inform about the environmental damage caused by fast fashion. The source includes specific statistics to bring attention to the severity of the issue. In addition, the source highlights the urgency of the topic by anticipating future trends of the fashion industry. The United Nations Environment Programme is the prominent global environment authority with a mission to promote sustainable development within the United Nations System. The organization strives to inform the public about environmental injustice and advocate for sustainability. As this article describes fashion's environmental harm, the United Nations Environment Programme is a credible and relevant authority. The source does have a clear bias supporting the UN Alliance on Sustainable Fashion, which *UN Environment* sponsors. However, this bias does not affect the validity of the facts in the article. I mainly used this source in my second narration paragraph to bring awareness to the gravity of the issue and show why my paper matters.

Sloan, Kayla. "Why You Should Start Spending More Money on Clothes." *Prosper and Thrive*, Santander Bank, thehub.santanderbank.com/start-spending-money-clothes/. Accessed 2 Mar. 2020.

This source endeavors to inform people about why they should invest in more expensive clothing. Anticipating a possible hostile audience, the author concedes some opposing viewpoints of expensive clothing. The author continues with a series of arguments about why individuals should purchase more expensive clothing. One key aspect is that more expensive clothing is generally composed of higher quality fabrics, ultimately lasting longer than cheaper, fast fashion alternatives. The source advises to refrain from ridiculously expensive brand name clothing, which is often marked up for the brand name and not the higher quality materials. The author Kayla Sloan is a financial analyst and advisor who helps individuals make economic-conscious decisions. *Prosper and Thrive*, website initiated by Santander Bank, helps individuals understand finances and make judicious financial decisions. The container has over 125 articles from various experts to ensure credibility of information. However, the source has a clear bias as it is sponsored by Santander Bank. Spending more on clothing calls for more expensive credit fees, potentially benefiting Santander Bank. Nevertheless, the source still holds merit and the bias does not affect the facts presented. I primarily used this source in my rebuttal confirmation paragraph concerning the benefits of more expensive, high quality clothing compared to cheap, low quality fast fashion fabrics.

Stanton, Audrey. "What Is Fast Fashion, Anyway?" *The Good Trade*, www.thegoodtrade.com/features/what-is-fast-fashion. Accessed 11 Feb. 2020.

In attempt to inform the masses, this source provides a closer look to the definition of fast fashion. The source identifies the fundamentals of the fast fashion model and how it has gained increased influence recently. The fast fashion model flushes the markets with new trends every week, creating 52 "micro seasons" per year instead of the traditional four. The source transitions to the environmental harm caused by the fast fashion industry. The industry is responsible for polluting water supplies, clogging up landfills, and releasing an unsightly carbon footprint. The source ends on a positive note by defining slow fashion—the antithesis to fast fashion—which individuals can support to combat fast fashion. The author, Audrey Stanton, is a freelance writer with a focus on sustainable fashion. She has written many articles for *The Good Trade*, a resource educating the public in sustainable living. The article has a bias to support sustainability as it is contained in a website promoting sustainable living. However, this bias does not affect the validity of the facts Stanton presents. As this article mainly serves to define fast fashion, I used this source mainly in my two narration paragraphs describing fast fashion and the environmental harm associated with it.

“The Ugly Truth of Fast Fashion” *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj*, volume 5, episode 3, Netflix, 24 Nov. 2019. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com. Accessed 26 Jan. 2020.

In one of his relatively recent episodes of his informative yet entertaining Netflix series, Hasan Minhaj addresses the topical issue of fast fashion. Understanding that his audience has varied knowledge about the topic, Minhaj offers a detailed explanation encompassing the whole picture of fast fashion. Minhaj first defines the fast fashion model and how it revolutionized the modern clothing industry. This section was followed with a description of the negative effects of fast fashion, bolstered by specific statistics. Minhaj concludes with a call to action, inviting his viewers to combat the harm caused by fast fashion by holding on to clothing longer and finding alternative sources of new clothing. The series, *Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj*, presents modern cultural and political issues through comedian and talk show host Hasan Minhaj. Minhaj informs his audience in an engaging manner using humor and well crafted graphics. Being sponsored by Netflix, it is reasonable to assume the credibility of news content that Hasan Minhaj presents to the mass media. In addition, all statistics presented during episodes are cited with the exact source and date to ensure credibility. Although Hasan Minhaj is known to have a left leaning bias, this does not seem to affect the factual content of his episode. I used Hasan Minhaj’s depth of research to gain a better understanding of the topic and (will use) his statistics in the body of my essay.

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