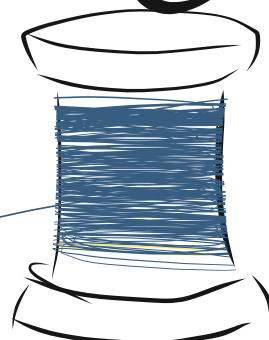


# Fast Fashion



## What is Fast Fashion?

*“Cheap, trendy clothing, that samples ideas from the catwalk or celebrity culture and turns them into garments in high street stores at breakneck speed.”*

### Speed

Customers can now easily see the latest fashions online and have become conditioned to expect a constant stream of trendy new styles from retailers. Opposed to the traditional 4 seasons of winter, spring, summer, and fall, fast fashion runs on **52 “micro-seasons”** per year, releasing new collections on a weekly basis.

With online shopping, buyers don't even have to visit the stores to find the updated styles. Clothing websites allow customers to purchase a product as soon as it hits the screens.

### Copy Cats

Trends and styles in the fashion industry are cyclical in nature. Anything “new” is inherently dependent on looking to others for inspiration.

Especially when companies are releasing new catalogs every week, copying is an unavoidable, inevitable process. The designs produced in fast fashion are copied from everyone, from up-and-coming artists to high-fashion brands.

## The Environment

The fashion industry is the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest consumer of water, producing **20 percent** of wastewater in the US.

It also generates more greenhouse gas emissions than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.

Every year, the US disposes of **11 million tons** of clothing.

The Copenhagen Fashion Summit reported that fashion is responsible for **92 million tons** of waste dumped in landfills each year.

Lead, pesticides, and toxic chemicals that never break down are released into the environment by the discarded clothing.

### Cheap Materials

In order to keep up with the constant demand for novelty while maintaining affordable product prices, companies use synthetic materials with poor craftsmanship to make clothing that isn't intended to last long.

### & Cheap Labour

Companies also turn to manufacturing garments in low-wage countries such as China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and India to keep the price of production low. Those who work in garment factories are often poor, young, and under-educated females who endure unsafe and unsanitary working conditions, low wages, long hours, and limited worker's rights.

## A Cultural Explanation...

Sameness, speed, and the damages incurred by fast fashion can all be accounted for through the workings of the **culture industry**.

### Cycles

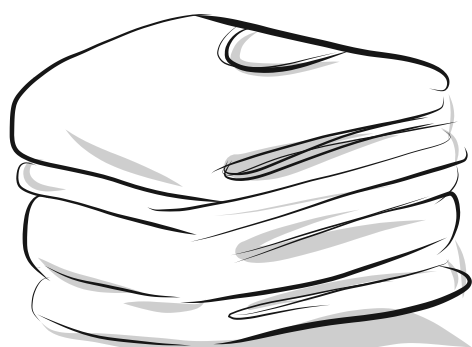
The cyclical nature of the fashion industry perpetuates the blind continuation of the culture industry. The lack of depth behind clothing designs and the simple repetition and imitation of trends allows for meaningless products to be disseminated and mindlessly consumed.

### Commodification

High fashion looks and the work of indie designers, previously considered to be forms of art, are now being commodified by fast fashion. The overturn of art into a dutiful commodity of the culture industry can be seen with the reproduction of a designer's craft into goods for the masses and for profit.

### The Market

In the culture industry, only large companies who can afford powerful marketing tools and specialists are able to monopolize the ideologies promoted to consumers. The success of online shopping only comes easy to the fast fashion companies who can afford to create effective marketing strategies. The pervasiveness of their online presence, through an effective website design and pervasive advertisements keeps the ability to influence within the hands of the few.



*“Culture today is infecting everything with sameness”*

The standardization and mass production of culture into commodities reduces the imagination of consumers. We are granted a false freedom, being entertained by repetition, instant-gratification, and blissful ignorance to production processes.



### Mindlessness

Blind consumption in the culture industry is a result of mindless amusement. In order to be entertained, we allow ourselves to forget the suffering of ourselves and others in labour. Consumers easily dismiss the lives of garment workers at risk in the production of fast fashion, and look passed the resulting volume of carbon emissions and acres of landfill in order to enjoy.

### Value

The low cost of fast fashion clothing implies a lower use value and social benefit of cultural artifacts in the culture industry. The intentionally poor durability of materials is compensated for with instant gratification. Consumers feel the need to replace clothing and renew their styles more often in order to replenish their happiness.

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