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From Fashionable Frivolity to 'Addicted Abandon': The Changing Moral Discourse on Fashion's Excess from the Middle Ages to Today

Abstract

In Medieval and Puritan times, moralists framed the following of new fashions and the pursuit of novelties as frivolity, pride and excess, while today discourses about overconsumption, unsustainable industry practices, and distance from producers take on ethical and moral tones sometimes being attributed to greed or apathy. This research traces these moralizing discourses and the terms they use, comparing particular fashions or dress behaviours that were considered immoral on the basis of wastefulness of time and resources (including money) in each time period. In Medieval times, long trains and wide sleeves were often considered wasteful and frivolous by moralists. Likewise, in the Puritan era, the extravagant use of time in preparing complex appearances was condemned. Today, the Western world's consumption patterns are seen to be problematic. This research looks for patterns and similarities among the damned fashion practices, and highlights the differences in ways the discourse is framed. For example, in

Medieval and Puritan times, morality was framed in relation to God and sin, while present day

discourses assume a common morality that overlooks God or religion.

Keywords

Fashion, waste, excess, moralize, moralist, frivolous, vanity, greed, apathy, care,

conscientiousness, ethical/unethical, sustainable/unsustainable, propriety

Introduction

       Opposition to new clothing styles and frequent changes of fashion has accompanied

fashion since its beginnings in the medieval period (Heller 2010), and has persisted to this day,

at times in an outright condemning manner and at times taking on more subtle moral tones.

During medieval times one moralist claimed: "The devil has made himself chief justice of new

fashion" (Sylvester et al. 151). In the late 16th century, a Puritan moralist criticizes women's

modes hoping they will see the "horrour of their impieties, and tragicall abuses" so that they

would "leave off their wickednesse, call for mercie at the handes of God, repent and amende"

(Stubbes 106). And even today, a well-known documentary about the fast fashion industry, *The*

True Cost (2015)*,* names "greed and fear, power and poverty" as main themes characterizing

the industry's current story.

       Within the last ten years, as a student of textiles and fashion, I have observed the

conversation about the ethics and sustainability of the fashion industry gaining momentum and

reaching greater numbers of people. It is a discussion that needs to happen, about a topic that

is current and relevant given the growing concern about the well-being of our planet. However,

when I began looking at moral and satirical works about clothing and textiles in Britain from the medieval period, I realized this discussion is not new and that similar concerns about the consumption and excess associated with fashion were being brought to the fore as far back as eight centuries ago. This observation piqued my interest and I wondered which 'excessive' fashions and habits incited moral censure, and how criticisms of fashion's wasteful aspects have changed or remained the same over time.

This paper analyses early and current moralizing discourses on fashion's wastefulness and excess in order to discover the differences and similarities in concerns, how moralists framed their concerns and how this reflects wider societal shifts in ways of thinking or living. The moralizing texts under examination have been drawn from a variety of sources including a compilation of medieval writings entitled *Medieval Dress and Textiles in Britain: A Multilingual Sourcebook* (Sylvester et al. 2014); courtesy literature, poems, satires and sermons from the 16th and 17th centuries (Brathwait 1630; Dekker 1609; Peacham 1634; Williams 1620); contemporary books on the history of dress and moral aspects of dress (Breward 1995; *Dress and Morality* 2003; *Fashion and Fiction* 2005); a documentary film (*True Cost* 2015); online articles (Church and Society Council 2011; Horsley 2014; Wise 2014); blogs (Dornak; Wise); and popular books on fashion sustainability and ethics (Fletcher 2014; *Naked Fashion* 2011; *Slow Fashion* 2016; Cline 2012; Hoskins 2014; Brooks 2015). These sources were found through library catalogue inquiries related to fashion, morality or ethics, and waste or excess, google searches, MA courses that introduced these texts, and suggestions from friends and faculty. The written and documentary sources examined are drawn from three periods: the medieval period (1100s-1400s); what I call 'the Puritan age' (from about 1550 to 1680—covering the time

when Puritans were an influential force in Britain's politics and government); and a short period

of twenty-first century history (from the early 2000s to today). While many of the passages

selected are small segments of moralizing diatribes that target a variety of fashion-related

issues, this research focuses on moralizing discourses that speak to the excesses or

wastefulness of fashion. The term *fashion*, as it is used in this paper refers both to "incessant,

cyclical pursuit of the 'new'" in clothing and adornment styles (Entwistle xvii), and to the

fashion system, which incorporates the producing, marketing, selling and consuming of

fashionable clothing (Entwistle xv). Entwistle, in her book *The Fashioned Body* (2015), argues

that the widely accepted academic definition of fashion as "regular and systemic change"

necessarily places fashion historically in western modernity, even though it is now a

phenomenon that affects the whole world (xv). It is not surprising then that much of the

criticism of the products and system of fashion also comes from the global north and west. This

analysis mainly focuses on moralizing from Britain with some comments from or referring to

surrounding European nations and, in the latter period, North America.

The medieval period represents one of the earliest times for which significant material

evidence, in the form of surviving paintings, writings, and even a few textile artifacts, points to

a "birth of fashion" in Europe (Keller in Riello et al 2010) and enables us to determine attitudes

and ideas about clothing, making it a good period to start with. The 'Puritan age' was selected

for examination as it produced a speeded up fashion cycle, as well as a great deal of innovation

in—and outcry against—the numerous accoutrements used to artificially shape the body and

produce a fashionable silhouette (Breward 1995; Foreng 2007; Bruna 2015). It was also the

time when Puritans played a significant part in politics and government (Shelley 1995). Since

Puritans are often singled out as killjoys, condemning all forms of earthly pleasure, I wanted to discover how they perceived the goodness or badness of these new fashions in comparison to other moralists of their time. The fashion practices of our present era have also provided plenty of fodder for morally-toned criticism as advancements in industry, technology and communication have enabled consumption and its accompanying ecological degradation to dramatically increase. Our current time period is included in the research in order to draw some connections and contrasts between historical moralizing discourses and those speaking up against the fashion system today.

Before proceeding to the findings and analysis, I would like to touch on a few important terms that are used throughout the body of this paper. I often refer to the authors of the excerpts used in this paper as *moralists,* meaning people who write or teach for the purpose of informing others about the rightness or wrongness—the ethics—of actions, behaviours, thoughts, or motives (Oxford English Dictionary (OED)). When I say that an author is *moralizing*, I mean that they are interpreting or appraising certain events, actions, habits, circumstances, or characteristics in relation to right and wrong, good and evil (OED).

Excess and *waste* are also key words used throughout the research. It is interesting to note that, in the fourteenth century, the word *excess* meant "Extravagant violation of law, decency, or morality; outrageous conduct", and later in the eighteenth century it figuratively meant "departure from custom, reason, etc." (OED). The way I use the word in my paper is related to these meanings, but, more closely means: "The overstepping the limits of moderation"; "the state of…being in greater quantity or degree than is usual or necessary; exuberance, superabundance;…an extreme degree or amount"; "the fact or state of being in

greater amount or degree than is beneficial or right; 'faulty superfluity' (Johnson)" (OED). In the seventeenth century, *excesses* was another word for *luxuries* (OED). Of particular interest are those definitions that ascribe fault or wrongness at the core of the meaning of *excess*. These undertones pertain very much to the moralizing of what is seen as 'too much' in relation to dress, whether it be too much money or time spent on acquiring garments and preparing appearances, or too much material used in the making of fashionable items, or too much waste and toxic effluents produced in the process. These terms imply a correct amount (of time, money, material, etc.) that has been overstepped. Similarly *waste,* as it is used in this paper, refers to "useless expenditure or consumption, squandering (*of* money, goods, time, effort, etc.)" (OED). The word was used in this sense since the 13th century, and in the 18th century, we see an interesting correlation between *wastefulness* and *excess* as the word *waste* could indicate "a profusion, lavish abundance of something" (OED), such as, in the case of personal overabundance, a dress in every available colour and cut, or, in the case of systemic overabundance, new styles of clothing coming into fast fashion stores each week*.*

What we see from the research is that participation in the fashion system, with its frequent stylistic changes, and accelerating pace, is an action that evokes significant moral censure when the consequent waste and excess is taken into consideration. From the time fashion's ebb and flow of aesthetic change was born until today, writers and critics have been concerned about how much time, money, energy, and resources are consumed to a keep apace. What we will find is that many of the concerns brought forward in the Middle Ages are still concerns today, though often on a grander scale today. While underlying concerns remain somewhat consistent, the target of moralizing discourses shifts from particular dress and

consumption habits of individuals to an overarching condemnation of a fashion system that is

seen as unsustainable. Additionally, the moral framework in which criticisms of excessive dress

behaviours are presented shifts from a religious one to a more materialistic and humanistic

one.

Chapter 1: The Devil's Banner

The Medieval period is one of the earliest times for which significant literary, artistic and material evidence indicate how dress practices may have been perceived by contemporaries and how they changed over decades and centuries. Margaret Scott, in her book *Medieval Dress and Fashion,* suggests that there is a lot to learn about secular clothing from the criticism against it from the mouths of clergy (12). This chapter discusses attitudes and responses of Medieval historians and moralists to the emerging love of novelty as well as to particular new styles gaining popularity in Britain's later Middle Ages, spanning the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. This discussion focuses on language that judges these fads as wrong based on their perceived wastefulness of time, energy, life or resources and how these criticisms were expressed to the writer's audience, often in relation to one of 'seven deadly sins'.

The seven deadly sins

Before digging into the particularities of Medieval moralizing of fashion, a little note about the prominence of the seven deadly sins in Medieval thought is in order, especially as some of the writings discussed in this chapter are structured around this framework. From the first century, ascetic and monastic communities began designating particular sins as 'cardinal', 'capital' or 'chief'—sins or human tendencies that led to spiritual death or acted as major headings under which all other evil acts fell (Schimmel 14, 24; Barringer 211). In the ancient world, it was common to place sins in groups of seven, a pattern that even appears in the Hebrew Bible (Schimmel 22; ESV Proverbs 6:17). A list of 'Seven Deadly Sins' was introduced by Christian monk and theologian John Cassian of Marseilles (c. 360 – c. 435), developed by Pope

Gregory the Great (c. 540 - 604), popularized by Prudentius' fifth-century poem

Psychomachia—a poem picturing a war between vice and virtue that had great influence on art

and literature of the Middle Ages—and illustrated by many literary and artistic works of the

Middle Ages (Kaplan et al 2; Schimmel 16-17). The list included: pride (*superbia*), envy, anger,

sloth, avarice (greed), gluttony, and lust (*luxuria*) (Barringer 211; Kaplan et al 2). Sometimes

these sins were considered external and powerful, and thus were often attributed to demons

(Schimmel 25; Barringer 212). From the ninth century, church councils encouraged and then

mandated that this list be used in religious instruction, preaching, and the hearing of

confessions (Barringer 212). In England's later Medieval educational institutions, many

instructors were trained as or appointed by monks (Miner 17-22), and therefore education

could well have been based on religious teachings, including presumably teachings on the seven

deadly sins. By 1215, years of repetition, instruction and popular interest had engrained the

deadly sins in Western Christendom's psyche as "a fundamental part of daily life, 'as real as the

parish church itself'" (Barringer 212).

Both Schimmel and Barringer claim that particular vices were emphasized at different

points in history, based on changes in society and ways of life (Schimmel 25; Barringer 212). For

example, Schimmel finds that, in a Medieval society that valued order and structure, pride was

particularly condemned for its elevation of individuality and rebellion against authority (25). In

the later Middle Ages, as society became increasingly commercial, avarice (or greed) was

considered most threatening (Schimmel 25).

In the examples of Medieval moralizing below, pride appears repeatedly as a pernicious

sin infecting dress behaviours. To modern ears the notion of 'pride' is not particularly offensive.

However, in ancient times pride was so serious that Pope Gregory the Great (c.506-604) viewed

pride as the one sin that led to all other sins (Schimmel 34). Pride connoted arrogance,

insolence, haughtiness, self-conceit, self-aggrandizing, rebellion against God and human

authority, and braggadocio (Schimmel 37; Strong 840, 848), and it is in this sense that the word

pride is used in some of the extracts below. Interestingly, it was also often interchanged with

"vainglory" (or the desire to be glorified or praised), and was symbolized by a peacock or by a

woman admiring herself in a mirror (Schimmel 33, 34; Lehner 8) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Of Overbearing Pride* from Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools.* Attributed to Albrecht Durer, 15th Century.
Image from the University of Houston's special collections.

Societal shifts

Times of societal transition or moments of significant change often arouse fear and concern about how the shifts will affect customs, value systems and known ways of living. During the later Middle Ages Britain saw significant growth and change on a broad level that undoubtedly stirred fear and concern within certain members of society. For example, mechanization (including the use of newly invented spinning wheels and fulling mils) made craftsmanship more efficient (Scott 28-9; Breward 20); book production increased, making images and ideas more available to lay readership (Heller 28); from the late 11th Century to the 12th century, agriculture expanded and population grew, along with urban centres (Heller 33); there was then a significant drop in population due to the Black Death of 1348-9, yet wealth continued to grow (Scott 80); and English peasant risings of 1381 "suggest increasing expectations further down the social ladder" (Scott 80).

In the realm of clothing production and use, Scott argues that there are clear signs from the 12th century onwards that the pursuit of novelty became a motivating force in dressing (35). For example, in Western Europe, simple T-shaped garments, called *cottes,* for both men and women, had been acceptable typical dress even among the nobility until around 1100 (Scott 16; Breward 8,13). After this time, clothing became increasingly complex and contoured and required the service of specialists in cutting and sewing, rather than traditional female-led domestic production (Scott 12-3, 36; Breward 30). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, tailors began to set up shop; international trade across Europe and with the East became more organized; clothing production was structured into guilds and apprenticeships led by men; spending on clothing became more liberal; many ranks of society had a greater variety of

fabrics and styles within their reach; and styles changed noticeably in shorter periods of time (Scott 36, 72, 77; Breward 30-31; Heller 33). These significant societal shifts aroused fear of overspending and concern that visual distinctions between social classes would be muddied. Within this setting, complaints from moralists about outrageous or frequently changed outfits and the habit of pursuing novel clothing styles abound, as do sumptuary laws designed to control clothing consumption—especially the type of textile used—based on economic and social class.

Moralizing fashion in the Middle Ages

Robert Mannyng of Brunne (c. 1283 – c. 1338) gives us a sturdy criticism of new-fangled garments to begin with. Born eight miles south of Sempringham in modern Bourne, Mannyng may have been a student at the University of Cambridge between 1298 and 1302 (Biggar 522) and was a Gilbertine canon[1] in Sempringham, Lincolnshire for at least fifteen years and up to thirty-six years (Coleman 311; Biggar 522; Sylvester et al 142). He is known for authoring a confessional manual, *Handlyng Synne,* which he worked on from 1303 to 1317 (Coleman 311). This instructional piece is an adaptation and Old English translation of *Le Manuel des Péchés* (literally *Handbook of Sins*) written by William Waddington in the mid-thirteenth century (Coleman 311; Biggar 522; Sylvester et. Al. 132). Brunne adds to this earlier work with distinct

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[1] The Gilbertine Order was made up of four groups of people: nuns, lay sisters, canons (members of certain Roman Catholic orders), and lay brothers. Gilbertine canons followed the rule of Saint Augustine, whose writings had a powerful influence on religious thought in medieval times, including the belief that people should focus their attention on God, undistracted by the concerns and pleasures of the world, and that no one could receive God's forgiveness unless they belonged to the church and took the sacraments. See www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Gilbert-of-Sempringham and "Augustine, Saint" in *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1985).

regional anecdotes and illustrative moral examples (Coleman 314; Biggar 522). Biggar and

Coleman agree that the intended audience is varied, with the work potentially read or heard by

novices in the monastery, lay brothers, visitors and pilgrims of various social standing (including

gentry) (Biggar 522; Coleman 312). Mannyng may have written the manual as part of a

widespread response to the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council's call for all Christians to confess

yearly (Biggar 522-3). It would act as a guide to confession, both showing sin and encouraging

readers and hearers to avoid it and live a holy life (Biggar 522-3). Coleman argues that it may

have also been written to persuade pilgrims and visitors to "contribute to the rebuilding of the

priory church" (312), perhaps by offering means of escape from the consequences of sin at a

price. The following excerpt, which includes both instruction and an illustrative tale, comes

from Louise Sylvester's English translation in *Medieval Dress and Textiles in Britain* (2014). The

subtitle under which this excerpt falls is *The Seven Sins;--and first of Pride*:

> Do not fashion your clothing in a new-fangled way immoderately in order to be
> praised. Alas that it should happen but many a person is damned for their pride.
> God's grace will never come into a land where men hold this fashion so dear.
> God and providence are angry with those who have changed their clothing out of
> pride. Nevertheless, every man may make himself attractive in accordance with
> his rank, but misfortune comes of going beyond what is reasonable. Frequently
> noble men end up in poverty because of this desert. […] Those that rush towards
> novelty all day greatly sin in their ingenuity. In order to be praised and to have a
> great appearance, they alter their appearance as much as they can all the time.
> For truly it seems a good thing to them to spend their whole lives on frivolity. […]
>
> *The Tale of the Knight and Monk who loved new Fashions*
> There was a knight who loved novelties as many now follow that foolish course.
> In the summer time he proudly had made for himself an intricately slashed coat
> and God was not pleased by this, for in his pride he was betrayed (147, 149).

Mannyng goes on to tell how the knight was killed by his enemies, and how his friends divided

his property, seeking where his coat would go. The poor would not take it, but a clerk

(clergyman, or someone serving in the church) desired it, received it, and was then burned as

soon as he put it on. Mannyng concludes:

> By this example God demonstrated that the coat was cursed and that it
> betokened sorrow and misfortune, so that no poor men would take it because
> pride in new fashions goes against the ways of Christian men [...] Here you may
> see that God is angry with those who alter their clothing [...]
> The devil has made himself chief justice of new fashion, and if a clerk ordained in
> dignity nevertheless pursues such frivolity and in his folly begins to be rebellious,
> he waves the devil's banner about. Many people are blinded by this; may God
> heal them (qtd. in Sylvester et al. 149, 151).

As we can see, Mannyng considered it prideful to fashion clothing in a "new-fangled way

immoderately in order to be praised", a sin worthy of damnation and one affecting the whole

land. The author suggests that not only is it prideful, but it is not good, unwise, and wasteful to

spend one's life and time trying to alter one's appearance so frequently. He emphasizes in no

uncertain terms the sin of such behaviour by declaring God's anger, displeasure, punishment

and lack of grace towards those who practice it, and by contrast stating that the devil is the

'chief justice of new fashion'. The consequences of fervently following new fashions implied

here include poverty, misfortune, cursing, death and damnation.

A second example demonstrating general concern about society's movement to acquire

more and more clothing comes from Thomas Hoccleve's most successful writing, *The Regiment*

of Princes of 1411-1412, a work based on a thirteenth-century piece of the same name,

produced for Henry, Prince of Wales (Encyclopædia Britannica, "Thomas Hoccleve"; Burrow

445). Hoccleve was educated in both Latin and French, and became a clerk in London's privy

seal office at the age of about twenty, a position he maintained for thirty-eight years (Burrow

444). In his younger years in London, he lived a licentious life, but it is there that he also met

Geoffrey Chaucer, a man he considered his master in the art of poetry (Burrow 445). While

Hoccleve's writing consisted of poetry for patrons, and he never entered holy orders, his later work took on religious tones and conveyed the problems of his time in a "literal-minded manner" (Encyclopædia Britannica, "Thomas Hoccleve"; Burrow 445). His *Regiment of Princes* was meant to advise Prince Henry on the character qualities necessary for a good ruler (Burrow 445). In this excerpt, taken from Louise Sylvester's translation in *Medieval Dress and Textiles* (2014), we see Hoccleve's concern about the amount of clothing that fills households:

> In the old days, when a small amount of clothing was enough for a high rank or household, great houses were well filled with food; but now households are slender and lean, for all the good that men may reap or glean is wasted on outrageous outfits, so that men cannot keep their households.
> Pride would much rather carry a hungry mouth to bed than be outraged by lack of fine clothing. He sets no price by the law of measures, nor takes cloth, food or wages. Moderation is out of the country on a pilgrimage; but I suppose he will return before long, for need will drive us to it (141).

Hoccleve, like Mannyng, attributes household poverty to unsatisfied men wasting all the good they glean on 'outrageous outfits'. And while he claims people are being extreme in their clothing acquisition, he optimistically believes people will revert back to a more moderate approach when necessity brings them to their senses. It is interesting to note that well-mannered children around 1300 would only change their linen (underwear) once every two weeks, and around 1350 it would be typical for women to have only three outfits—one best outfit, one for Sunday and ordinary feasts, and one for everyday wear (Scott 80, 89). While Hoccleve fails to give specific numbers, we may guess that the number of garments men and women possessed at this time rose above three!

Unlike Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne*, this excerpt does not directly refer to God or the Devil in order to point out the sinfulness of the pursuit of fine clothing. Instead 'pride', which was understood as one of the most critical of the seven deadly sins at this time, is blamed for

the immoderate behavior, thus lending a disapproving tone to the work. Hoccleve also appeals

to the reader's expected desire to have a prosperous household, rather than a lean one.

Under the umbrella of overarching criticism of rapidly changing fashions and greater

accumulation of clothing, specific fashions considered outrageous, silly or wasteful are also

attacked. For example, long trailing trains; long, wide sleeves; tippets (or tapets or sleeve tails);

and elongated, pointy toes on shoes were contemporary fashions condemned by moralists. The

next part of this chapter looks at how these fashions were viewed as wasteful of time, energy,

ability, and material by certain historians and moralists writing at the time of their popularity.

William Waddington's lengthy Anglo-French poem, *Le Manuel des Pechiez* or *Manuel*

des Péchés (literally *The Manual of Sins*) provides us one example. It was written c. 1220 to c.

1240 as part of England's wide-spread educational efforts for both clergy and laity, in response

to the Fourth Lateran Council's 1215 decree that all adults must confess to a priest each year

(Lutton 69). Waddington worked as a secular canon, legal expert, lay steward of the great

house of the archbishop of York, and founder and archbishop's knight at Southwell Minster

(Lutton 69; Ralph et al. 93). This minster was very near to Mannyng's Gilbertine house, where

Handlyng Synne would have been written shortly after (Ralph et al. 93). As evidenced by the

size and style of certain manuscripts, *Le Manuel* may have been written for private reading or

for oral reading to a small group, and must have been fairly widely read, as there are still 25

manuscripts in existence (Lutton 69, 75). The poem contained many striking tales to illustrate

moral points and encourage self-examination in preparation for confession and penance

(Lutton 69-71). These *exempla* were especially found in the sections about the Ten

Commandments and the seven deadly sins (Lutton 70).

As in Mannyng's manual, Waddington's section "Of the Deadly Sins: The First of Which is Pride" makes reference to dress—in this case, specifically to long trains. Prior to the time of this writing, court dress and feminine dress sometimes reached to the ankles or below, while shorter dress was worn by workers, particularly male workers (Breward 13). In fact, many paintings and manuscript illuminations from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries depict figures—mostly, but not exclusively, women—wearing garments that reach well beyond the bottom of their feet (Scott 2007) (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Lady Hunting from *The Alphonso Psalter* c. 1284-1316.
Image from The British Library Digitized Manuscripts, Add MS 24686 f.13v

The following excerpt, taken from Louise Sylvester's English translation of Frederick Furnivall's 1901 edition of Waddington's *Manuel,* includes a brief instruction as well as an *exemplum.* The garments here are referred to as *robes* in Anglo-French, and may refer to what costume historians call the *cotte* ("a simple 'T' shaped shift") (Breward 13)*, surcot* (a garment worn over the *cotte,* sometimes sleeveless) (Breward 13, 14)*,* or *houppelande* ("a loose-bodied floor-length coat with narrow sleeves") (Breward 16).

Of women, of whom we have spoken before, who wear very long trailing robes it would be better if the train under her foot were given away for charity

[*How the Devil has power over Women's Trains*]
By one example it is confirmed that in 'the Book of Vices' we find that two monks walking together met a women with a long train. One of them looked at her then produced a great laugh, the other asked why he was laughing. 'Willingly', he said, and then said to him—'The woman who is walking in that place has a devil on her train and it is pulling her by the train towards him. The devil is in a bog, he will completely overcome her in the mud, and truly, it is at this that I am laughing'. And through that you can know that a long train gives the devil power (141).

Waddington makes a judgment here, that it is not good for a woman to have a long train and, in fact, that the devil was on and had power over the train. The monks in the story given here must have found the style so foolish, stupid or silly as to bring an outburst of laughter—either that or the monks were so compassionless and cruel that they delighted in the woman's impending doom. Waddington's claim that the train would have been better given to charity reflects the high value that textiles embodied and could indicate that he saw an imbalance of people in need while others had more than enough.

Writing a century earlier, historian and monk Orderic Vitalis in his *Ecclesiastical History* bemoans the impracticality of the new, unnecessary fashions of his day, including trains, long sleeves and 'pulley-toes'. Orderic Vitalis was born to a French father and English mother near Shrewsbury in 1075 (Chinball 3; Prestwich 921). From the time he was ten until his death c. 1142, he lived as a monk in the Benedictine order (Chinball 3; Prestwich 921). It was in the Norman monastery of Saint-Evroult that he copied manuscripts, read extensively and worked many years on his great work, *Ecclesiastical History,* completed in 1141 (Prestwich 921). According to Orderic himself, his purpose in writing was to state the simple truth (Prestwich

922). Prestwich also adds that "his task was to describe the follies, fashion and disputes of men as they were and not as he would have had them be" (922). Below is an extract adapted from Chinball's translation, found in Sylvester et al.'s *Medieval Dress and Textiles in Britain:*

> Our ancestors used to wear decent clothes, well-adapted to the shape of their bodies[…] But in these days the old customs have almost wholly given way to new fads. […] They sweep the dusty ground with the unnecessary trains of their robes and mantles; their long wide sleeves cover their hands whatever they do; impeded by these frivolities they are almost incapable of walking quickly or doing any kind of useful work. […]
> Also many other learned writers have composed long laments about the sins and sorrows of this age. Following their example, I have given a brief account in this modest work of the time when men in northern parts adopted the foolish fashions of pulley-toes and long and flowing hair and garments that sweep up all the filth on the ground for no useful purpose (131, 133).

Here Vitalis esteems freedom of movement and ability to do practical, 'useful' work, citing long sleeves and trains as impediments to what he implies are praiseworthy uses of energy and ability.

Figure 3: An extremely long sleeve on one of the magi, from *The Psalter of Henry of Blois,* mid-twelfth century to second half of thirteenth. Image from The British Library Digitized Manuscripts, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f.11r

Earlier in this work, Vitalis calls the man who began stuffing the elongated pulley-toes of shoes and boots 'worthless' (*nebulo* in Latin, which means 'blockhead') and, both the fashion he set and the people who search for novelties, '*frivolam'* in Latin, translated 'frivolous' in English. The

word 'frivolous', when referring to activities, thoughts or words in this time period, connoted

idleness, vanity, folly or stupidity, and, when referring to people and their character, meant

foolish, lacking sense, silly, thoughtless, and of a "futile nature or disposition" (OED). Vitalis'

language is strong and pointed when he speaks of the people who pursue such fashions:

> But now laymen in their pride seize upon a fashion typical of their corrupt morals
> that once honourable men judged shameful and all rejected as rubbish [literally
> 'dung'], that modern people think sweet as honey and wear as a special distinction
> (qtd. in Sylvester et al 131).

Vitalis, using a potent contrast between the vile and the sweet, says the fashions of long trains,

long sleeves and long toes are useless wastes of time and materials, bringing shame on those

who adopt them and revealing the pride and corruption in their hearts.

Thomas Hoccleve affirms Vitalis' sentiments about a fashion that evidently persisted

nearly 300 years later in this next excerpt of *The Regiment of Princes* (1411-1412), translated by

Louise Sylvester:

> What is a lord without his retinue? I put the case to you that his enemies
> suddenly attack him in the street: what help would he […] whose unwieldy
> sleeves hang down so as to be swept elegantly along give to his lord? He cannot
> assist him. In such a case he is nothing but a woman; he cannot stand in the
> place of a man.
>
> His two arms have more than enough to do to hold up his sleeves […]
>
> Now this land has little need of brooms to sweep away the filth from the street,
> since the wide sleeves of penniless men will lick it up, whether it is dry or wet.
> Oh England, stand upright on your feet, so disgusting a waste in such a simple
> degree! Banish it or you will bitterly regret it (Sylvester et al 173, 175).

Hoccleve laments that a man's strength is given to holding up his 'unwieldy' sleeves instead of

doing what he is intended to do—protect his lord and give his strength to what, by contrast, is

considered a useful task. He appeals to his fellow Englishmen to consider their behaviour logically and rationally, especially in light of the filth that could be swept up by their long garments while walking on streets where horse dung, liquid waste, such as dye run off and latrine contents, and 'muck' were sometimes disposed of (Jørgensen 552-558). He uses a repugnant image of this filth being collected in clothing to point out the foolishness he perceives in the adoption of extreme fashions.

Earlier in this work, Hoccleve explicitly refers to particular fashionable styles as wasteful of money and of material:

> But this I consider a violation of propriety to see someone walk in gowns of scarlet twelve yards wide with sleeves hanging down to the ground, and the fur trimming set within it amounting to twenty pounds or more. And if he has paid for it, he has no wealth left to him with which to buy a hood. […]

> Also there is another new fashion: a disgusting and excessive waste of cloth. There goes, no less than a yard of broadcloth into a man's tippet, by my life. I think this is a true inducement to stealing (Sylvester et al. 169, 171).

Hoccleve condemns the extreme width of a gown of scarlet, a high-quality, highly sought-after fine woolen cloth dyed in a range of colours (Scott 29). Though twelve yards is almost certainly an exaggeration, even a fraction of this width of scarlet would have been expensive and clearly indicated the wearer's ability or desire to spend wealth on luxuries. Hoccleve writes "*if* he has paid for it" (emphasis mine), indicating that the gown may even have been too expensive for the wearer to pay the full amount in a lump sum, perhaps leaving him or her indebted to a tailor or creditor[2].

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[2] Schofield and Mayhew's *Credit and Debt in Medieval England c.1180-c.1350* contains essays that discuss both formal and informal systems of credit and debt extant in this late medieval period. The essays show that certain men of noble or wealthy households, as well as peasants, merchants, clerics, urbanites and country dwellers all participated in transactions of debt and credit (Neville 627).

The tippet (tapet or sleeve tail), a long "pendulant streamer" of cloth attached to an armband and worn over tight-fitting sleeves or incorporated into the sleeves (Hill et al 30-33; Scott 107) with apparently no function besides decoration, also comes under criticism for the same reason that it is a waste of fabric and money (See Figure 4). Implying that the amount of broadcloth needed to make a non-functioning decoration was excessive, he also worried that the desire to acquire the novelty might cause carelessness about whether it was acquired rightly or wrongly (i.e. by theft). This concern hints at another of the deadly sins known to the medieval conscience: avarice (or greed). As Schimmel and Barringer suggested, emphasis on this sin arguably accompanied the increase in variety of stylish options and mercantile activity in the later Middle Ages.

Fashionable ladies in *The Coronation Book of Charles V, king of France,* 1365-1380.
Image from The British Library Digitized Manuscripts, Cotton MS Tiberius B VIII, f.67v

Observations

From the above examples, we get a good sense of how fashionable extremes of the medieval period were perceived by contemporary historians and moralists. I must note here that what is criticized is excess. There are a number of statements throughout the satirical and moral writings I examined that endorse dressing well according to one's station in life. The passages I selected focus on criticism of what is seen as excessive attention to changing fashions and absurd or outrageous styles. Such attention and pursuit of novelty is framed in these examples as prideful, immoderate, wasteful, frivolous, foul, financially unwise, sinful, foolish, leading to damnation, and caused by corruption in the heart or the overpowering influence of the Devil and his demons. This language reflects practical concerns about expenditure and financial survival, but also spiritual concerns about vices and living a virtuous life leading to a secure afterlife. The fact that these statements were written indicates that not everyone equally valued thrifty, conscientious consumption, functionality, and generosity to those in need—or perhaps that they were not yet informed about the proper expression of such virtues and the perceived dangers of their opposite vices. Informing the population on this subject was clearly a major motivating force behind much of the writing discussed above.

Chapter 2: Rigging the Ship and Other Absurdities

The second timeframe examined in this paper is what I call the 'Puritan age'. It covers the late Tudor period and part of the Stuart period in England, from approximately 1550 to 1680, and includes the time when Puritans were an influential force on England's politics and society (1560 to 1660) (Shelley 291). Widely understood as adamant and vocal moralists—and even as killjoys—Puritans had some strong criticisms of what were perceived as absurd fashion habits of this time period. However, as we will see, theirs was not the only voice protesting the wastefulness of time and resources in the pursuit of the latest modes, nor were their ways of living and thinking always starkly different from the rest of England's. This chapter will give a brief overview of both Puritan and Anglican views on clothing, as well as an outline of shifts in the textile and clothing industries, ways of thinking, and fashionable styles during this period. With this information as a backdrop, we will then look at texts that reflect contemporary moralistic attitudes towards concerns such as: the accumulation of many garments, the use of time and money on clothing, and excessive use of resources. After looking at these texts, we will consider how fashion moralizing of this period is framed and how this is similar or different from medieval criticisms.

Puritan and Anglican mindsets

The Puritans were part of a historic and political movement occurring in England on the heels of the Protestant Reformation, and carrying over to New England starting in the mid-16th Century. From 1560 to 1660, these Puritans determinedly sought to purify the Church of England from Catholic ritualism and superstition, and return it to its first-century condition as a

group of believers ruled by Christ rather than by monarchs (Miller & Johnson 6). Church

historian Bruce Shelley describes Puritans as rugged preachers of national and individual

righteousness who highly valued the Bible as the supreme authority on every matter including

how to live their personal lives, how to structure the church, and how to rule society (Shelley

270, 293). Their desire to avoid sin individually and societally manifested in numerous ways

such as the regulation of businesses by government, fixing fair prices, and limiting how much

profit an individual could gain so that the whole community would be well off (Miller & Johnson

5).

Puritans were divided against fellow Englishmen in their religious convictions about the

authority of the Bible and the importance of church tradition, but according to Miller and

Johnson, Puritanism shared most of its culture with the rest of England at the time:

> its basic ideas as to the function of the human mind and the responsibilities of
> the human soul were common to Christendom at the time, its fundamental
> doctrine were common to Protestantism at the time, the texture and range of its
> learning were common to educated opinion of the time, its struggle to maintain
> homogeneity in religious thought, to unify religion and knowledge, was common
> to all devout and intelligent men of the time (40).

Puritan thought, as well as Anglican, was agreed that mankind was sinful, in need of the saving

grace of Christ, and under the sovereignty of God (Miller & Johnson 8). They shared a common

heritage of medieval conviction "that all knowledge was one, that life was unified, that science,

economics, political theory, aesthetic standards, rhetoric and art, all were organized in a

hierarchical scale of values that tended upward to the end-all and be-all of creation, the glory of

God" (Miller & Johnson 10). They were also agreed on the humanist emphasis on natural

reason and rational logic in life and in the interpretation of Scripture (Miller & Johnson 21). The

Puritan's mindset, like the Catholic's and Anglican's, was touched by Renaissance interest in the Greek and Roman classics, including Plato and The Stoics (Miller & Johnson 21-2).

However, Miller and Johnson point out that one difference that divided Puritans and Anglicans was how they viewed the Bible. Puritans saw the whole Bible as the authoritative Word of God, able to be interpreted so as to apply its guidance to every issue of life, including dress, while Anglicans believed such minute, detailed aspects of life were free from specific strictures from God (Miller & Johnson 43; Morgan 2). Despite the Puritan belief that God's Word governs what one wears, little evidence exists to show that there were marked differences in the way Puritans dressed for their work in the world. Samuel Willard (1640-1707), a Puritan scholar and preacher from Concord, wrote in 1684 explaining that true followers cannot be identified by external signifiers:

> Their great Glory for the present is within; outwardly they look like other men, they eat, drink, labour, converse in earthly imployments, as others do; the communion which they have with God in all of these, is a secret thing (qtd. in Miller & Johnson 369).

While they may not have differed significantly from other men in attire for everyday activities, one of the main offenses Puritans held against Anglicans was their emphasis on ornament and ritual for its own sake, especially within the church. Perhaps this has contributed to the conception that Puritans were deficient in aesthetic sensibility (Miller & Johnson 61-2, 68). While Puritans made concerted efforts not to give too much value to worldly, sensual things (Miller & Johnson 62), Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan leader of the Parliamentarians (whose preference was plain and simple garb) ascribed to expected sartorial norms including dressing royally in an ermine-lined purple velvet robe when 'crowned' Lord Protector at Westminster Hall (*Fashion and Fiction* 199).

Societal shifts

The Puritan movement both influenced and was influenced by the broader English culture. This period began to see such changes as the expansion of English trade, the widespread influence of travel and long distance communication, and increasing literacy and knowledge-sharing through printed travel books and newssheets (Foreng 11, 221, 227). Rationalism become more deeply engrained as a mindset, hope in scientific and technological discoveries grew, and the importance of the individual and his or her rights was emphasized in a new way (Foreng 229). There was also greater support for personal study and inquiry of Scripture along with the publication of the King James Bible, and alternating waves of religious persecution and religious toleration (Foreng 9-12). Items now considered household staples, such as coffee, tea and cotton, were imported in larger quantities from Asia, and significant fashion shifts were seen in as short a period as a decade (Foreng 82, 227).

Fashion shifts

After looking through chronologies of elite English and European fashion changes during the late 16th and 17th centuries, one is left with the impression that this is a period in time when more artifice, structural manipulation and shaping was introduced than in years prior, particularly in the dress of courtiers, royalty and the elite classes (Hill & Bucknell 1967; Breward 1995; Bruna 2015). Some examples of fashionable items that created artificial, sculptural shapes—many of which received moral censure—are: padded doublets, periwigs, farthingales, bum rolls, starched and supported ruffs, tight laced stays and bodices, stomachers, peascod belly doublets, codpieces, and wire frames for hair (Breward 1995; Vincent 2009; Bruna 2015)

(See images 3, 4 & 5). Getting dressed in a fashionable outfit composed of many parts could have taken considerable time and assistance. For example, setting the folds and pleats in "one neck and two wrist ruffs takes over three hours" (Vincent 28)—and this is not taking account of the time for washing and starching (which was done after each wearing) (Vincent 27-8), let alone the time taken to prepare other parts of the outfit. The time-consuming nature of dressing fashionably is the butt of some contemporary moralizing, as we will see.

Image 3. English supportasse, rebato, underpropper or pickadil made 1595-1615 using wire, card, and whalebone to support formal neckwear. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Image 4. Stays and busk possibly from the Netherlands, made between 1660 & 1680 using baleen whale cartilage for structure. Image © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Traditional high quality textiles such as silk satin, velvet, and brocade as well as fine woolens and furs continued to be used, but lighter, less durable, less expensive fabrics, such as cotton and cheaper silks, came into demand and grew more widely available (Foreng 68, 83;

Currie 160, 167). In nearby France in 1546, the Venetian ambassador observed that "they make

textiles that cost little and last even less, which is what the French want as they would become

bored with their clothing if they wore it for too long" (Firpo qtd. in Currie 161). This statement

reflects an early attitude of carelessness about the work going into textile making, as well as a

prioritization of novelty, or being in fashion, over maintaining materials and clothing. Clothing

remained a valuable commodity, however, as tailoring techniques advanced, design and

embellishment became more important, and work was divided among various skilled

craftspeople (Currie 160, 167-8). Currie claims that the "prevalence of medium-cost textiles

undoubtedly also meant that customers were more willing for tailors to carry out techniques

that were irreversible (it also reduced the possibility of eventually recycling or adapting a

garment)" (162). This movement would have resulted in less re-making of clothing, less reuse of

textiles for new garments, and potentially more waste of fabric once the textile was deemed

unfashionable.

Moralizing fashion in the early-modern era

In light of these changes, complaints about the amount of time, money, and resources

used for keeping up a fashionable appearance can be found in writings of authors from various

backgrounds throughout this early modern period. Below are examples of moralizing texts

about the time and money spent on fashionable dress, for both men and women, along with

some discussion about how the concern is framed. While women are often the target of fashion

moralizing, the first examples below comment on the time and/or money consumed in the

pursuit of men's fashion, showing they were not exempt from attraction to fashion nor from

censure. The texts below include advice for the proper use of clothing more often than

condemnations of what was seen as improper, and rather than focusing on specific garments

that suggest excess, they criticize in fairly general terms. Thomas Dekker's[3] *The Gull's Hornbook*

of 1609, based on a 1549 poem by German Frederick Dedekind (c. 1525-1598), deals with ill

manners on a societal level (McKerrow v). Dekker writes to "all gulls in general" whose "hands

are ever open, [their] purses never shut" (1)[4]. His *Hornbook*[5] at different moments addresses

the waste of time, money and ability in the pursuit of fashionable accoutrements. For example,

Dekker asks the gull if man was born into the world for "no better matters than all his lifetime

to make privy searches in Birchin lane for whalebone doublets…?" thus implying that, firstly, he

knew of some who spent inordinate amounts of time looking for just the right apparel, and,

secondly, that there are many better ways to spend one's time (15). Dekker then reflects on the

tailors in times past, and those of his own day, stating that

> Tailors then were none of the twelve companies: their hall, that is now larger
> than some dorpes [villages] among the Netherlands, was then no bigger than a
> Dutch butcher's shop: they durst not strike down their customers with large bills:
> Adam cared not an apple-paring for all their lousy hems (16).

Here the reader gets a sense that the business of tailoring has dramatically expanded, and that

tailors are charging large sums for their work. By calling the tailors' hems 'lousy', and comparing

the size of their shops to villages, Dekker expresses his disgust at new modes and the extent to

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[3] Thomas Dekker (c. 1570 – 1637) wrote for a broad audience in a wide variety of genres drawing material mainly from life in London (McKerrow i, Twyning 697, 699). He may have received education in a grammar school, and was well-acquainted with the classics and contemporary authors (Twyning 697). Dekker wrote *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* in 1606, but his most well-known non-dramatic work is *The Gull's Hornbook*, published in 1609 (Twyning 697, 699). According to Twyning, *The Hornbook* enjoyed popularity into the Restoration period (699).
[4] A gull is a fool or someone easily tricked, duped or cheated (from whence we get our English word *gullible*) (OED).
[5] A hornbook is a book written to systematically deal with the basic elements or principles of a subject. Historically leafs of paper were "protected by a thin plate of translucent horn" giving it its name (OED).

which the gulls of his day participated in the success of the tailor's business. By saying tailors of

the past would not burden customers with large bills, he implies that tailors of his own day

did—perhaps because customers purchased more clothing or because tailors charged

exorbitant prices, the reason is not given in the text.

We also see Dekker's criticism of the physical restrictiveness of fashionable clothing in a

later chapter on "Rules for the Morning". He advises:

> Put on therefore either no apparel at all, or put it on carelessly; look how much
> more delicate liberty is than bondage; so much is the looseness in wearing of our
> attire above the imprisonment of being neatly and tailor-like dressed up in it. To
> be ready in our clothes is to be ready for nothing else: a man looks as if he hung
> in chains, or like a scarecrow (25).

This passage could be Dekker poking fun at a new tendency to wear loose, negligent clothing

(Breward 68-9), but he also makes fun of neat and well-tailored clothing that is so restrictive

that a man can do nothing once dressed, thus wasting his ability and energy as if chained or

stuffed stiff like a scarecrow.

Henry Peacham, in a slightly later work of courtesy literature, entitled *The Compleat*

Gentleman (1622), provides his readers with admonishment towards moderate expenditure on

clothing. Peacham (c. 1576 – c. 1644) was the son of a clergyman, born in the parish of

Northmimms in Hertfordshire near to where Sir Thomas More wrote *Utopia* (Gordon vii). He

took a Bachelor of Arts degree at Trinity College in Cambridge from 1592 to 1595, and later a

Master of Arts, completed in 1598 (Horden 236). He worked as a writer, illustrator, teacher and

rector at various points in his life, and sought the patronage of Prince Henry and a place in

court, as was fashionable in his day (Horden 236-7; Gordon vii-viii). Around 1612, after the

death of Prince Henry, Peacham travelled to France, Germany and the Low Countries, there

gaining perspective on the manners and customs of his own England (Horden 237; Gordon x). It

was while travelling abroad that Peacham gathered inspiration for writing *The Compleat*

Gentleman as a way to correct what he saw as England's lackadaisical education of young men,

and their comparative inferiority to the rest of Europe in their gentlemanly upbringing (Horden

238; Gordon x). As an Anglican and Royalist sympathizer, Peacham's work was very popular

among Cavaliers (Horden 238; Gordon vi). Throughout his book, Peacham's Christian worldview

is made obvious, but he refers to history, mythology, Greek philosophers as well as the Bible as

sources for his writing. In his dedication of the work to William Howard, Knight of Bathe,

Peacham describes his motive for writing:

> Wherefore, since the Fountaine of all Counsell and Instruction (next to the feare
> of God) is the knowledge of good Learning; whereby our affections are
> perswaded, and our ill manners mollified: I heere present you with the first and
> plainest Directions…and the readiest Method I know for your Studies in general,
> and to the attaining of the most commendable qualities that are requisite of
> every Noble or Gentleman (no pag.)

In his chapter on "Reputation, and Carriage in Generall" Peacham esteems balanced

moderation, frugality and sobriety in men's apparel choices. He quotes a "wiseman" who

asserts "*By gate, laughter, and apparel, a man is known what he is*" and Peacham adds that in

order to preserve that reputation, temperance and a moderate mindset are necessary (221).

Below are his detailed instructions on how to practice moderation in dress:

> Be thrifty in your apparel and clothing, least you incurre the censure of the most
> grave and wisest censor…Neither on the contrary, be so basely parsimonious or
> frugall…Or to bee knowne by a Hat or Doublet ten or twentie yeeres…But using
> that moderate and middle garbe, which shall rather lessen then make you bigger
> then you are; which hath been, and is yet observed by our greatest Prince, who
> in outside goe many times inferior to their Groomes and Pages (Peacham 226).

He then holds up King Charles V as an example, who went "as plaine as any ordinary Gentleman", who wore dark colours, no lace or items of extraordinary expense, and who would repair his own 'points' if any happened to break (Peacham 226-7). Likewise, Peacham sings the praise of frugality as "the Mother of vertues, a vertue which holdeth her owne, layeth out profitably, avoideth idle expenses, superfluitie, lavish bestowing or giving, borrowing, building, and the like" (225). These examples demonstrate that though clothing was to be seen by gentleman as important and a way to bolster and protect his reputation, this reputation would be promoted by the modest, careful and frugal use of money to acquire garments that neither required undue expense nor were too old and out of date.

If Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* was the conduct book of the Cavaliers, then Richard Brathwait's *The English Gentleman* was that of the Puritan, "by no means destitute of polite accomplishments yet grounded at all points on religious precepts" (Raleigh qtd. in Gordon vi). Brathwait's book, published in 1630, like Peacham's, emphasizes the virtue of moderation in spending time and money on sensual pleasures such as apparel, food, and drink, sometimes pitting the over-indulgence of the flesh against proper focus on spiritual pursuits (Braithwait 342, 348). Seeing time as a precious resource to be used for valuable activity (338), Brathwait is clear about what he perceives as valueless activity, calling out the "miserable Covetous wretch…[who] employs *so* much time in getting and gathering goods, as he reserves *no* time for doing good" (342, emphasis added). Notice the contrast between 'so much' goods and 'no' doing good. This seems to imply that the time taken to get goods replaces time to do good—that the one excludes the other.

John Williams (1582 – 1650), archbishop of York, and defender of the Church of England and of Protestantism, wrote *A sermon of apparell* in 1620 that endorses Brathwait's reflection on the misplaced expenditure of money on clothing:

> To see a man (who is but a *Steward* of what hee possesseth, and to render a fearefull account of the same) to haue a *Farme* clapt vpon his feete, a *Coppy holde* dangling vp and down his legges, a *Manno*r wrapt about his body, a *Lordship* hanging vpon his shoulders, nay (peraduenture) the *Tythes (Christ's patrymonie)* turn'd to be a Cap, and the *bread* of the poore to a plume of feathers: and this waste to no *ende* then this, that people might come out and see, *this man cloathed in soft rayments* (18).

Here Williams endeavors to help his congregation see that the money spent on shoes, breeches or hose, cloaks or doublets, and caps could easily have been a farm, a *coppy hold* (title to land), a manor, tithes to the church, or food for the poor. In his view, this exchange is wasteful—a term that in his day would have meant "useless expenditure or consumption, squandering (*of money, goods, time, effort, etc.*)" (OED). The reason given for these upturned priorities is "that people might come out and see", an allusion to vainglory or pride.

Like Medieval moralists, and Williams above, Brathwait also draws on the still-well-known deadly sins, framing lack of moderation in ambition and attire as indulgence of a prideful tendency, as demonstrated in the passage below:

> How necessary it is then for man, being more subject to Pride himself in his height…to learn how to moderate his acception of honour…Neither in Ambition only, but in that attire of sin, gorgeous[6] apparel, is the like limitation to be used: for herein are we to observe such decencie, as neither the contempt thereof may tax us of irregular carlessnesse, nor affectation therof evince us of too singular nicenesse (335).

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[6] During this time period, *gorgeous* meant sumptuously showy or magnificent (OED).

Brathwait does not condemn the proper use of fine apparel, but warns against eccentric

'nicenesse'—a word that, in this time period, meant absurdity, senselessness or foolishness

(OED)—as well as the lackadaisical contempt of 'decencie'[7] (335). He argues that moderation

neither over-jumps nor jumps too short, advocating instead measured balance (347).

Throughout Braithwait's *The English Gentleman*, biblical concepts and Scriptures, as well as the

framework of deadly sins, are used to exhort his readers towards proper behaviour. Within this

overarching worldview, Brathwait also appeals to Reason to empower the exercise of

moderation:

> Moderation is a subduer of our desires to the obedience of Reason, and a
> temperate conformer of all our affections, freeing them from the too much
> subjection either of desires or feares (306).

Medieval writers also alluded to the use of reason and wisdom in good sartorial choices

by condemning 'bad' ones as foolish or "beyond what is reasonable" (Mannyng in

Sylvester et al. 147, 149; Vitalis in Sylvester et al. 133). Through these comments, the

medieval authors, along with Brathwait, encourage thoughtful, rational decision making

that evaluates both desires and fears, and tempers emotions regarding what to

purchase and wear.

The final commentaries we will look at concerning excessiveness in men's attire come

from Margaret Cavendish and Philip Stubbes. Margaret Cavendish (c. 1623 – 1673) was duchess

of Newcastle and a writer who held a materialistic worldview (Fitzmaurice 634, 636). She was

the wife of a defeated Royalist commander and thought of herself as a military leader

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[7] The meaning of *decencie* at this time is very close to our use of *decency.* It meant acting in a way appropriate to the circumstances or to one's rank or dignity (OED).

(Fitzmaurice 633-4). Cavendish's 1656 work, *Nature's Pictures,* is a compilation of love stories, poems and prose about issues of sex and gender, and satire on a variety of topics (Fitzmaurice 634). It includes at least one observation about the way men are no better than women when it comes to "phantastical vanity", rhetorically asking her readers "are not Men more perfumed, curled, and powdred than Women? and more various colours, and greater quantities of ribbins ty'd and set upon their hats, cloaths, gloves, boots, shoes, and belts, than Women on their heads and gowns?" (Cavendish qtd. in *Fashion & Fiction* 202). While not an outright condemnation of excess, she presumably draws on what could be perceived of excess care in grooming and embellishment on the part of men perhaps to defend her sex against similar accusations from men.

Philip Stubbes (c. 1555 – 1610 or after) was a religious youth, with an obscure education (Walsham 204). He may have only achieved grammar school education, though some believe he studied for a time at Cambridge, even though there is no record of his enrollment (Walsham 204). By the end of the 1580s, after the great success of his book *The Anatomie of Abuses* of 1583, he became known as one of London's common pamphleteers (Walsham 204). In his *Anatomie of Abuses* Stubbes provides, in his own words "A Description of such notable vices and enormities, as raigne in many Countries of *the world, but especiallie in this Realme of* England: T*ogether* with most fearefull examples of Gods heauie Iudgements invflicted vpon the wicked for the same" (48). In his section on "A particular description of Pride, the principall abuse in England, and how manifold it is" he creates a list of the numerous suits men seem to require for different occasions:

> We lothe this simplicity of Christ, and abhorring the Christian pouertie and godly
> mediocrity of our forefathers in apparell, wee are neuer content except we haue

sundrie suits of apparell, one diuers from another, so as our presses cracke withal, our coffers burst, and our backes sweat with the cariage thereof: we must haue one suite for the forenoone, another for the afternoon, one for the day, another for the nighte, one for the workeday, another for the holiday, one for Summer, another for winter, one of the new fashion another of the old, one of this collour, another of that, one cut, another whole, one laced, another without, one of golde, another of siluer, one of Silkes and Veluets, another of cloath, with more difference and variety then I can expresse: God be mercifull vnto vs, and hasten his kingdome for his Elects sake (89).

Like other writers of his time, Stubbes associates excess with pride. He also considers the acquisition of such numerous suits a rejection and rebellion against the example of Christ and the Christian men who came before his generation. In order to emphasize just how much clothing he sees gathered by men of his time, he says that "our presses cracke,[…] our coffers burst" with the number and variety of it all. A *press* was a large cupboard that usually had shelves and was used for storing clothing, linen or books (OED), and a *coffer* was a strong box or chest often used for storing valuable items (OED). Just as people today might say their closet is overflowing, Brathwait likewise expresses the excess people in his day accumulated. Judging from the context, calling his forefathers' apparel mediocre may not mean so much the quality was mediocre as the quantity was moderate. By asking for God's mercy, he clearly shows that such behavior is considered sinful and requiring judgement.

  While the passages above focus in a large part on the number of garments acquired and the money spent by men, this passage, from Thomas Tomkis' *Lingua or the Combat of the Tongues* (1607) concentrates on the time taken to prepare the innumerable components of a "nice gentlewoman's" attire:

Five hours ago I set a dozen maids to attire a boy like a nice gentlewoman; but there is such doing with their looking glasses, pinning, unpinning, setting, unsetting, formings and conformings, painting blew veins and cheeks; such stir with sticks and combs, cascanets, dressings, purls, falls, squares, busks,

> bodies, scarfs, necklaces, carcanets, rebatoes, borders, tires, fans, palisades,
> puffs, ruffs, cuffs, muffs, pusles, fusles, partlets, frislets, banglets, fillets,
> crosslets, pendulets, amulets, annulets, bracelets, and so many lets that yet
> she is scarce dressed to the girdle; and now there's such a calling for
> fardingales, kirtles, buskpoints, shoe ties, etc. that seven peddlers' shops—nay
> all Stourbridge Fair—will scarce furnish her: a ship is sooner rigged by far,
> than a gentlewoman made ready (Thomas Tomkis qtd. in Breward 42)

Through his careful numbering of the maids and the hours spent, as well as listing each and every minor accoutrement possibly available to dress the gentlewoman, Tomkis exaggerates the absurdity and sheer excess of what he observes[8]. He overtly pokes fun at such behavior by comparing the collection of women's garments to the items available at Stourbridge Fair which, at the time, was the largest trading event in all of England ("The 800-year-old story"). If his commentary was not yet strong enough, he then also compared the time taken to dress a woman to the amount of time taken to that spent rigging a ship, which could take a crew months to do! John William's *Sermon of Apparell* contains a similar complaint (though less exaggerated) about the time spent on dress:

> But hearken, yee that forget God [...] this is no proportion at all, to allow *halfe*
> *a day,* for the tricking of the *body,* and grudge the poore poore *halfe houre* for
> this preparing of the *soule* (31).

He pits the greater time some spend on "tricking" their bodies against the lesser time they spend on spiritual disciplines remarking that such use of time is disproportionate to the value of each activity.

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[8] Tomkis' list includes a few redundant embellishments, such as *carcanets* and *cascanets* (two words for the same thing); *frislets* (small ruffles) and *ruffs* (which were larger ruffles worn at the neck or wrists); and *squares* and *partlets* which could both be pieces of cloth worn around the shoulders and upper part of the chest (OED). However, most of the items could actually potentially be worn on various parts of one body!

Philip Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* includes a section entitled "A particular Description of

the Abuses of Womens apparell in England", to add to the complaints. Before going into a long

list of criticisms, he explains the outcome he hopes his writing will inspire:

> But though it may be perhaps a corrasiue [corrosive, annoyance] to their
> tender stomackes, and a nippitatum [strong liquor] to their haughty minds, to
> heare their dirty dregs ript vp and cast into their diamond faces, yet hoping
> that they, seeing the horrour of their impieties, and tragicall abuses, layd open
> to the world […] like good Conuertes, become the faithfull Penitentiaries of
> Christ Iesus, leaue off their wickednesse, call for mercie at the handes of God,
> repent and amende (106).

One by one, he then critiques in detail the "Collouring of womens faces", "Attiring of womens

heades", "French Hoodes", "Doublets for Women", "Netherstockes of women" and "Womens

Gownes" in England. There is not enough space in this paper to touch on each of these topics,

but in his section about women's gowns we find these words:

> Their Gownes be no lesse famous then the rest, for some are of silke, some of
> Veluet, some of Grograine, some of Taffatie, some of Scarlet, and some of fine
> cloath, of x. xx. or xl. shillings a yard. But if the whole gowne be not of Silke or
> Veluet, then the same must be layd with lace, two or three fingers broad all ouer
> the gowne, or els the most part…and these gownes be of diuers fashions,
> chaunging with the Moone: for some be of the new fashion, some of the olde,
> some of this fashion, some of that…[after also describing petticoats and kirtles:]
> when they haue all these goodlie robes vpon them, women seem to be the
> smallest part of themselues, not naturall women, but artificiall women, not
> women of flesh and bloud, but rather Puppits of Mawmettes [dolls] consisting of
> ragges and clowtes compact together (119-120).

In like manner to Tomkis, Stubbes makes a long list of the slight variations in women's gowns of

his day, emphasizing with disdain the overabundance. But to this argument, he adds negative

comments on the artificiality of women's appearance. He also says this "Canker of Pride" has

eaten into England so far that every daughter of every type of household has the gowns, kirtles

and petticoats he has described. Bemoaning that the parents of these daughters "owe a brace

[the length of extended arms] of hundred pounds more then they are worth, yet will they haue

it…*either by hook or by crook*, by right or wrong as they say" (120), Stubbes connects this

perceived excess with misspent financial resources and greed that must be satisfied whether
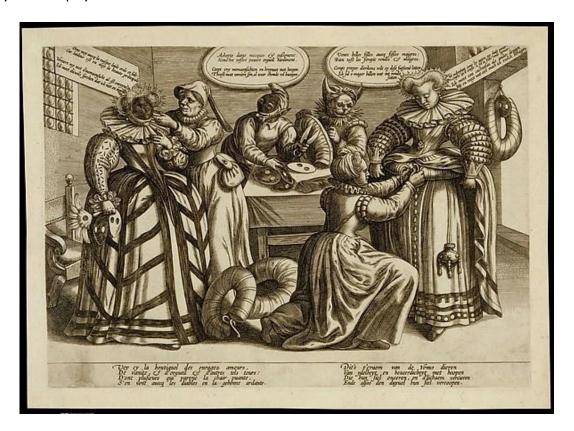
justly or corruptly.

Image 5. *The Vanity of Women: Masks and Bustles*, attributed to Maerten de Vos (c. 1600). Image from The Met.

Richard Brathwait, in his book *The English Gentlewoman,* published one year after *The*

English Gentleman, in 1631, deals with a variety of topics he sees pertaining to women.

Interestingly, of all the "Principall points" he treats in his book, apparel is treated first—even

before behaviour, decency and honour. Braithwait tells his gentlewomen readers that clothing

was first ordained for necessity as the climate became harsh after the sin of Adam and Eve (3-4)

and that there are two reasons for the abuse of clothing. The first abuse arises from being more

curious or prone to change than necessity and decency requires, and the second is "*Superfluity,*

in storing more variety and change of rayments than either nature needs, or reason would

admit […] by giuing way to what vnbounded appetite requires" (12). Brathwait reasons that

frequently exchanging garments within ones' wardrobe, is a behavior caused by "*naked* insides,

which stand in need of these *Superfluous* additaments" (20). Below he describes in more detail

the state of mind he claims the behaviours flow from or cause, as well as some of the specific

behaviours he disproves of:

> What myriads of indisposed houres consume these in beautifying rotten tombes!
> How curious they are in suiting their bodies, how remisse in preferring their
> soules suit to their Maker! How much they are disquieted in their choyce, how
> much perplexed in their change, how irresolute what they shall weare, how
> forgetfull of what they were! This edging suits not, that pirle sorts not, this
> dressing likes not: off it must after all be fitted, and with a new Exchange, lesse
> seemely, but more gaudy suited. The fashion that was in prime request but
> yesterday, how it begins to disrellish the wearer, as if it had lost the beauty by
> vnseasonable weather: thus is the fashion fallen into a quotidian Feuer: See our
> compleatest *Fashionmongers,* how much they tyre themselues with their
> trimming! It seems wonderfull to me, that they are not wholly crushed, with that
> onerous burthen with which they are pressed (20).

Here Brathwait exaggerates the numerous hours spent on appearance, and also the speed at

which fashions are accepted and rejected. More importantly, however, are the reasons he

presents for such neurotic behaviour: "naked insides" and "rotten tombes". These are both

references to souls lacking something. The "naked inside" is perhaps a soul searching for the

covering of confidence, peace, or acceptance, and pursuing them through adornment. The

"rotten tombe" refers to a body encasing a decaying soul, perhaps infected with greed or pride.

He claims that such pursuits are burdensome and crushing—stressful, perhaps, in our present-

day vernacular. While not stated outright, the stress produced and energy consumed seem to

be considered an unnecessary waste.

While we have abundant examples of fashion moralizing that have to do with the time, energy, and money spent on frequent or abundant changes of garments and the wastefulness this presumes, a couple of rarer observations point to an awareness of how the pursuit of human adornment is affecting all kinds of creatures across the world. John Williams provides one example in his *Sermon of apparell* (1620):

> …yet pride should so farre transport a priuate man, that the *Indians* (the remotest people of the world) must bee continually busied to tricke vp and trimme him. In spinning of their *trees* for silke to apparell him, in diving to their *seas* for pearles to adorne him, in picking their rockes for *diamonds* to sparkle him, in digging to their Center, for golde to lace him, in hunting their vermin for *smels* to fume him; And the end of all this stirre, to be no other then this, that fond people might come and see… (16).

As may be expected, Williams associates pride with the far-reaching "stirre" of exploration, extraction and refinement of raw materials—all activities done with the end goal being "that fond people might come and see"(16). In a period of increasing trade with "new" worlds, he also mentions that it is the Indians who are kept constantly busy, working in the remotest parts of the world to provide the English with their decorations, perhaps hinting at a concern that this human resource is being abused as well.

One example of a fashion that touches Williams' concern about both animal byproducts and "Indians" is the very popular beaver hat, known as "beavers" (McDowell 49; Dolin 21). In the late 15th century, felt hat manufacturing came to England. The felt was made of beaver fur—much of which was imported from North America with the help of "Indians" (McDowell 49). By the end of the 16th century, high quality beaver hats were the most desired hats in England and all of Europe (Dolin 21). However, this had a destructive effect on the beaver population. Dolin explains that "The exponential growth in the trade in beaver hats was a

mortal blow to the European beaver. As demand for pelts grew, an extinction problem first

coursed through Europe, with the circle of death eventually reaching Russia" (Dolin 22).

The anonymous Puritan critic who authored *England's Vanity* (1683) provides a very

similar description to Williams', arguing that to satisfy the requirements of "proud Peacocks"

the earth is ravished:

> we rob and spoil all Creatures almost of the world, to cover our back and to
> adorn our bodies whithal; from some we take their wool, from many their Skins,
> from diverse their Furrs, from sundry their very Excrements, as the silk which is
> nothing else but the very Excrement of the worm; not content with this, we
> come to Fishes and do beg from them their Pearles to hang about us, we go
> down into the ground for Gold and Silver...And having borrowed all this of other
> Creatures, we jett up and down, provoking men to look upon us, as if...all that
> beauty came from us (qtd. in *Dress and Morality* 94).

His choice of the words "rob and spoil" demonstrate his belief that the materials are not

acquired justly, nor that they are managed wisely, but rather that they are damaged in the

process. While it seems his main point is to show it foolish to consider oneself more beautiful

and glorious by wearing the clothing of other creatures, it is noteworthy that the authors

consider the spoiling of earth's resources an issue to be confronted.

OBSERVATIONS

The above texts demonstrate that writers and moralizers from Anglican, Puritan and

unknown religious backgrounds—like their medieval forerunners—often credit pride and

internal frailty or vices as motivating factors in the utilization of excessive time, materials and

resources in fashioning extravagant fashions. Hyperbole and long repetitious lists are tactfully

employed to point out the foolishness perceived of the abundance of time and the

numerousness of parts involved in preparing the fashionable appearance of the day. The texts

analyzed above contain fewer references to poverty and debt as results of excessive pursuit of

novelty than those analyzed for the previous chapter on medieval moralizing, but this issue is

still a consideration, as Dekker's concern about tailors' large bills reveals. Other consequences

of frantic pursuit of fashionability are spotted as well. "Imprisonment" in fashionable tight-

fitting garments that restrict movement is a consequence spotted by Dekker (25), while

Brathwait notes mental consequences such as exhaustion and vexation resulting from the

attempt to keep up with the feverish pace of fashion change (20).

Reasonable moderation and frugality are held up by all authors as rational ideals to

achieve. In calls for repentance, change and mercy in relation to the pursuit of a large variety of

suits or gowns, both Anglican and Puritan writers reveal their understanding that immoderate

consumption is sinful and subject to judgement, though the Puritan writers seem to use

stronger and more direct language. In addition, by expressing the extraction of natural

materials from all corners of the world in terms of robbery and spoliation, the Anglican

preacher John Williams, and an anonymous Puritan writer hint at their disproval of the injustice

and unwise stewardship of nature practiced by the fashion trade.

Chapter 3: Reckless Addicted Abandon

This section analyses contemporary Western criticisms of wasteful aspects of the fashion industry such as: the waste of finished garments and disposal of usable clothing; rapidly changing fashion trends and overconsumption; excessive use and abuse of natural resources; and exploitation of human life and labour. Critics also often provide guidance, suggestions or calls for action in response to the wastefulness they observe. This chapter examines the context in which these criticisms and calls to action are offered, how they are framed and how they are different or similar to those of previous centuries. It includes writings from British academics, industry leaders, and authors as well as works by Americans, as from the 1950s onwards there has been significant overlap and increasing homogenization of cultural practices and customs between the USA and the UK (Rosen 154). The specific period from which moralizing texts are drawn for discussion ranges from the early 2000s to the present time. However, significant shifts in ways of thinking and living that occurred in the Western world from around 1950 to today provide context for these statements.

SOCIETAL SHIFTS

In his book *The Transformation of British Life 1950*-2000 (2003), Andrew Rosen finds that deeply rooted respect for traditional practices and institutions that once characterized British society significantly weakened after World War II (7). He cites dissolving veneration of institutions such as the police, the Royal Family, churches and marriage, as well as decreasing church attendance, increasing crime and divorce rates as manifestations of this weakening, and

relates these trends to the concomitant increase in standards of living and personal freedoms

(7). Rosen states that in Britain, between 1971 and 2000, household disposable income per

person doubled; and that in the second half of the 20th Century, *all* industrialized democratic

nations experienced a dramatic rise in standards of living (13, 11). This growth led to new

hopes, attitudes and expectations unimaginable to generations that came before, as

"Yesterday's luxuries became today's necessities" (Rosen 7-8, 13).

Increasing focus on individual freedom led to waning church attendance and a tendency

for "Even the devout… to feel free to pick and choose among doctrines" (Rosen 49). The

position of faith in a person's life has been challenged by other preferences and priorities. By

the late 1990s, Sunday shopping became more important to Britons than church attendance

with about eleven times as many people shopping as going to an Anglican church on a given

Sunday (Rosen 48). Rosen notes that a survey taken around the turn of the millennium showed

that only ten percent of British respondents were confident that God even exists (Rosen 50).

Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, co-authors of *Moral Blindness* (2013), link

consumerism and individual freedom with diminishing morals and religion. Bauman observes

that "A consumerist attitude may lubricate the wheels of the economy; it sprinkles sand into

the bearings of morality" (15), while Donskis, states that prioritizing individual freedoms leads

to the collapse of the great religions (202). This tremendous shift from near consensus about

the existence and importance of God in British life even a few decades earlier to near

consensus that Christianity is no longer relevant, occurred in parallel with rising consumerism,

and has undoubtedly impacted the ways of thinking and behaviours of those in Britain and

beyond.

Shifts in ways of making and distributing fashion

The way fashion was made, sold and consumed also underwent dramatic changes in the latter part of the 20th Century. By the 1920s, ready-made women's clothing was already gaining popularity, and some companies had begun to move towards making large runs of a limited number of garment designs in order to gain more profits (Cline 192; Grumbach 178). Using synthetic fibres in place of natural ones became more prominent during the war years, as natural fibre supplies were limited and sometimes restricted (De la Haye & Tucker 255). It was also during this time that Britain and the USA grew their ready-to-wear sectors and improved their international reputation in the fashion world (De la Haye & Tucker 255). In the 1950s, a period Laver calls one of "intense fashion activity", top designers produced two collections a year (De la Haye & Tucker 258).

By the mid-1960s ready-to-wear clothing dominated, as customers' willingness to attend time-consuming fitting sessions and pay a higher price for clothing they only planned to wear for a short period of time dwindled (De la Haye & Tucker 265). Further developments in and adoption of man-made fibres in the 1960s prepared the way for the introduction of more complex synthetic textiles into the twenty-first century (De la Haye & Tucker 287), while the emphasis placed on individuality and self-expression predominant from the late 60s to mid-70s "paved the way for the stylistic pluralism of the present day" (De la Haye & Tucker 266-7). In the United States, the availability of less-expensive imported clothing began to discourage home sewing (Cline 192-3).

In the early 1980s, demand for ready-to-wear clothing increased significantly, but fashion authorities still set seasonal trends throughout the decade (De la Haye & Tucker 273). From the 1980s to 1990s, high street fashion at a low cost further diminished the popularity and economic benefits of home sewn clothing; sewing skills and textile fibre knowledge dissolved (Wood). Another significant shift was the loosening and eventual elimination of international trade quotas among World Trade Organization (WTO) nation members under the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), in effect from 1995 and 2005. The Agreement permitted more textile and clothing imports from developing nations into Western nations (World Trade Organization), enabling clothing companies in nations like the United Kingdom, the USA, and Canada to turn to less-expensive clothing manufacture labour offshore. This resulted in numerous Western fashion businesses changing their mode of operation to become design and marketing companies instead of manufacturers (Cline 53). This, in turn, resulted in the loss of many domestic manufacturing jobs (Cline 5, 37, 160; Rosen 11-12). With costs of clothing decreasing up to sixty percent in the last couple decades (Cline 32) and the distance between makers and consumers of textiles and clothing growing, people increasingly saw used clothing as "rubbish" rather than as valuable material to be reused (Brooks 81).

Advanced communication technology, including the widespread introduction of the Internet, gave rise to a level of access to fashion information and images unknown before this time. With fashion companies investing more heavily in marketing efforts, stores open longer hours or around the clock online, fast fashion stores bringing in new collections on a weekly (or more frequent) basis and greater access to fashion images and messages, companies created

new desires and pushed the evolution of trends at a much faster pace, promoting rapid,

"superfluous" consumption of cheaply made goods (Cline 96-103; Brooks 82).

In the fifth edition of James Laver's *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History,* Amy De La

Haye summarizes that

> While fashion is inherently ephemeral, a new term, 'fast fashion', has been
> coined to describe low-price, fashion forward clothes sold on the high street. In
> Britain, famous for its superb high street fashion stores, it has been estimated
> that in 2011 the 'average' woman has around four times as many clothes as her
> counterpart owned in 1980. The result is that more and more energy, materials
> and labour resources are being expended and the landfill sites are brimming over
> (297).

Within only four years, from 2001 to 2005, fashion consumption per person grew thirty-seven

percent in the UK (Black 9)! Brooks observes that consumers in the global North have simply

become used to, and indulge in, rapid consumption of ever-changing supplies of fashion (7-8).

Cline considers the amount of clothing produced today in comparison to post-war production

to be "in another stratosphere" (23). Although purchasing more and more clothing, Kate

Fletcher states that "it is expected that these products will look dated and stylistically

incongruous in six months; it is usual to discard rather than repair" (140), resulting in about

$160 million worth (or 350,000 tonnes) of used clothing heading to landfill each year (*Slow

Fashion* 17). Because of the fuel required for transporting garments across the world, the

energy consumed in the production and maintenance of clothing, and the water and chemicals

used in growing fibres and dyeing and treating textiles, the fashion industry earns the position

of the second worst polluting industry in the world (*Slow Fashion* 17).

The pressure on companies to produce clothing at "an increasingly furious pace", as Cline calls it, "is placing ethical practices 'at greater risk of being ignored'" (147). In order to compete, low-wage factories, desperate for contracts, may force extreme overtime on workers (Cline 147). In the 1990s, issues related to sweatshop labour came to public attention, and pushback ensued. Social justice and economic development concerns joined environmental concerns on the public radar and a sustainability movement began (Welters 573). Some fashion enthusiasts have joined the movement, calling for long-term, systemic change, even while others continue to post shopping hauls on YouTube. It is in this atmosphere of varying standards, general awareness of pollution and climate problems on a global scale, and no universal system of morality to fall on that critics of our day speak out about the issues they see within the fashion industry.

Moralizing fashion today

The first criticisms we will deal with are those involving the problem of wasting clothing, as a finished product itself. Sandy Black, in her book *The Sustainable Fashion Handbook* (2013), states that "everyone is implicated in the destructive aspects of this endemically unsustainable system, where obsolescence is inbuilt" and warns that there is an urgent need for change (8). She explains the problem further, saying

> The combination of speeded-up fashion cycles, increased rates of consumption and falling prices of clothing relative to income has created inevitable growth in fashion waste, as perceived value has declined and fashion has become a disposable commodity. The promotion of the new (and the rejection of the recently 'old') that is built into the fashion system is endemically wasteful (207)

While this passage describes the state of affairs with regards to growing consumption and its

resultant waste, she hints at the widespread, problematic nature of this state by saying no one

is exempt from participation in it, and by calling the inbuilt obsolescence of the fashion system

"*endemically* wasteful" (emphasis added). This word *endemic* has some negative undertones as

it alludes to disease that is present in an area permanently or for a long period of time because

of local conditions. In this way she expresses the wrongness or lack of wellness of the system.

She links disposability and the destructive aspects of the fashion industry with failure to

appreciate the value of garments—and perhaps by extension, the resources and labour that

were invested in them. Destruction and wastefulness are generally perceived by the Western

world as contemptible behaviours, especially as awareness of environmental issues was

heightened following the release of Al Gore's documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006

(Welters 573). Although programs focusing on clothing waste, such as Fashion Takes Action's

My Clothes My World school workshops, just seem to be getting off the ground, this generation

knows that waste is frowned upon, even if there is not yet a direct translation from general

knowledge to fashion-related action. Black's use of the words 'destructive' and 'wasteful' to

describe the fashion system, associates the industry with other environmental catastrophes

that many now perceive as wrong.

This failure to think ahead and change course is expressed in a disconcerted tone by

Lucy Siegle in her book *To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing Out the World?* (2011): "Almost

overnight we have become used to consuming fashion with reckless, addicted abandon, buying

more clothes than ever before, reversing centuries of fashion heritage, knowledge and

understanding in the process" (x). Here Siegle claims that the normal way of consuming—the way we are "used to" consuming fashion—is careless of the consequences that might result, hasty and bull-headed. Not only that, but we are surrendered—or "abandoned"—to this pattern of buying; we have given up hope of resisting our cravings for more, choosing to indulge them instead. To pack a final punch, she claims that past knowledge, skills and understanding of fashion have been lost, echoing the criticisms of fashion moralists from ages ago who also bemoaned the loss of former modes and practices of dressing.

The following statement by fashion correspondent Hilary Alexander, found in her preface to Black's *Handbook*, puts the moral view of wasting clothing it in no uncertain terms. She confesses: "I freely admit my guilt as a fashion-obsessive. My crime is a wardrobe stuffed with clothes I never wear and never will" (6). The words "guilt" and "crime" convey the sinfulness she perceives of her actions, while the description of her fashion-related behaviour as "obsessive" alludes to mental unease, and unreasonable, imbalanced focus. Note that while she admits her guilt, she does so freely, and seemingly lightly, calling into question her seriousness about changing. In response to such habits, ethical clothing company founder Saffia Minney asserts that "We need to consume less fashion and wear our clothes for longer, while the fabrics and clothes that we do buy need to have more 'value added'" (*Naked Fashion* 20)

It is interesting that, while our generation, perhaps more than the ones prior, is very aware of our duty to recycle, reuse and reduce waste for the sake of the future of all creatures, we are also the generation producing more textile and clothing waste than ever before. Herein lies a severe disconnect. Perhaps this disconnect between knowledge and action can be somewhat explained by an idea I have found reflected in a number of texts: that living in a

sustainable manner should not require sacrifice. Some of the texts I have read express the belief that in order for ethical, sustainable fashion to succeed, it needs to be sexy, alluring, attractive, and require no financial sacrifice from the consumer (Cline 157; Bowman qtd. in Blanchard), while others acknowledge that sacrifice and difficult moral decisions are required to change our course towards a more sustainable future (Fletcher qtd. in Obregón 2). When one grows up in a culture where product obsolescence is planned and where many products are specifically designed to be thrown out after short uses, education on recycling, reuse and reduction competes against the tough adversary of convenience. Experience shows it is often easier, more accessible, faster and more affordable to buy a new item than to repair it and reuse it. Elizabeth Cline, in her book *Overdressed* (2012), found that a shoe repairman could not even get his own children into the mindset of repairing what they have (133)! The discourse that promotes the idea that no sacrifices should be required in order to change our future potentially adds to the attitude of thoughtlessness and reckless abandon, dismissing the need to count the cost of our consumption habits in a real way, and seems to conflict with calls to action, such as Minney's, to consume less fashion.

Contemporary fashion critics acknowledge that the rapid changing of trends, distance from the production process, and constant desire to revise one's identity all contribute to mounting masses of clothing waste, but they also hint at the affect these behaviours have on consumers' mental and spiritual health. New-York based journalist and expert in political philosophy, Elizabeth Cline admits that "chasing trends with one eye on the price tag didn't get me any closer to liking my clothes. My wardrobe ultimately left me feeling slavish and passive. I was devoting too much time and way too much space in my house to a habit I knew shamefully

little about" (8). Here Cline indicates the unsatisfying nature of the chase, as well as her feelings

of powerlessness as a passive slave to fashion's dictates. In hindsight she feels shame at how

she over-indulged in the pursuit of fashion while being ignorant of what structures and

resources enabled her habit. She also admits to using an excessive amount of time and space to

foster it.

Tansy Hoskins, a freelance journalist who writes primarily about the fashion industry

and labour issues (*Tansy Hoskins*), addresses an issue she feels has not yet been sufficiently

dealt with by the fashion world. In her book, *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion*

(2014), she remarks that "the self-loathing and the black hole of wanting that exists and cannot

be filled no matter how much you buy" (6). Her terms are vivid and powerful, expressing so

poignantly the desire, disappointment and self-disgust that occurs when promises made by

fashion marketing just cannot be fulfilled by the products it promotes. Dr. Andrew Brooks, a

professor at King's College London with an interest in the geographies of clothing and textile

production and consumption, affirms the deceptive and competitive tendencies of the fashion

industry a number of times throughout his book *Clothing Poverty*:

> While old clothes are viewed negatively and past fashions often ridiculed, the
> new clothing sector and the fast-fashion system are positively associated with
> youth, independence and even female emancipation. This is a charade. Fashion,
> by its very nature…places consumers in a never-ending contest of purchases
> which contribute to expressing their identity (81)

Later he observes that "Retailers [of new clothing] maintain cycles of production by

manipulating demand for unnecessary goods" leading those of us in the global North to

consume clothing to an excess (98-99). Brooks' descriptions evoke disdain at what he reveals as

a controlling, beguiling system which 'places consumers' seemingly without choice into a contest they'll never win, but that they keep playing. Kate Fletcher acknowledges some of the consequences of implication in this system in her book *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles* (2014). She explains that in the first decades of the twenty-first century "clothes are often shopped for habitually and the pressure to constantly reformulate identity in light of changing fashion trends has been linked to psychological insecurity and rising levels of mental illness" (140). Others who are aware of their need to change how they consume, are unwilling to for the very reason that clothing consumption is seen as a way to construct identity (Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik 63). They may not be able to imagine an alternative way of expressing themselves or being fulfilled aside from clothing consumption (Ozdamar Ertekin & Atik 63). The above excerpts do not condemn people for the way they are affected by the fashion system, but they do make it clear that the effects of its manipulative, pressing ways are not good, and thus point to a malfunction in the system or perhaps to a bad system overall.

The moralizing discourse on the wastefulness of fashion includes numerous references to the industry's negative impact on the environment and natural resources. For example, many participants in the discourse on fashion sustainability and ethics agree that the fashion industry and our patterns of consumption are burdening the Earth's supply of natural resources and pushing the limits of our planet (Cline 125; Brooks 229; Fletcher xvi). Cline summarizes that the industry "behaves with embarrassingly little regard for the environment or human rights" (6). And while she acknowledges that "Textiles have always had an unflattering environmental footprint", she distinguishes past concerns from present issues by stating that "the more pressing problem is the terrifying scale at which they are now being produced" (Cline 125).

When removed from glossy advertisements, theatrical catwalks, and carefully curated retail spaces "clothing is ultimately just fabric that comes from resources and can result in horrifying volumes of waste" says Cline, after witnessing bales of discarded clothing in a rag sorting room (126). Tansy Hoskins, in her book *Stitched Up* (2014), affirms this observation that each fashion item is "not just a structure of meaning, it is also a commodity produced by a corporation and sold on the market for a profit at huge environmental cost" (Hoskins 5). The language Cline uses in the above excerpts express clear, unquestionable disapproval of the fashion industry's current state and also fear at what will come as a result. She confers shame and guilt on the industry by describing its lack of regard for environmental and human rights as 'embarrassing' (6). She then describes the textile industry as a whole, from past to present, as presenting an unfavourable view of itself, calling it 'unflattering', and the textile and fashion industries' current scale of output and waste production as 'terrifying' and 'horrifying'—words expressing intense fear and dread—perhaps to wake the reader up to the urgent need for drastic change.

Safia Minney, founder of the Fair Trade fashion company *People Tree*, echoes this language of urgency and dread about the consequences of engaging in a fast-fashion system of production and consumption in her book *Slow Fashion* (2016), stating that "The way the Western world – and increasingly, developing nations such as China and India – lives and consumes is destroying the planet" (11). She argues that "Fast fashion…fuels rampant consumerism. Its horrific environmental impact includes accelerating water use and increasing carbon emissions, as well as massive amounts of clothing waste" (13). She then adds to the industry's list of faults its heavy reliance on oil-based synthetics—"an outdated manufacturing process that causes environmental pollution, and an unsustainable speed of production that

feeds into and encourages our throwaway culture" (*Slow Fashion* 11). Like Cline, above, Minney

uses strong words to emphasize the seriousness of the condition of the environment. She

points to unrestrained, intense consumption and the fast fashion industry as destructive—

implying damage beyond repair, and even complete obliteration—as well as horrific and

wasteful. These words reveal Minney's view of the dire situation and evoke an emotional

response in her readers to prepare them to accept the assertion that "If we are to save the

planet, we must reduce consumption" (*Slow Fashion* 11).

Andrew Brook's *Clothing Poverty* provides an in-depth study of the relationship between

the fast fashion industry and the second-hand clothing industry and how this relationship

affects the social and economic well-being of various stakeholders in uneven ways. Writing to

inform academics and others of the experiences of the poor in the Global South, he also

highlights the environmental degradation caused by the fast fashion industry. He claims

outright that "Fashion is a practice that directly underpins the rapid despoiling of the earth's

environmental systems…it is evident that clothes-making harms the natural world" (229). He

references the limits of planet Earth, arguing that "evidence abounds of the varied ways in

which industrial capitalism is exceeding planetary boundaries" (Brooks 229). Here Brooks' use

of the words 'despoiling', 'harm' and 'exceeding' highlights his judgment of the bad character of

the fashion industry and those who control it, as they rob, plunder, and hurt the Earth pushing

beyond its fragile limits. Kate Fletcher, in her influential text *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles*

(2014), chimes in that, because planetary boundaries are being transgressed, "an alternative

framework for life is essential and pressing" (Fletcher xvi). Fletcher, like all the other authors

mentioned in this section, is writing to inform readers of gravity of the state of Earth and to

urge immediate alternative action. The authors do this in words that evoke emotional responses like fear and dread of consequences of inaction, though these consequences are tied to the physical earth rather than eternal punishment, as was the case in the medieval period.

In many discourses on issues of justice and sustainability, excess and waste within the fashion industry, disrupted ecosystems, pollution and environmental waste are inextricably linked to unethical, immoral, exploitive treatment of people. Hoskins states: "The fashion industry's ill-treatment of people is linked irrevocably to its ill-treatment of the planet" (12). This statement makes sense considering we, as humans, are utterly dependent on the natural resources found in our surroundings, including water, air, soil and the fruits of the soil and water. If these basic, essential resources are plundered and spoiled, polluted and used up, people are directly affected—either by being forced to consume and cultivate toxified resources or by not having enough of them. In Andrew Morgan's 2015 film, *The True Cost*, viewers are faced with the fact that toxic chemicals used to treat fabrics, tan leather, and spray cotton fields are breathed in, bathed in, played in, and consumed by people living in close proximity to factories and fields, sometimes resulting in serious mental or physical illnesses. Many garment workers in Bangladesh and Cambodia work long hours for very little pay just to meet the demand for more and more, cheaper and cheaper clothing in the West. Morgan, and other fashion critics of our time, are challenging consumers to reevaluate their priorities, and consider the true cost of indulging our consumption habits. Hoskins provides a poignant contrast to awaken readers to the imbalance involved in our fashion system: "we live in a global society where malnutrition causes a third of all child deaths, yet world-wide, sales of luxury goods stand at approximately $150 billion" (8). She calls on our consciences to consider the

morality of a small number of companies receiving huge profits as a result of consumer's

indulgence in luxuries, while children in our global village starve to death. The choice is

unavoidably clear.

Interestingly, both Hoskins and Minney, in speaking of exploitation of human lives

within the fashion value chain, avoid placing blame on individuals, instead placing blame

squarely on the shoulders of impersonal capitalism, and seemingly distant players implicated in

a capitalist system, such as marketing campaigns, and fast fashion. Hoskins explains, "In

Stitched Up anti-capitalist means the rejection of the capitalist system as a whole because it is

the systemic cause of sweatshops, child labour, environmental devastation and alienation. The

problem is not simply one of bad companies or bad people at the top of society (though these

exist), but of a bad system that produces destructive imperatives" (8). In case one would think

that the fashion system could escape specific blame, Hoskins clarifies that "the very concept of

fashion is part of the social process of capitalism", inseparable from it (9, 7). Hoskins' moral

evaluation of the system is clear: it is 'bad' and sometimes involves 'bad companies' run by 'bad

people'. The results of the system are equally bad and clearly expressed as destructive,

devastating and exploitive. While she is not moralizing about a specific person's shopping habits

or way of dressing, she is making clear judgements on the system overall, which, in the end,

was invented and is sustained by people.

Safia Minney addresses a more specific aspect of the capitalist and fashion systems—its

marketing strategies and production methods—as the focus of her criticism and call to action.

She recognizes

It is easy to be seduced by fashion imagery and throwaway fast fashion. It's not your fault! But acknowledging your reaction every time you feel the seduction of fashion advertising is the first step to your liberation. This will liberate not only ourselves, but also the people who toil to make what we wear, and the environment (*Slow Fashion* 7).

Minney, like Hoskins, does not blame individuals for feeling the pull of fashion advertising. By describing that pull as seductive, she implies that it could be deceptive, or misleading, and she calls on readers to recognize it for what it is. While we may not be able to avoid seeing and reacting emotionally to fashion marketing campaigns, Minney does hold people responsible for their responses. She asks her readers to acknowledge and consider the consequences of fashion imagery's allure, implying that both consumers and, in turn, labourers are entrapped by surrender to that seduction.

Observations

In contrast to moralizing statements about fashion from historical periods discussed earlier in this research, these mainstream criticisms contain not even one explicit reference to God or sin as a way to express the morality or immorality of habits having to do with fashion, dress or clothing production. This is likely a result of the secularization and pluralization of Britain and other Western countries. However, sin or wrongness is alluded to through words that express shame and guilt in relation to personal or systemic patterns. When describing the fashion industry, words such as manipulative, seductive, charading, destructive, devastating, and polluting imply a certain morality, and call on our society's general consensus that deceiving and destroying are wrong. In addition, words and phrases such as 'obsessive', 'self-

loathing', 'insecurity', and 'mental illness' in these texts associate certain wasteful or excessive behaviours with dis-ease, lack of satisfaction, or imbalance.

Contrasts and calls to action are also used to criticize or moralize the way fashion works today. Tansy Hoskins points out the wrongness of our priorities by contrasting the amount of money spent on luxury goods with the number of children dying of malnutrition. Calls from authors to change our ways, to save the planet, to stop consuming so much, to consider carefully our purchases reveal their perspective that there is something wrong with what we are doing—something that needs correcting. Even Minney's declaration that it is not our fault if we are seduced by fashion imagery implies that there is a fault with that seduction—that someone or something *is* at fault. The texts analyzed both condemn the fashion system, and call for personal action, demonstrating that while we may not have direct control over our environment, we are still held personally responsible for our participation in it. The excerpts above contain no references to an explicit universal moral system, Christianity or a sovereign God in order to inspire change, but many of the statements contained in this chapter assume an underlying moral system and a shared set of values, such as compassion, fairness, and stewardship, perhaps residual of the Western world's Christian history.

A google search of "Christianity AND sustainability OR ethics AND fashion OR clothing" led me to a few articles and blogs that express the same concerns about pollution and mistreatment of people in the fashion industry as the texts above, but with a Christian worldview as the backdrop. Interviewees and bloggers such as Val Hiebert, Professor of Sociology at Providence University College, and Leah Wise, creator of Style Wise blog, connect purchases of fashion with ethics and human lives. They reference Bible verses in explaining to

other Christians why it is important—indeed necessary—for them to consider their clothing choices more carefully. For example, Val Hiebert in an interview for *Christian Week*, reminds readers that Jesus calls his followers to feed, clothe, and care for the least in the world. Leah Wise uses a biblical perspective of God as the Creator of each person, imbuing inherent worth on every human, to argue the necessity of thinking about how our actions affect others, while blogger Nicole Dornak (*Narrow Collective*) uses this verse: "Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others" (Philippians 2:4) as a mantra for her blog that features "purpose-driven" brands. The Church of Scotland Church and Society Council produced a report called "Are we what we wear? The ethics of our clothing choices" (2011). The report contains Bible verses, a quote from Kate Fletcher, stats from the BBC, and an excerpt from Ronald Sinclair's book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (1997) to inspire the church to take action on issues of pollution and exploitation in the fashion industry. One of the Bible verses quoted is from the book of Romans, and says "They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator". This verse was used to exhort readers to consider how much they value (or 'worship and serve') luxury items and fashionable garments in comparison to worshiping and valuing God through acts of obedience such as caring for the poor and using well the things they are given (Church of Scotland 4).

These articles and blogs are not as thorough on scientific details as the other texts discussed above, nor are they as easily accessible. Unlike centuries prior, the Christian worldview is not the default view, but rather requires a little digging to find. However, Christian authors use the scientific knowledge about fashion sustainability and ethics that has been gathered by other researchers and reporters, as well as the rising general awareness of

fashion's ethical issues, to join the call for action. The difference is that they state spiritual

reasons and motivations for moral action (such as the knowledge that all people are created by

God and are worthy of respect and care, and obedience to God's command to love all others

and to be steward of the earth), and wrong internal motivations for actions that are called out

as unjust or unethical (such as apathy and covetousness) (*RELEVANT*; Horsley).

Conclusion

Within the texts selected for this discourse analysis, common threads of moralizing run through the passages about fashion's wasteful, excessive characteristics in each time period. These common threads seem to centre on consistent human tendencies. How the moral issues are presented and which fashions, activities or structures are targeted vary to some degree according to changes in styles, industry and society, but all are intended to make their audiences aware of perceived wrong behaviours associated with consuming fashion, and to inspire a turn to right or proper behaviour when it comes to their clothing choices.

All texts acknowledge implicitly or explicitly that our adornment is not simply about appearance, but that taking time to get dressed, spending money to buy new fashions, and using natural resources to create clothing and accessories all involve making decisions that have real physical consequences for ourselves and others. Time, money, energy, lives, and natural resources used or abused in the making, purchasing, or wearing of fashion may or may not be retractable for use in other ways. Therefore, how much we invest into fashion—like investment of our resources into any other area—reveals how much we value, prioritize, or 'worship' it over other values. As has been mentioned earlier in the paper, appreciating and wearing clothing in and of itself is not considered wrong by the authors featured here. All of the moralizing texts criticize the squandering of resources or the overstepping of moderate boundaries. This section briefly recaps the peculiarities of each time period's critical discourse, and highlights shared moral or ethical judgments, and ways of expressing these judgments in each period. To conclude, I propose possible reasons for the patterns we see.

In the medieval period, much of the criticism focuses on changing clothing frequently, pursuing novelty, accumulating more garments than was customary in the past, and altering or changing clothing. However, these behaviours alone do not seem to be enough to evoke censure. Most often, a motive is assumed to underpin such pursuits. Pride, or seeking personal praise and attention, is the motive most frequently attributed to the frequent changing of clothing, accumulation of many garments, or following of new fashions (see Mannyng and Hoccleve in Sylvester et al.). Excessive love or pursuit of novelty, going beyond what was considered reasonable, and spending too much time pursuing new fashion are criticisms that indicate the medieval authors perceived imbalanced or improper priorities among their audiences. Hoccleve also calls attention to rising discontentment with the number of garments once thought to be enough and warns that the desire for novelty could lead a household into a lean or indebted state (qtd. in Sylvester et al. 141, 169-71).

A number of the moralizing texts from the Middle Ages point out particular fashions as foolish or condemnable. Wide and/or long sleeves, intricately slashed coats, 'outrageous outfits', clothing that is ill-adapted to the body's shape, long trailing robes, trains, scarlet gowns made of twelve yards of fabric, tippets and fur trims are all called out as culprits of being useless wastes of fabric, money or human energy (Sylvester et al. 2014). Waddington suggests that a better use of the money spent on a long train would be to give it to charity (in Sylvester et al 141).

In moralizing texts of the late 1500s to late 1600s, long, repetitive lists of garments were used to draw the reader's attention to the numerousness and variety garments, as well as the time and money spent on them, rather than on the morality or immorality of each particular

item. Moralizing texts target immoderate, superfluous accumulation and spending on clothing leading to bursting coffers and presses, as well as consuming "myriads of indisposed houres" (Brathwait 20) or a disproportionate amount of time in constructing a fashionable appearance when compared with time spent on preparing the soul (Williams 31). Like medieval writers, these later authors attribute the waste of money, the world-wide extraction of natural resources for adornment, the expenditure of time and acquisition of numerous garments to pride, vanity or a desire to be seen (Williams 16, 18; *England's Vanity*; Cavendish in *Fashion and Fiction* 202). Discontentment with simple Christian living (Stubbes 89), lack of self-control (Brathwait 12), the elevation of fashionable appearance over God (Brathwait 20), allowing fears and desires to overpower one's decisions (Brathwait 306), covetousness (Brathwait 342), and naked or decaying insides (souls) (Brathwait 20) are other soul conditions associated with excessive and wasteful dress behaviours. In this period we also begin to see criticism of the commercial aspects of the fashion trade. For example, Dekker notices that tailor shops are growing in size and that tailors are hitting customers hard with large bills (16). As in the medieval period, the appeal to use moderation in clothing choices is also based on the concern that constant desire for more would lead people to debt, poverty, and temptation to steal (Stubbes 120; Hoccleve in Sylvester et al. 171).

In the 21st century, one of the main criticisms of participants in the fashion system in the West is overconsumption, echoing earlier concerns about acquiring more garments than is needed. Rampant, thoughtless consumerism, addiction to shopping, statistics about how much more clothing we own than past generations, wardrobes stuffed with little- or never-used clothing, and landfills overflowing with textile waste are all highlighted as evidence of the

Western world's desire for more than we can possibly use. While the negative, often tragic, consequences of this overconsumption are scientifically explained in detail—including effects on the environment, labourers, and Western consumers' state of mind— attribution of overconsumption to underlying immoral motives is noticeably less in these mainstream writings compared to the previous two periods studied. Readers are not called covetous or prideful, nor are they encouraged to repent of wrongdoing and ask for God's mercy. Rather, they are often viewed as ignorant, passive consumers in a system they had no control over creating. It is implied that given the right conditions (right system) and right knowledge (such as the statistics listed and stories shared in each of the texts discussed) readers or viewers would have enough goodwill and care for others and the environment to make right fashion choices.

Perhaps because of this view of people as passive participants in fashion's customs, the moralizing of the 21st century primarily falls not on individuals but on impersonal, seemingly distant fast fashion and capitalist systems. These systems are condemned for manipulating desires, putting pressure on companies to produce at unreasonable speeds, creating products that will intentionally be obsolescent in a short period of time, creating massive environmental problems, treating people and the earth badly, and causing alienation and other mental insecurities in consumers.

Moralists of the first two time periods were not timid to rebuke sinful, selfish tendencies in human nature—such as pride and greed—and to link them inextricably with what they saw as immoral behaviours connected to fashion. Today's ethical and sustainable fashion writers, by contrast, seem to expect good motives at the core of our beings and are not so forthcoming about the possibility that moral deficiencies in our souls may lead to environmental

degradation and exploitation. However, the criticisms of the industry and our personal choices indicate that the same underlying moral disapproval of greed and selfishness exists today as it did in the medieval, Tudor and Stuart periods. For example, Andrew Morgan's *True Cost* film explicitly calls the industry one of greed while contrasting Western consumers frantically rushing into a clothing store on Black Friday with impoverished, mistreated apparel makers. Other industry professionals interviewed for *True Cost,* such as *People Tree* founder Safia Minney, Bangladeshi garment factory owner Arif Jebtik, and Bangladeshi garment worker Shima Akhter, emphasize our need to think more about the people involved in making our clothing and to extend care to them through our clothing choices. This implies that we have not been thinking about them—perhaps only ourselves and our desires. The fact that we are seduced by fashion imagery (*Slow Fashion* 7) to buy more and constantly reformulate our identity, without concern for the physical effects of our surrender to that pull, may be an indication of too much self-focus and desire to be seen or accepted by our appearances. Minney calls on her readers to be aware of and not give in to the allure. In a selfie-culture where social media profiles have been given so much importance in many people's social lives, the allure to constantly reform one's appearance is real and powerful. In contrast to today's authors, moralists of the past may have boldly called this preoccupation with self-presentation pride, arrogance or self-absorption.

There are a number of concerns consistently criticized throughout the periods studied that all relate to inner conditions. These include among others: the tendency to always want more (and the harm that the process of constantly acquiring more brings to oneself or others); mixed-up priorities; and pride or self-seeking. In the particular fashion-related texts analyzed above, this tendency shows up as the excessive pursuit of novelty or new fashions, anxiety and

discontentment with clothing already in one's possession, spending money on luxuries or excesses when others are in need of basic living requirements, and useless squandering of valuable resources, such as energy, fabric, water, and space in order to keep up appearances or make more money. In all cases, writers or producers expect their moralizing communications to awaken consciences and inspire individuals to respond by acting differently.

The question remains: Is knowing the consequences of our actions and the right choice enough to make us willing to master our selfish impulses or to sacrifice something we desire in the moment for the sake of another person? In the first two periods studied, writers felt it was important to connect outward actions with an inward condition. Authors of those periods did not hesitate point out vices and sins they perceived through their manifestation in wrong real physical behaviours. Most contemporary writings on the wasteful, excessive aspects of fashion fail to designate personal, inward lack of morality as a factor in the harmful environmental results and social injustices so carefully recorded and shared. Psychology professor Dr. Solomon Schimmel would argue that this approach is a product of secular psychology and is ineffective in bringing about change. In his book *The Seven Deadly Sins: Jewish, Christian, and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology* (1997) he states that secular psychology "considers the notions of sin, vice and virtue to be relics of antiquated theological and philosophical traditions, which it has superceded" (5). He then argues that, if secular psychology fails to give attention to right and wrong (as traditional moralists did), anxieties of our day will go unresolved (5). Contemporary focus on the fashion system, over and above personal responsibility, may also be hindering progress towards a waste-less and fair industry. Schimmel highlights a study demonstrating that people who assume that what happens to them in their lives and how they

feel is outside of themselves are less likely to take steps to change themselves (21). It seems

that taking personal responsibility for our moral weaknesses, temptations and actions is in

order if more sustainable and ethical fashion trade is to come about.

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