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Work Smarter, Not Harder - A Quick Look at Fast Fashion Satire

Fashion has become a staple in our culture and staying current with trends has become a necessity. This necessity has led to the rapid growth of the fast fashion industry, which is the replication of high fashion designs, and mass producing them at a low cost. Thus, retailers can keep current with short and frequent trends, and maintain a steady stream of supply for an ever-growing demand. Due to the availability of many articles of clothing, many of which lack longevity, consumers are compelled to dispose of old, unused clothes more frequently. The waste generated by these consumers is immense, and has many adverse effects on the health of our natural environment, yet the fast fashion industry only continues to promote this wasteful consumerism as it continues to grow. Numerous publications have addressed this issue, and have been featured in mainstream media, such as the book “Fashionopolis” written by Dana Thomas, which was featured in a *New York Times* article titled “How Fast Fashion is Destroying the Planet”. These writings have traditionally used statistics and anecdotes from those involved with the industry to reveal the shortcomings of the fashion industry, a tactic that only has limited efficacy. On the other hand, some writings use techniques such as humor and sarcasm to appeal to target audiences. An example of this kind of writing is ‘FAUX’, a satirical magazine written by Hubbub, a British environmental organization. Such writings use Horatian techniques to expose the numerous faults in the fast fashion industry, and reveal how consumers themselves are responsible for these problems. Through directly targeting the practices of the consumer, the

use of caricature and hyperbole in 'FAUX' exposes the faults in the fast fashion industry more effectively than the facts used in "How Fast Fashion is Destroying the Planet".

One of the techniques 'FAUX' uses to appeal to its target audience is hyperbole. The exaggeration of the elements in a fashion magazine prompts readers to evaluate the legitimacy of the content in fashion magazines. Ranging from advice columns which contain redundant advice, all the way to "Hot or Not" columns which contain the exact same products on both sides, the authors of the magazine effectively portray the hypocrisies in fashion magazines. Much of the content in fashion magazines is filled with direct contradictions, such as how the "Hot or Not" column tells you to not be "the last to know," but on the exact same page also tells you "Stand out from the crowd, don't follow the herd" (Hubbub 17). Making two opposite claims about the same product allows fashion magazines to appeal to all viewers, a tactic which 'FAUX' exaggerates. By doing so, the authors of the magazine are able to effectively convey how they ultimately compel readers to buy more fashion products. An additional contradiction the magazine aims to address is the quality of products in high fashion. Nowadays, brands make thousands of dollars by advertising simplistic goods in a way that appeals to buyers in the high fashion industry, who spend thousands of dollars to set themselves apart from other styles. In reality, these items are of the same, if not worse, quality than other affordable items. An example of this is the "Fresh Air" brand presented by the magazine, which sells perfumes made of air from outside. By advertising "Fresh Air" products as more exceptional in quality than they truly are, the magazine attracts hundreds of thousands of potential customers that look for products specifically to set themselves apart from normal, when in reality all they're buying is just air. Similarly, there are designer clothes advertised which are merely made of tape and paper. Yet the articles of clothing were listed at prices of thousands of dollars, solely because they were

branded with high fashion brands such as Prada and Louis Vuitton (Hubbub 41). Through these examples, 'FAUX' demonstrates that regardless of the quality of a product, consumers will purchase them just for their brand. Exaggerating such marketing tactics allows readers to reflect upon legitimate fashion magazines they've read in the past, and evaluate if content in those is similarly redundant to the examples provided in 'FAUX'. This reveals to the reader that the true industry of the fast fashion industry is to generate profits by any means, and that consumers are quick to fall for such tricks. By presenting these examples in an intuitive, non-provocative manner, the use of exaggeration improves the reception of the claims presented in the magazine.

In conjunction with the exaggeration of aspects of the fashion industry, 'FAUX' employs caricature through the "fashionista" to ridicule the trends in the fast fashion industry. A fashionista is "a designer, promoter, or follower of the latest fashions" (Merriam Webster). In popular culture, a fashionista is someone who devotes much of their time to fashion and their appearance. This persona is portrayed as the target audience of fashion magazines, and is satirized in 'FAUX' for their wasteful habits. We can see how the satire portrays the fashion industry's appeal to fashionista through the use of sarcastic language, present in titles such as "Shut up and Take my Money" (Hubbub 14), which shows how the fashion industry effortlessly profits off of such buyers. By mocking the persona of the fashionista, the magazine is able to explain a serious issue in a way that's easier to digest, which allows readers to reflect upon their own practices, and how they may align with those of the fashionista. Another example of the magazine's appeal to the fashionista is clearly provided with the targeted advertisements for everyday products as high-end products, such as "Aqua Cool," which is just ice. In the magazine article, "Aqua Cool" is presented as "coming directly from our melting glaciers and whizzed over from Greenland" (Hubbub 2017). Such descriptions exaggerate how fashion magazines go

the extra mile to make products appear exotic, such that they appeal to these fashionistas. This is usually done at the cost of the environment, as in this case with the melting glaciers. This can then be tied to the fashionista's wasteful buying habits, and how the purchase of useless products contributes to the growing waste problem. Additionally, through the inclusion of such advertisements, consumers are forced to realize that the only reason these products are successful is because they are generating a profit from such buyers, thereby reinforcing the idea that the fashionista's habits of buying useless, tacky products is harmful to the environment. By reinforcing these ideas, the magazine is able to reveal how the habits of the consumer are influenced by the contents of fashion magazines, and how this dependency furthers the growth of the fast fashion industry, thereby increasing the waste of resources it generates.

As opposed to targeting the consumers in the fast fashion industry, the New York Times article about 'Fashionopolis' aims to shed light on the shortcomings of the industry. Fast fashion is riddled with vice and malpractice, ranging from being a severe detriment to the environment, as far as numerous human rights violations. Through the appeals to logos and use of narrative writing techniques, 'Fashionopolis' systematically explains the downfalls of the fashion industry to readers in an attempt to raise awareness about its plight. These techniques are demonstrated in Thomas's explanation of fast fashion's ecological impact, where she states that "more than 60 percent of fabric fibers are now synthetics," but then proceeds to explain how this means improperly disposed fabrics could reach "the deepest parts of the oceans, and highest glacier peaks" (Schlossberg 2019). By explaining the significance of statistics using descriptive imagery, the significance of those facts becomes more apparent to the reader, which amplifies the impact of the article. Moreover, the article addresses the issue of human rights in the textile industry by mentioning the Rana Factory Disaster in Bangladesh, which killed and injured thousands.

Through the use of an anecdote, the article appeals to pathos by invoking feelings of disgust towards the negligence of safety in the textile industry. The text uses accusatory language throughout its description of the disaster, explaining how “none of this news... diminished Americans’ appetites for cheap clothing” (Schlossberg 2019). Through the description of fashion, a luxury reserved for the privileged, similarly to something as necessary as food, Thomas is able to effectively portray the vile nature of American consumerism, and how it promotes the infringement of human rights in the textile industry. Highlighting these issues allows the article to effectively antagonize fast fashion companies and the textile industry.

Despite the strength of the techniques utilized in the article, ‘FAUX’'s purpose of invoking self-realization in consumers has a stronger appeal to the reader than the antagonization of the textile industry conveyed by the New York Times. Although the appeal to reason in the New York Times article properly establishes feelings of guilt in readers for supporting the industry, it fails to develop a lasting impression in the reader’s future practices. Even if the article succeeds in dissuading consumers from supporting specific fast fashion brands, it fails to address the wasteful nature of the consumers themselves. ‘FAUX’, on the other hand, directly targets the habits of the consumer, and effectively conveys a message that the source of the fast fashion problem is the consumers themselves. Through the use of images and vibrant colors, and content relatable to younger audiences, the magazine is made appealing to the target audience. This allows the overall message of the magazine to be more effectively conveyed, since the readers are more invested in what the consumer has to say. Using these techniques, the magazine inspires readers to make reforms to their own lives, and change the way they think of fashion.

In conclusion, ‘FAUX’ takes a targeted and more lighthearted approach to prove to the consumers of the fast fashion industry that their practices are harmful. This is more effective than

the use of facts and statistics in the New York Times, which aims to antagonize corporations in the industry rather than the root cause of the problem: the consumers. Appeals to logos and pathos can both be equally effective if used strategically to prove a specific point. In this case, the purpose of 'FAUX' targeted the source of the problem, something which the New York Times did not do, which is ultimately the reason why the magazine is more effective than the news article. As quoted from Yves Saint Laurent by the article, "Fashion Fades, style is eternal" (Schlossberg 2019). Similarly, an argument can fade, but a well-constructed claim is eternal, and has a much stronger impact on readers. Therefore, the argument made by 'FAUX' directed at the habits of the consumer is more effective than the New York Times' antagonization of the textile industry.

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