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Morality, Materiality and Mystery:

Second-hand Clothing Consumption and Practice in
a Small Town in Aotearoa / New Zealand

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degree of Master of Arts in Social Anthropology at Massey University,
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Rachel Stansfield

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My thesis is dedicated to you.

Abstract

Over the last ten years, the popularity of second-hand clothes (SHC) in Aotearoa (New Zealand) has grown rapidly, evidenced by the increase in SHC shops in the country. Ethnographic research was undertaken at a traditional church-affiliated second-hand shop to explore second-hand clothing consumption and practice in a small town in Aotearoa using anthropological methods and approaches. The research was also designed to consider social, economic, and political changes that might account for the increase in SHC popularity and the potential consequences of this increasing popularity. Anthropological theories of consumption and materiality were drawn on to analyse the findings. In Aotearoa, SHC consumption is conceived as a ‘good’ consumption practice associated with charity, not-for-profit fundraising, and increasingly, environmental sustainability. This is reinforced and perpetuated by media accounts that valorise SHC shopping but fail to tell the whole story of the growth in SHC imports and clothing waste. Consequently, SHC have become infused with notions of morality and ethical stance-making practices which do not reflect the realities of trade in Aotearoa. Although SHC consumption is a conscious, intimate, and sentient practice there is a lack of transparency in Aotearoa’s unregulated participation in the global trade of SHC and the problems associated with SHC disposal and waste management. The research identifies a gap in current New Zealand research, policy, and legislation regarding the trade and management of organic and synthetic SHC and the need for greater transparency and public awareness in SHC trade in Aotearoa.

Keywords: Second-hand clothes, Consumption, Morality, Materiality, Waste Management, Relational ontologies, Thing Power, Disposal.

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2 Introduction

“[T]he rapid growth of the global secondhand clothing industry affords an opportunity to make visible the links between micro-practices of consumption and riddance on the one hand, and the macro-politics of waste economies on the other, revealing the wider impact of emerging political, economic, and social concerns.”

(Lucy Norris (2012, p. 133)

I have had a mild obsession with second-hand shops for many years; it is possibly a trait I inherited from my maternal grandmother. Her warm and busy house was a veritable wonderland of curiosities, each with its own story and usually out of bounds for inquisitive but clumsy little hands. I also admit to the addictive thrill of finding something unique, stylish, retro, vintage, antique, and delightfully cheap. I am a treasure hunter, and I am very comfortable in the territory of second-hand shops or ‘op-shops’ as they are called in Aotearoa. The term ‘op-shop’, I learned, is an abbreviation of Opportunity Shop which according to the 1920s marketing effort of Melbourne’s Lady Millie Tallis, has a more dignified ring than charity, second-hand or thrift shop. (Joey Watson and Gabrielle Lyons, 2020).

In the last ten years, there has been significant growth in second-hand clothing (SHC) available in Aotearoa, evidenced by a growing number of shopping places and types. For example, online shopping (through Trade Me, Facebook Market) and online instances of physical not-for-profit and for-profit shops that have blossomed during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Additionally, the shops have become differentiated, there are now designer recycle, vintage, and those that sell on behalf of customers where once there were just op-shops. I have also noticed changes in the clientele, not only an increase in numbers but also my perception of the people shopping. Most notably, they are a younger group than were previously active. Much to my chagrin, I have also noticed a gradual increase in price expectations. It seems there are not as many bargains to be had anymore, despite the ever-increasing volume of ‘stuff’. I am curious about what is driving supply, demand, and popularity changes. I began my Master of Arts programme in February 2021, intent on following my curiosity to understand the social, economic, and political changes potentially contributing to this change.

I chose a small traditional church-affiliated op-shop in a nearby village as my research site because of the seemingly large number of second-hand shops in the affluent north Auckland area where I live, compared to the population (approximately 6k largely Pākehā people). The village

lies in a lush green valley at a narrow point on the banks of a swiftly flowing river, close enough to the sea to have been a useful transport hub for generations of both Māori and Pākehā in the region. The village and its buildings, once utilitarian, now considered quaint, provide desirable aesthetics for the tide of gentrification sweeping rural and particularly coastal Aotearoa. Over the last 15 years, the small rural village has gentrified, and the community has whitened and become more obviously affluent and middle-class, although I use the term broadly. I acknowledge the contestability of the term ‘middle class’ and the potential problems associated with it, particularly in the context of Aotearoa, where social hierarchies based upon European ideology fail to describe social hierarchies within Māori culture or acknowledge social differentiation between Pākehā and Māori (Jock Phillips, 2018). Anecdotally, the area’s new affluence creates an expectation among op shop customers that the donations will be of good quality and shop prices are known to be traditionally very cheap.

I offered my labour as a volunteer in exchange for permission to base my research there, and I worked, sorting, and shopkeeping for as much of the 12 months of my research as I could. COVID-19 lockdowns interrupted my research, during which time I could not attend the site hindering the enrolment of participants and valuable observational time. However, I enrolled five shoppers and three friends of shoppers who enthusiastically agreed to participate in my research. I talked to each participant in person or via Zoom for at least an hour and followed up with specific questions or clarifications as I worked through their commentaries.

Background

Since the 1950s, the abundance of cheap clothing in the global north coupled with rapidly cycling fashion styles has led to consumers purchasing more, wearing them less frequently and disposing of them more regularly (Veronique Greenwood, n.d.). In turn, the abundance of clothing has flowed into secondhand clothing economies, swamping traditional outlets, and creating new diversions. The global trade in SHC has been growing concomitantly with the growth of fast fashion since the 1980s and is estimated to reach an economic value of US\$64 billion by 2028, surpassing the global trade in fast fashion by some \$20 billion (Ireland Hendry-Tennent, 2019).

Anthropologist Karen Tranberg Hansen who has studied the development of the global trade in SHC, mainly in Zambia, since the 1970s, suggests that between 1980 and 2001, the global economic value of SHC trade grew from US\$201 million to US\$1,498 million. The United

States of America (USA) is still the largest exporter followed by the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK), and Europe. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa are the largest importers of SHC, followed by Asian countries, particularly Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, and Hong Kong. The Middle East and South America are also significant importers (Hansen, 2004, pp. 3-4).

It is little known that Aotearoa participates in the global trade of SHC through imports and exports. Between 2015 and 2021, imports have grown by a staggering 2884%, from a mere 1039 kgs in 2015 to 31,008 kgs in 2021. In this six-year period, a total of 135,000kgs of SHC were imported, 87% of which were from the USA, 10% from Australia and 3% from the UK. All are showing a growth trend. According to Aimee Shaw (2021), at least 24,000 kgs (24 tonnes) p.a. of SHC imported from the USA is by one SHC retail business: Recycle Boutique. According to the UsedFULLY report “Looking in the Mirror” (2020), the volume of second-hand clothes channelled into the reuse cycle, via second-hand stores and charities in Aotearoa amounts to approximately 7000 tonnes of clothing per year. It is estimated that once sorted, almost half of this is deemed unusable or unsaleable and sent to landfill without the means or opportunity for further reuse or recycling. Charities report that the relentlessness of this flow coupled with the sheer volumes of materials and clothing involved in this second cycle is causing an “eco-anxiety” among charity shop workers (p. 38) that is invisible to consumers through the work involved in sorting and discarding.

Given that most of the clothing and textile waste in Aotearoa ends up in landfills, estimated at 220,800 tonnes per year (220,800,000 kgs) (Casey and Johnston, 2021, p. 10), increased volumes of SHC or new clothes will equate to high volumes of clothing waste in landfills. In 2019 textile waste accounted for an estimated 5% of landfill, Auckland Council estimate that this is likely to increase to 14% by 2040. In their government white paper, Casey and Johnston (2021) draw attention to the growing problem of textile disposal in landfills and the lack of current legislation governing textile disposal in Aotearoa. Similarly, plastic product regulation in Aotearoa does not currently include plastics found in clothing, such as polyesters, nylon, and lycra, nor do clothing plastics feature in the 2023 future tranches of regulation “Plastics” (2022).

Aotearoa is not only a passive recipient of other people’s unwanted clothes: significant quantities of SHC are also exported. Between 2015 and 2021, a total of 50,689 tonnes, (50,689,541 kgs) of SHC were exported. 48,636 tonnes (98%) were exported to Papua New Guinea and the remainder to other Pacific Islands, notably Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. Overall total

exports show a downward trend in 2020 and 2021, possibly due to COVID-19 restrictions (Stats NZ, 2022). The clothing, donated under the auspices of charity in Aotearoa, is bundled into 50kg bales and sold to retailers, who on-sell to the public through markets and shops (Hernandez-Curry, 2018). Although not regarded as waste initially, once worn out, clothing adds to the growing problem of waste disposal in the Pacific Islands, particularly Papua New Guinea, given the volumes imported (Asia Development Bank, 2014).

Much of the current research into the growth in SHC is situated in the northern hemisphere. It tends to be focused on the global trade from the largest exporters, i.e., USA, UK, and Europe, and is positioned within the broader social, economic, and political narratives of global north to global south trades as both an economic resource and as waste or pollution. From the perspective of a consumer shopping practice, there is significant research into the cultures of general second-hand shopping in the UK, spatially and experientially, compared to the geographies of mainstream shopping locations and practices but SHC are not a specific focus. Research about consumption, although plentiful, has been criticised for a failure to define what consumption is (David. M. Evans, 2019; David Graeber, 2011; Daniel Miller, 2012) and, as such has tended to be criticised as being overly focused on shopping, in terms of acquiring or procuring items, rather than how they are used, by whom, and how they are discarded (Evans, 2019). This thesis defines consumption broadly as including acquisition (procuring, buying, gifting and inheriting), appropriation (using), and disposal (riddance, abeyance, donation and waste). Second-hand then refers to the second cycle of these phases for a particular item.

There is a significant gap in research regarding SHC consumption and practice in Aotearoa per se, and particularly that which incorporates consumer perspectives and practice, the SHC product lifecycle, and the positive or negative consumption externalities associated with this industry locally, such as waste. This is the gap that this research hopes to fill, by researching a micro-segment of SHC consumption and practice, via anthropological methods and approaches, at a small op shop and interviews with customers. The research aims to achieve a greater understanding of what is driving the growth in supply, demand, and popularity of SHC in Aotearoa. Further, it seeks to gain insight into the social conceptions and changes in SHC consumption to understand what the impacts of this growth might be on the social construction of SHC and the social systems that manage SHC as a product throughout its lifecycle.

My research began by questioning *why* people choose to buy or donate second-hand clothes. However, after observing customer behaviour in the op-shop, this question expanded to include

the practice of SHC shopping, i.e., how they go about it? And what kinds of SHC they were attracted to, and why they matter more than others? During the fieldwork period, the acts of sorting the bags of donated goods in variable conditions and hauling three 240-litre rubbish and recycle bins to the curb for collection each week, expanded my research to question the consequences of growth in SHC in Aotearoa. The surprising discovery of Aotearoa's participation in the global trade in SHC led me to further questions about the social construction of SHC and how this may differ from the reality of trade, including questioning the availability of this knowledge as public information. These questions form the basis of my study, albeit using a sample of SHC shoppers in a small village north of Auckland.

As historian Phyllis M. Martin (cited in Hansen, 2000, p. 359) suggests:

“[Clothing is] a cultural story about consumption and about the importance of clothing, both old and new to modern sensibilities, embodying new social and cultural abilities to discriminate. In the process, clothing has become an important agent of social change.”

The purpose of this research is to tell some of the ‘cultural story’ that has contributed to the recent growth of SHC in Aotearoa and its consequences, told through a micro-segment of one op-shop, and eight discrete participant stories. Situated in the broad discipline of Social Anthropology, my research encompasses aspects of Economic Anthropology (particularly consumption and material culture), but also the various forms of disposal within the full life cycle of SHC. The significance of this research is that it is the first of its kind in Aotearoa (as far as I am aware) and therefore offers a unique perspective of SHC consumption and practice within this local context. Although specifically bound, the scale and scope spans elements of consumption practices from acquisition and appropriation to various disposal(s), that may not lead to their wastage, and thus challenges notions of what constitutes waste. The research brings together the hitherto under-researched, little known, and, perhaps, taken-for-granted social relations embroiled in SHC from an individual, intimate perspective, to the social systems and structures that maintain social relations. This research has the potential to contribute to and influence how clothing and textiles are considered among waste and plastic management in New Zealand government policy.

There are limitations to this research in that it is a micro-segment of a growing phenomenon, located in a church affiliated, traditional kind of op-shop within an affluent demographic area. Some aspects of my research and participants may have differed significantly had I chosen a different type of shop, perhaps a designer recycle shop in an upmarket suburb, or perhaps a

community or charity shop in a less affluent suburb. The differences may be in the types and volumes of donations and the clothing sought after as well as the spatial aspects of the shop and the different practices that may be employed, such as rummaging through mixed boxes of clothes or neatly curated in sizes, styles and types barely requiring touch. It is also limited in scale to just one shop, rather than multi-sited and time bound to fit within the scope of a Master's degree. It is gendered in that all my participants are women without the financial necessity to shop for SHC, and with sufficient time to browse without the anxiety of potentially going without. As previously mentioned, my research was also limited by COVID-19 lockdowns. I also acknowledge that full lifecycle of SHC is much broader than the focus of this thesis which is confined to localised consumption and Aotearoa's part in the much broader global consumption of SHC.

The thesis is organised around three main themes that emerged from conversations with participants: Morality, Materiality and Mystery. I found that, first, the reasons my participants chose to buy and donate SHC clothes varied, but each was imbued with a sense of morality. Second, the materiality of SHC was referred to in terms of the importance of touch, the fabrics preferred, and their materials. Significantly, the thesis utilises the work of Tim Ingold (2007) 'Materials against Materiality' to make clear the distinction between 'material' and 'materiality', defining the former as the active components or matter from which artefacts, including clothes are made, and the latter as the human significance of both the materials and the artefacts within a processual and relational understanding of world-making.

The materiality of SHC is explored through the various relational accounts of the emotionally felt and embodied absence presence (Trisia Farrelly, Rochelle Stewart-Withers & Kelly Dombrowski, (2014); Morgan Meyer, 2012) told to me, about the lingering traces of the previous wearers that may conjure repulsion or deep enduring affection. The assignment of value and the possibility of agential clothing is examined as stories of extraordinary, more-than-clothes are recalled. Third, a sense of mystery emerged in response to Aotearoa's participation in the global trade of SHC to question the transparency of this trade and revealed a divergence between the social construction of SHC and the realities of trade. As seems fitting, the thesis ends with an analysis that tries to unravel the mysteries and an examination of the social, economic, and political relations associated with the lifecycle of SHC. The following paragraphs explain how the chapters are structured around the three key themes.

Morality

Broadly speaking, anthropology deals with questions of morality as a tool with which to understand and describe the underlying values associated with social norms that guide what people do in real life through their actions and discourses (Fassin, 2012). The Morality chapter discusses how notions of morality emerged in conversations with my participants as reasons why they chose to buy or donate SHC. I examine how notions of morality are instrumental in justifying or rejecting certain types of consumption within the good/bad moral dichotomies typical of western ontology. Further, I explore how forms of morality have become embedded into my participants' social, economic, and political lives as individuals and as members of social groups, and function as pillars to uphold perceptions of the social order within generational periods.

I interpret and position my participants' commentaries into a broader body of anthropological literature, discussed in greater detail in the literature review, particularly the work of Daniel Miller, Richard Wilk and Didier Fassin, to support and enable me to think more broadly about these findings of morality. I draw on Miller's (2012) theory of shopping to analyse how despite the necessity to consume, consumption is often framed within narratives of immorality, unnecessary excess or individual pathology that requires justification, or in Miller's analogy, sanctification. And I discuss how the secondhandedness of the clothes provides the medium through which morals become the instruments with which to sanctify or justify consumption choices and transform them into acts of micro-virtues and micro-activism.

Although my participants' particular morals were varied, they are not arbitrary and revealed a distinct generational pattern when overlaid with their demographics to show how SHC are infused with moralistic notions and ethical stance making. Thus, I analyse my participants' responses through a generational lens supported by evidence that suggests a moral zeitgeist. I distinguish between generations using statistics sourced from Stats NZ - Tataurangi Aotearoa and use labels widely accepted in popular culture, by four of the seven living generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

Materiality

The Materiality chapter aims to understand how perceptions of the materiality of SHC are formed and become embodied through their practice of SHC shopping, what they choose to buy, or borrow from clothing swaps, and those gifted or handed down from loved ones. In addition to the materiality of the clothing, I examine how the materiality of the built environment of SHC spaces, the spatial arrangements within shops, shopping practices, and categorisations of clothing, are experienced as more pleasurable for my participants and differ from more mundane mainstream shopping. I discuss how the innate materiality of the clothes is perceived through the sense of touch and socially coded as good or bad through knowledge of the “affordances” (Ingold, 2018, p.40) or properties of natural and synthetic fabrics. Why some clothes matter more than others to my participants is explored through a relational ontology, where “meaning emerges from the *relationships between things* (Grauer, 2020, p. 76). The relationality of absence presence is discussed from and between differing accounts of the value assigned to SHC from connection with known or unknown previous wearers. This leads to a discussion about unique and special clothing that troubles the western dualistic boundaries of subject and object to become more than object, but not quite subject. The notion of agency and agential clothing is considered using Jane Bennetts’s theory of “*Thing-Power*: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (2010, p. 6).

Mystery

The Mystery chapter is so named to capture the puzzling contradictions I discovered between my participants’ beliefs about SHC and the realities of SHC trade in Aotearoa. In some ways, recalling Fassin (2012), it represents an exploration of what is taken-for-granted in the moral and ethical stance-making infused within my world and my participants’ worlds of SHC. I discuss how co-emergent knowledge in research can challenge, elicit, and clarify ingrained beliefs that are built and reinforced by the perpetuation of narratives and social structures designed to support them. The dominance of charities in SHC retail since the 1950s, combined with contemporary narratives of environmental sustainability, bound together and unchallenged, are enculturated as social norms that maintain conceptions of SHC as charitable, not-for-profit, and contributing to the common good in society. This gives rise to a discussion about the existence of a hypothetical social contract and the impact of presumed breaches to it. The lack of overall transparency in SHC trade in Aotearoa obfuscates the divergence between the predominant

narratives about SHC as charity and the realities of trade and the social and environmental impacts.

The obfuscation of facts leads to antipathy toward the realities of the SHC industry in Aotearoa and is discussed through a lens of the social constructions of disposal, that encompass acts of both riddance and abeyance, and pose questions of how waste is constituted. The fluid conceptions of waste as a resource and waste as being valueless are discussed through my participants' responses, particularly those regarding the importation of SHC in Aotearoa. The context of disposal, as described above, as an active and social process within consumption is examined via Kevin Hetherington's application of absent presence. It challenges the possibility of anything being entirely absent, suggesting that things are only ever "moved along" (Hetherington, 2004, p. 162). Consequently, I discuss how the various acts of disposal, carry with them the responsibility of upholding the social relations associated with the items and where they are 'moved along' to. Some things for which a proper means of disposal is unclear or unavailable can become burdensome and challenge the social order by their recursivity.

The riddance of unwanted clothing, constituted as waste in Aotearoa, is problematised through waste management practices and the future possibility of clothing and textile recycling in Aotearoa. The current initiatives proposed by UsedFULLY organisation to enhance the management of clothing and textile waste and the aims of these initiatives are discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion about corporate greenwashing and the historical efficacy of product stewardship as corporations attempt to demonstrate the sustainability of their operations through various, usually ineffectual initiatives, designed to maintain the status quo (and profits) rather than effect real change. An example of clothing recycling and the difficulties inherent in these processes is discussed alongside the perils of incomplete or ineffectual riddance. This is particularly pertinent to the riddance of synthetic and blended fabrics where decomposition and breakdown processes are only partially known due to their longevity.

3 Literature Review

Introduction

The global trade in SHC is of growing interest to multiple social science disciplines because of the social, economic, and political impacts on importing and exporting nations. Anthropologists have analysed and critiqued the various types of global trade in SHC since the 1970s. Notably, the work of geographer Andrew Brooks (2013), anthropologists Daniel Miller (2005a, 2005b), Lucy Norris (2012), and Karen Tranberg Hansen (2004, 2005, 2019) have analysed and critiqued a breadth of issues such as the westernisation of local culture and identity, the assimilation of western material culture, value creation, employment, and the culpability and association of charitable organisations with exploitation and the politics of waste. Further, geographers Nicky Gregson and Louise Crewe (2003) comprehensively analyse second-hand shopping practices, places, and spaces. They examine how some of the appeals of secondhand shopping places and practices are because of their contrast to more mundane “first-hand” shopping practices.

However, while these theories offer excellent insights into SHC as a pastime and a global commodity, research and analysis of SHC consumption and practice in Australasia are few. Otago University consumer marketing scholars Lisa McNeill and Rebecca Moore (2015) examine the value-action gap in sustainable fashion consumption, i.e., “inconsistencies in what people say and do regarding pro-environmental values and behaviour” (Trisia Farrelly and Corrina Tucker, 2014, p. 11). SHC feature in this study as a sustainable alternative to fast fashion; the term used to describe the changes in the clothing industry caused by low-cost production and rapidly changing styles that encourage the more frequent purchasing of new items (McNeill & Moore, 2015, p. 213). Australian scholar Kathleen Horton (2018) analyses fast fashion’s role in feminising consumption and liability for its ills. Auckland University of Technology (AUT) Master of Business graduate Maria Hernandez-Curry’s thesis “Global production network for second-hand clothes from New Zealand to Papua New Guinea” (2018) examines value creation in the export trade in SHC from Aotearoa and the contradiction between well-intended charitable donations and for-profit sales.

Consequently, there is a gap in Aotearoa research and literature that explores local consumption of SHC from a social and material perspective that this thesis attempts to fill. Research about

consumption, although plentiful, has been criticised for a failure to define what consumption is, (David. M. Evans, 2019; David Graeber, 2011; Daniel Miller, 2012) and as such has tended to be criticised as being overly focused on shopping, in terms of acquiring or procuring items, rather than how they are used, by whom, and how they are discarded when no longer needed or wanted (Evans, 2019). This thesis defines consumption broadly as including acquisition (procuring, buying, gifting, and inheriting), appropriation (using), and disposal (riddance, abeyance, donation, and waste). Therefore, SHC consumption and practice referred to here includes acquisition, appropriation, and disposal and its consequences. This thesis is supported by the general literature on consumption and materiality and adds value through a unique perspective of SHC consumption and practice using a micro-segment in Aotearoa not previously analysed. Further, this research brings together the hitherto under-researched, little known, and, perhaps, taken-for-granted social relations embroiled in SHC. Although spatially and temporally bound, the research spans individual and intimate perspectives, and builds out to the social systems and structures that maintain social relations, yielding insights to the social changes involved in the growth of SHC in Aotearoa. The primary sources of literature that support and aid my thinking about the main themes that emerged from my research are mapped by the chapter themes: Morality, Materiality, and Mystery.

Morality

In recent years much of the discussions about consumption have focused on critiques of over-consumption, giving rise to debates about the growing awareness and possibility of ethical consumption, eco-consumption, and environmentally sustainable consumption choices. SHC, once associated with charity shops, have become popularised by their inclusion in these narratives, leading to an increased presence of SHC shops. Narratives of charity have expanded to include narratives of ethical consumption and have created a potent blend of morally infused justifications for consumption choices. To examine the role of morality in SHC shopping, it is necessary first to understand the role of morality in consumption generally.

Broadly, the literature on the role of morality in consumption practices traces the rise of conspicuous consumption from its somewhat negative and morally charged historical context to current analyses of material culture. The work of Daniel Miller (2001, 2012), Richard Wilk (2001) and David Graeber (2011) aim to understand consumption practices in a modern context by critiquing previous arguments that position consumption in binary opposition to production and, in doing so, not only render all consumption as inherently bad, but fail to define precisely

what consumption is. Further, Graeber (2011) argues that by positioning consumers as merely passive and impotent recipients of production, consumption as a social practice is ignored. Miller (2012) delves into the ethnographic analysis of shopping practices to understand how meaning is made from this necessary yet deemed morally bad practice and transformed into acts of virtue via moral reasoning. Wilk (2001) is also useful for understanding how forms of consumption became moralistic and subject to a moral good/bad dichotomy. And secondly, how this binarism can be linked and situated temporally and spatially within a period's broader political and socio-economic issues. Didier Fassin's (2012) work on moral anthropology provides the genealogy and context of moral philosophy and how it continues to play various roles within the sub-disciplines of anthropology and, more broadly across the social sciences. Fassin (2012) contends, "The object of a moral anthropology is the moral making of the world" (p. 4), in this case, my participants' worlds of SHC.

Drawing on the work of anthropologist Daniel Miller (2001, 2012), who questions the role of morality in consumption by analysing and critiquing the morally negative connotations associated with consumption when positioned in opposition to and isolated from production. He argues that while these entrenched accounts comment on the perceived ills of the effects of consumption, particularly materialism, capitalism, and environmentalism, they fail to engage with the real-life practice of consumers, and why and what they choose to consume. He contrarily contends that rather than assuming that less consumption is required per se, more consumption is needed for necessities like clean water and medicines when grounded in the principle of equitable global distribution. Miller (2001) suggests that the perversion toward consumption is because of the view that "While production creates the world, consumption is the act whereby we use it up" (p. 227). He argues that 'using up' a divinely created world and thereby diminishing it requires propitiation for a divine creator. Therefore, he attributes the "centrality of sacrifice to any theory of consumption" (2012, p. 78) as the appeasing ritual performed at the "transition between production and consumption" (2012, p. 78). The purpose of the ritual is to absolve consumers of the guilt associated with diminishing the world. He applies this rationale of ritual sacrifice to his *Theory of Shopping* (1998). He proffers that moral notions, specifically thrift, are practised by shoppers to justify their consumption through demonstrating moral responsibility, which upholds their perceived social order. His work shifts the focus on consumption from a harmful and destructive act to regarding consumption (shopping) as a facet of social behaviour that contributes to our understanding of material culture. Accordingly, Miller's work gives anthropological insight into why, and what, consumers actually consume.

While Miller's approach critiques morality in consumption and how consumers use morality to justify these consumption choices, less attention is paid to disposal as an integral part of consumption. However, he recognises the relational importance of divestment of 'stuff' in terms of dealing with loss, such as those belonging to a deceased person or an ex-partner which he regards as being a part of the "rituals of separation" (2010, p.148) used to transition through grief. Thus, much of his work is confined to the acquisition and appropriation phases of consumption and the morality thereof. He does not attempt to critique the morality of the extraction or manufacturing phases of production and confines his analysis of consumption to acquisition or shopping. He does not account for how morality features in second-hand economies specifically or within the broadening narratives of charity and sustainability.

Wilk (2001) frames how the historical, moralistic notions of consumption as 'bad' arose by tracing the assumptions of immorality back to the work of economist and sociologist Theodore Veblen (1899). According to Wilk (2001), Veblen argued that consumption was fuelled by false and shallow values of social competition and emulation, and to use valuable capital in this pursuit rather than in asset building was deemed wasteful and extravagant (p. 247). Wilk (2001) suggests that all forms of consumption are "morally ambiguous and problematic" (p. 253). Firstly because of the social, political, and economic relations involved in the just or unjust distribution of resources. Secondly, the contradictory nature of 'good' and 'bad' consumption choices pit individual choices against more complex societal, national or international options and the power dynamics involved that determine who and what, does and does not control the options made available to consumers. For example, the reusability and repairability of clothing, the materials used in manufacture and their durability or suitability for recycling. Personal consumption choices impact others, and therefore, individual choice is never wholly contained within individual consequences, and therefore, "the common good" (Wilk, 2001, p. 254) is ever-present, if not always apparent in personal choices of consumption. As globalisation has intensified, 'the common good' has expanded out of the sight of many consumers. Poor access to information further obscures the impacts of the consumption choices typically made by consumers in the global north on producers in the global south.

Wilk (2001) argues that while moralistic notions of consumption are "inevitable...they are not arbitrary; on the contrary, they are highly patterned, and they have a social and historical context" (p. 250), and for these reasons, morality is a necessary frame through which to view consumption. Wilk (2001) focuses on the necessity of morality in consumption on a global scale, including impacts such as climate change and planetary damage within his scope. Accordingly,

Wilk's work critiques a focus on the morality of individual consumers and a general moralistic notion of consumption because, he asserts, it obscures the broader moral implications of globalisation that require further analysis.

While Wilks' approach provides history and insight into the necessity of the role of morality in consumption and some production. Like Miller, less attention is paid to the role of disposal in consumption practices. While including global production and consumption systems, he does not include the global disposal of waste within this scope. Consequently, he does not analyse second-hand consumption or the role played by morality, from acquisition, appropriation and disposal. This chapter aims to fill the gap left in this literature by thinking through the role of morality in second-hand economies, specifically as applied in SHC consumption choices.

More broadly, I use the work of Didier Fassin (2012) to provide the genealogy and context of moral philosophy and how it continues to play various roles within the sub-disciplines of anthropology. This theoretical framework has deep roots in two distinct genealogies: Aristotle and Kant discussed in the Morality chapter.

Materiality

Much has been written about clothing as material culture and has tended to focus on the external influences that shape the material weight of clothing, such as fashion, culture and tradition, social hierarchies, and political statements (Brooks, 2015; Kuchler and Miller, 2005; Miller, 2005; Tranberg Hansen, 2000, 2005). Other more general studies of materiality have been criticised for their exclusive focus on the human concept of materiality as a quality bestowed upon a passive material. The biggest critic of this approach being Tim Ingold (2007). Ingold (2007) argues that viewing materiality in this way can lead to the dematerialisation, obfuscation, or exclusion of the source materials from which an object is made, as well as any agential power it may possess or transformation it may have undergone, and continues to undergo, as it mingles with other materials and organisms over time. I draw on the work of Ingold (2007) to clarify the distinction I make between the materials and materiality of SHC, the former referring to the matter from which clothes are made and the latter referring to the human significance of both the materials as matter and the clothes as artefacts. It is a necessary distinction as my thesis explores the tactility of materials and their "social lives" (Appadurai, 1986), discussed in chapter six. SHC present an opportunity to explore the multiple materials, processes, and complex materialities that are sculpted throughout the life cycle of SHC as they circulate within what Ingold (2007) calls the "generative fluxes of the world" (p. 12).

Gregson and Crewe's (2003) research on second-hand cultures in England gives a fascinating comparison between the spaces and practices of second-hand shopping and those of the "first-cycle" "high street" (p. 97) shopping areas. Their research argues that the contrast between second-hand and 'first-cycle' shopping (spaces and practice) appeals to many. While mainstream 'high street' shopping can be regarded as something of a chore that needs to be performed and productive, second-hand shopping is pleasurable, fun, and framed as "leisure time; [working] as a treat" (p. 95) without the necessity of provisioning. The 'treat' they suggest is as much about a purchase as it is about the practice. Secondly, 'the treat' is framed in terms of the unpredictability and variety of second-hand shops and the challenge in finding something, as opposed to the "too repetitive, too pre-selected" (p. 97) and homogeneity of 'first-cycle' retail that is too easy and routine as a practice. As geographers, Gregson and Crewe (2003) focus on spaces and places rather than the materiality of the clothes. Notably, their analysis lacks attention to the sensory perceptions of SHC, the importance of touch in assessing the clothes and the relationality and social coding of both fabrics and clothes.

Consequently, to analyse my participants' responses about the materiality of SHC, experienced through touch, I draw upon the work of anthropologists Tim Ingold and Amy Whitehead to think through the sensory and embodied experience of SHC shopping. Ingold's (2007, 2010, 2013, 2018) work on the innate materiality of all things, particularly their capacity for processual and relational transformation is a useful frame when considering how knowledge of materials and their "affordances" (2018, p. 40) are learned through touching and working with materials. He focuses attention on the materiality of material, rather than reserving materiality as a human-centric domain, or a feature of human creativity, imposed on passive materials. To examine the intrinsic properties of materials, Ingold uses James Gibson's division of the environment into "medium, substance and surfaces" (as cited in Ingold, 2007, p. 4). The interactivity between these mutually constituted layers forms perceptions of the environment experienced through shape, texture, strength, and resistance. Understanding the innate qualities of materials, or "affordances, that is, the intrinsic properties of the objects in themselves, regardless of whether any living being is there to realise them" (Ingold, 2018, p. 40) constitute 'knowing' the material. Knowing is gained through embodied knowledge and experience learned through touching, making, and crafting the materials in a process that he refers to as "correspondence" (2013, p. 7). "To correspond with the world, in short, is not to describe it, or to represent it, but to *answer* to it" (2013, p. 108). For Ingold, the 'affordances' are not firm attributes but mutable, like "stories"

or “histories” such that “practitioners know them by knowing their stories: of what they do and what happens to them when treated in particular ways” (2013, p. 31).

Amy Whitehead (2018) describes the importance of touch in religious statue devotion and assists in thinking through the performativity of touch. “To touch something is to gain knowledge of it, or to know it” (p. 229). Touch helps us to “apprehend and make sense of our world” (p. 229). Thus, knowledge goes beyond the intellect to become embodied (Serres, as cited in Whitehead, 2018, p. 229). In touching something, we are touched in return, “momentarily inseparable” (Whitehead, 2018, p. 232); in this moment, there is potential for bliss or disgust. Lingering smells on clothes may invite or repel touch. Smells may bring the absent into presence. As Kevin Hetherington (2004) argues, “The absent can have just as much of an effect upon relations as recognisable forms of presence can have” (p. 159) in other words absences *do* things, and they are performative in this regard. However, as Farrelly, Stewart-Withers & Dombrowski (2014) argue, “the performance of absence is simultaneously emotionally felt” (p. 5) and therefore, analysis of the experience of absences ought to include both the emotional and corporeal. Morgan Meyer (2012) discusses the relational ontology of absence, that is, that absences exist through relations that “make absences matter” (p. 105). Rather than absence be regarded in opposition to presence, and only as something that *does* something, they are also something that we engage with, “something we do something *to*” (p. 104). Meyer contends that absence, when considered as “a trace and as something to be traced” (p. 107), elucidates more clearly why absence matters. Previous wearers leave ‘traces’ on SHC, be they known or unknown, and they have the potential to lead us toward or away from “other places, other directions, other times” (Meyer, 2012, p. 107). While these ideas and theories help to think through how perceptions of SHC are formed and how meaning and knowledge become embodied through touch and smell, absence and presence, it does not support an analysis of why, despite knowledge of them, some things matter more than others.

The materialities of SHC clothing are complex, at times confounding and loaded with contradiction. Daniel Miller’s (2005a, 2005b) work on materiality helps examine the assignment of ‘good/bad’ dichotomies to SHC and the contradictions that might be implied through my participants’ various forms of materiality. Such as where and what notions of value were assigned and to what items. Miller’s idea of the “different registers of materiality” (2005b, p. 19) helps explain why some things spatially and temporally matter more than others and what internal and external factors might influence their assignment within this hierarchy, such as social systems and the dynamics of power that operate within them. For example, Miller (2005a)

questions why clothing (in the western world) is often characterised as superficial, and asserts, that it is a legacy of western ontology, a “depth ontology” (p. 3), a way of being that considers the real authentic self to lie within, which implies that surfaces, such as clothes, are considered less real. Although noted by Miller (2005a), the potential agency of clothing is not thoroughly analysed in his work. However, he briefly critiques theories that position clothing as merely “semiotic...signs or representations of social relations” (p. 2). Webb Keane’s work (as cited in Miller 2005a) addresses the tendency to regard clothing as superficial by approaching clothing as agential “part of what constitutes and forms lives, cosmologies, reasons, causes and effects”. As he succinctly summaries “[It’s] not just that the emperor had no clothes, but that the clothes should no longer have an emperor” (p. 2).

Materiality is relational and resists the confinement typical of the western binary ontology of Cartesian dualism, mind/matter, subject/object, nature/culture, animate/inanimate. John Law’s definition of relational ontology is: “what there is in the world, social and natural, is an effect of uncertain and provisional relations of representation, political and scientific” (as cited in Morgan Meyer, 2012, p.107). Therefore, according to Kacey Grauer, “meaning emerges from the *relationships between things*” (2020, p. 76), including the observer who “cannot take herself [sic] out of the picture” (Alexander Sidorkin, 2002, p.91). ‘Things’, then, are neither good nor bad inherently, but they become socially coded as good or bad through the multiple meanings assigned to them depending on who is assessing them. Consequently, to think through the ‘more-than-clothes, as special clothes, and clothes that mattered far more to my participants’ because they contained essences of special people, I turn to the work of Jane Bennett (2004, 2010), and specifically her theory of “*Thing-Power*: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (2010, p. 6) to better comprehend clothing as agential.

I also return to Ingold’s (2013) and Whitehead’s (2018) work to situate the agency of unique clothing within a relational ontology. ‘Thing-Power’ is relational; as Bennett (2004) suggests, “a material body always resides within some assemblage or other, and its thing power *is a function of that grouping*. A thing has power by virtue of its operating in *conjunction* with other things” (p. 355), much like Bruno Latour’s “actants” in a network (as cited in Bennett, 2004, p. 355). French philosopher Michel Serres refers to this connection as a “co-mingling” (as cited in Whitehead 2018, p. 232) and is applied by Whitehead in discussing devotees who seek to touch and be touched by religious statues, ‘co-mingling’ with them and becoming “momentarily inseparable” (p. 232). For Ingold (2013), the clothes have “stories” (p. 31) shared or known

within the assemblage. The unique clothes have ‘Thing-power’ because of their ‘assemblage’ with humans

The gap in this literature is essentially that the focus of these theories is not SHC. This chapter aims to extend the various works on the materials and materiality to SHC consumption and practice in Aotearoa using the qualitative analysis of my participants’ stories about the SHC that matter to them.

Mystery

It is a little-known fact that each year, thousands of tonnes of SHC are traded in Aotearoa through imports and exports. Anecdotally, a common assumption, including my own, is that SHC in Aotearoa are wholly the result of clothing donated or discarded from first-time use of clothing already circulating in Aotearoa. This assumption is bolstered by media accounts that valorise SHC as stylish, environmentally sustainable choices while positioning the global trade in SHC as occurring elsewhere.

The primary literature regarding the global trade in SHC tends to be focused on exports of SHC from the global north to less affluent countries in the global south. The work of anthropologists Lucy Norris (2012) and Karen Tranberg Hansen (2004, 2005, 2019), along with geographer Andrew Brooks (2013), analyse this trade using themes as broad as identity formation, waste, sustainability, recycling, and charity. The approach used in much of the literature analyses the impacts of this trade in the receiver countries. Tranberg Hansen (2004) challenges the notion of clothing as waste and studies how people in Zambia incorporate imported SHC into their daily lives, identities, and economies. Far from being considered waste dumping, Tranberg Hansen’s portrayal depicts western SHC, or ‘Salaula’ in the Bemba language (p. 7), as a valuable resource. Lucy Norris (2012) analyses the links in the global SHC economy between “marketing, materiality and morals” (p. 139) as clothing donated in the Global North is traded and becomes a valuable resource in the Global South. Andrew Brooks (2013) applies a Global Production Network approach that traces the reproduction of SHC from donations to commodities, capturing value creation activities and labour throughout the network. A common theme in each of these works is the opacity of this trade to those in exporting countries and a lack of knowledge among those who typically donate their clothes to charities.

These works are highly instrumental in the constitution of SHC economies as valuable resources, a far cry from common media depictions of this trade as purely waste dumping, exploitative, and

westernising local cultures. However, they pay less attention to the problems caused by the eventual disposal of these clothes as waste in the receiver countries, often with fewer waste management resources than the originating countries to cope with increased fabric waste (Besser, 2021). Nor do they analyse the systems of power that classify unwanted clothes (matter) as either resource or waste, and the spaces it is allowed to occupy as Max Liboiron (2019) suggests. Further, the work is focused on trading from Global North to Global South, whereas, according to Joshua Reno (2015), trade between North-North and South-South, is “unregulated and ignored” (p. 565).

The work of Hetherington (2004) and to a lesser extent, Miller (2010), theorise acts of disposal as having a “dynamic and performative role within consumption” (Hetherington, 2004, p. 159) rather than conceived as final acts of riddance. When viewed as a recursive process within the social activity of consumption, disposal can be seen as constitutive of multi-scalar social, economic, and political relations and activities (Hetherington, 2004; Reno, 2015) that spans individual, transnational, and global relations. Hetherington (2004) contends that acts of disposal may be considered a series of movements between absence and presence; some items are made present by their absence. Social relations, according to Hetherington (2004), can be as much about what is absent as what is present, and challenges that the absent is never entirely absent; he asserts, it is “only ever *moved along*” (p. 162) via socially constructed conduits of disposal.

Miller (2010) analyses how the divestment of ‘stuff’ that belonged to an ex-partner or a deceased loved one assist in moving through the emotions associated with grief or loss. Some items may take considerable time to ‘move along; some are held in abeyance until an appropriate time or conduit for disposal is found. The conduits for disposal or divestment have many permutations hinged upon presumptions of value and materiality. For example, the family heirlooms that must be handed down within the family rather than thrown away, or the seeming inability to ‘part with’ items owned by someone close, expensive, once loved, or specially gifted, even if disliked or of no more use. A sense of burden is created by not being able to honour the social relations infused within items by disposing of them in an appropriate manner.

Miller (2010) and Hetherington (2004) demonstrate the social importance of disposal through discussions about the ceremonies associated with human burial rights, to think about the care and responsibility required in the disposal. The work of Marcel Mauss, Richard Titmuss, and Robert Hertz (as cited in Hetherington 2004) refer to ceremonies of gifting, potlatch, and burial rights and the importance associated with ensuring against an unwanted return. Hetherington (2004)

describes these processes as a “management of absence” (p. 170) that, if not managed effectively, will lead to an unexpected presence. Representationally, he likens this to a ghost agency, i.e., a haunting. In the case of non-human items, such as SHC, this may be understood as the environmental or global impact of carbon emissions created by their disposal. Or in the case of synthetic fabrics, microfibres leaked into waterways through domestic laundry practices, leading to the ingestion of microfibres throughout eco-systems and food chains. Or given the length of time involved, the relatively unknown consequences of fabric and textiles made from plastic derivatives may ‘haunt’ future generations.

While these approaches provide deep insights into the relational and processual view of disposal, they are broadly applied to all artefacts. They lack a specific focus on a particular kind of artefact, such as clothing, and the real lives of consumers associated with them. Consequently, the gap I aim to fill is to understand the specific social construction of SHC in Aotearoa and to focus on Aotearoa’s participation in the global trade of SHC through a lens of disposal as an integral part of consumption. Further, I question the transparency and availability of information about Aotearoa’s trade, using my participants’ knowledge and responses to this information as indicative of the disparity between the conception of SHC and the realities in Aotearoa.

Quantitative data used in the introduction and referred to in chapter six is sourced from Statistics NZ-Tatauranga Aotearoa using the Infoshare database. UsedFULLY organisation’s white papers to the New Zealand Government concerning textile and clothing waste in Aotearoa provide the quantitative data regarding textile and clothing waste.

4 Methodology

Introduction

I have been attracted to second-hand, junk, and curiosity shops for as long as I can remember. I feel very comfortable in second-hand shops, nostalgic at times, and deeply interested in the materiality of the ‘things’ and how and why we are drawn to them. It is a lifelong interest that shows no sign of waning; in each new place, the first exploratory pull I feel is invariably toward one of these shops. Tim Ingold (2013, 2014) describes a sentient, enduring, real-time interaction such as this, as more akin to correspondence than interaction, for he says, it “has no starting point or end point. It simply carries on.” (2013, p. 105). In this way, I consider the engagement and pull towards second-hand shops as correspondence. The ambiguity of finds and their purpose or repurpose “always in the making” (Ingold, 2014, p. 389) yet never quite prescribed nor final. Inspired by Ingold (2014) I regard my research as an opportunity to broaden my correspondence with people, places and ‘things’. For the scope of this thesis, I have narrowed the field to second-hand clothes (SHC) because of the noticeable but seemingly inexplicable increase in SHC shops and contents.

My primary research methods were participant observation, a reflexive journal to capture field notes, my thoughts, feelings, and insights during the research process, and eight individual semi-structured interviews. I also sought to triangulate my findings by observing posts on public Facebook forums dedicated to op-shopping. COVID-19 lockdowns in the Auckland region from 17th August to 15th December 2021 influenced my research and, as with any student attempting to do fieldwork in a global pandemic, I had to reshape my research practises on the go such as moving to Zoom meetings.

Research Design

I decided that one research site was more practical than attempting a multi-site study within the scope of a Master’s thesis. With ethics approval and full consent from the owners, my participant observation began with volunteering at a local op-shop, rummaging through donations and forming relationships with other volunteers. My labour was offered reciprocally for the ability to research SHC consumption and observe the practice of SHC shopping. Participating in all shop

activities enabled me to understand social relationships and material flows, while generally giving me a feel for the explicit and implicit culture of the shop and the practice of second-hand shopping. My research was inductive, the resultant analysis emerged from the ongoing narratives in correspondence with the people, place, things, and observing and responding to the daily lives and activities centred around the shop.

My fieldnotes were a critical part of my research, captured in a journal alongside my reflexive, ongoing attempts to confront and understand my own biases (Musante, 2014, p. 261). I wrote an account of happenings after each period working in the shop, each interview, and as thoughts came to me. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, I wrote less frequently and at times, had to remind myself that I was still researching, albeit from the confines of my study. Reading my fieldnotes and journal became an essential way for me to stay connected to my research.

Fieldwork is a bodily experience, we participate, observe, and learn through all our senses. Memories are embodied and can conjure the feeling of being there long after a place is left (Okely, 2007). Recalling the senses in the retrospective analysis of experience in a journal is useful. I captured my sensory and emotional reactions, be they mild disgust at flakes of dandruff on a well-worn jumper, lingering aromas of a perfume I thought I recognised, or the curious sadness I once felt about a crinoline lady ornament, her circumstances so reduced and thick with dust I felt compelled to bathe her.

My work in the op-shop was sorting donations, tidying, cleaning, serving customers, and cashing up at the end of the day. I usually worked on Tuesdays, the sorting days, when the shop is closed to customers but open and alive with the vibrancy of the volunteers. I enjoyed the up-beat efficiency of sorting days, the laughter, chat, and storytelling as the whole space is groomed, and cared for. I staffed the shop as much as possible and usually alone. I love being alone in the shop. There is an unusual calm and quiet inside that feels like a pause in time, a liminal feeling that demands the reverence, hush, and respect, like entering a slightly musty sacred space. Every item has a back and future story from the unique to the mass produced, the loved, the gifted, the re-gifted and the rejected. Emblems of the Anthropocene era, these are the things with which we choose to fill our worlds.

I advertised for people to interview using posters I made and hung up in the shop (see appendix D). I introduced my research through chatting to customer who seemed receptive. This was a successful strategy once I had overcome some shyness in approaching people. I needed to talk to some op-shoppers in detail and so recruited eight participants for interviews. I used a core group

of open-ended questions (see Appendix B) because the fluidity of semi-structured interviews suited my qualitative approach. The conversations meandered via the interviewee's voice and steerage, gently brought back to the core questions, should the conversation stray too far.

Unfortunately, I had only completed five interviews when the shop was closed in August 2021 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. As COVID-19 restrictions continued I altered my recruitment strategy and interview process to use digital mediums. A public Facebook site for the shop had recently been created so I decided to try to recruit using it and made personal history with my first ever Facebook post. Proving unsuccessful, I re-advertised via my local book club and secured one interview, which was held over an online Zoom connection. This snowballed to another two people and two discussions, one over Zoom and one in person.

Observing posts on public Facebook sites dedicated to op-shopping in New Zealand served to 'triangulate' some of the themes that emerged from my other methods. Rather than lurk generally as Edelman (2016) emphasises, I tended to use these sites purposefully to dive into specific topics and triangulate my other findings. I did not intend to post questions on these sites or extend their use beyond triangulation, therefore, I did not disclose my research on the sites nor seek informed consent (Seligmann & Estes, 2020). Additional ethics approval was sought when I changed my recruitment to online and interviews to Zoom. My research status remained a low risk.

Choosing a research site

I chose a small, well-established, and popular 'op-shop' as my ideal research site and sought the permissions and courtesies necessary to commence my work. I learned through various networks of local friends that the shop had been operating in the area since the 1980s. Although owned and affiliated with the local church and parish, I learnt it was run by numerous community-minded volunteers not necessarily connected to the church. I was introduced to Grace¹, who invited me to 'sale day' the next Saturday "for a look-see" and suggested that I join the sorting team on Tuesdays. After that induction, I would be free to work in the shop anytime. I requested that Grace introduce me to the team and suggested she make sure everyone was comfortable working with me.

Many accounts of fieldwork describe uncomfortable beginnings, and mine was no exception. My first research day began on a crisp, clear Saturday morning, I was heading keenly and a little

¹ Grace is a pseudonym for an op-shop volunteer.

nervously to my field site at the village op-shop. In its prominent position on the only road through the village, the op-shop sale was spilling out into the street. It looked comical, rather like a bunch of ‘stuff’ had made a bid for freedom. Some had got as far as the front veranda; other more daring pieces had made it as far as the pavement where, resting on tables and racks they had attracted a crowd.

Joy² was overseeing the fray outdoors, her volunteer status evident by a small badge and a welcoming yet proprietary demeanour. She was chatting encouragingly to the crowds of expectant customers fossicking through the goods on offer, clearly enjoying the banter back and forth. Catching her eye, I introduced myself as ‘Rachel-the-researcher’, smiling at the alliteration, and was greeted with a chuckle. After a brief chat about my work and the sale, I was passed with the care and precision of a baton through the team of volunteers. I was greeted warmly on each pass and encouraged to introduce my work. The volunteers had been notified of my research and offered the opportunity to opt-out of working with me should they feel uncomfortable. Feeling a little uncomfortable myself, I wondered if anyone had taken it up. I had no idea how to behave in this new ‘field’, not quite a customer, not yet a volunteer and a novice researcher. What were the rules? How does one observe without looking creepy? God forbid me a clipboard! as was the kindly but quite horrifying suggestion from one of the volunteers concerned that I might forget a vital detail.

Inside was a chaotic scene, full of people jostling and rummaging like a flock of demented fowl. There was nowhere evident for me to stand or be, that was not in the way. My eyes were darting around, trying to take too much in at once, more like I was casing the joint than observing. I felt awkward; I needed something tactile to do to blend in and relieve my self-consciousness. The high-studded, usually tidy shop began to feel stuffy. The air infused with a blend of coffee and perfume added to my growing discomfort. The last straw was a Pad Thai that announced its arrival via the unique aroma of peanuts and fish sauce. Queasily, I retreated to the veranda. Further chit-chat with some volunteers outside confirmed that today was not a typical or good day to start on. I took the cue and bid them farewell until ‘sorting day’.

Sorting day - Fieldwork. Take-two.

Each Tuesday morning, a team of volunteers dedicate their time and effort to sorting, cleaning, and displaying the newly donated goods in the shop. The team are a friendly bunch of women

² Joy is one of the pseudonyms I chose for the volunteers discussed further on.

with enough free time to volunteer and who take great pride in the shop and the teamwork. New donations are typically left in bags or boxes on the porch at the back of the shop and can vary enormously in quality and condition. Bag by bag, item by item, the donations are expertly assessed, classified, and allocated to an area within the shop amidst a constant hum of convivial chatter, and intermittent hoots of laughter. There are no job descriptions; talents shine through tasks and once discovered, become well-respected ‘superpowers.’ Hope, complete with jeweller’s monocle, is the expert at identifying fine china tableware, silverware and jewellery. Any such item with the potential to be grander than its circumstances might suggest is taken straight to Hope for further assessment. Many are given pride of place in ‘Remuera’, the name of an upmarket Auckland suburb, and the staff nickname for the most prominent display area reserved for posh stuff.

There is an air of excitement on sorting day. A valuable ‘find’ is often celebrated; work stops for some exemplary items while multiple opinions are sought. The shop’s ethos is that it is an ‘opportunity’ shop, there was little over \$10, even in ‘Remuera’. I asked about pricing and was told, “We’re traditional, not like those other expensive ones”. Bartering was common among regular customers, and they engaged in good spirits. I was enthusiastically introduced to some regulars and kindly cautioned about others. The shop serves the community more than storing and selling second-hand goods. It is part of the community hub, the personal foibles and frailties of the familiar are tolerated as is common among small communities.

I wanted to measure the volume of clothes flowing in and out of the shop, to give a local perspective alongside the national statistics I had found through Stats NZ – Tatauranga Aotearoa. I attempted to weigh all the donations and waste, over a week. However, this proved too difficult because of the inability to control the constant flow of donations left on the back porch at any time and stored. The sorting criteria are essentially ‘gut feel’ and sensory. One day Grace opened a black bag and recoiled sharply and dumping the whole bag in the rubbish, turned towards me, and said, “sometimes...you just know”. Sorting Tuesdays coincide with the local rubbish collection. Municipal rubbish collection costs the shop in the region \$900 per year in the three 240-litre green wheely bins plus a 240-litre recycling bin that are filled, collected, and destined for landfill or recycling station each week.

Recruiting Participants

The shop was the leading recruitment site. I designed a gawdy poster to assist in the recruitment (see Appendix D) and displayed it prominently in the op-shop. Five participants were recruited

via chatting about the poster in the shop until the Covid-19 lockdowns when I moved to digital recruitment via the Facebook group and a local book club. I found one more participant, and a little snowballing led to two more people. Of the two recruitment methods, despite initial shyness, I preferred talking to people in the shop. By the time we were ‘doing’ the interview, I felt I had already built some rapport and the conversations flowed easily Okely (2015, p. 137).

Participants

I have used pseudonyms to protect the identities of my research site, the op-shop, the volunteers, and my research participants. I chose the pseudonyms for individual op-shop volunteers for literary flow and reference. The names were selected to reflect the church ownership, purpose and ethos of the op-shop. They are Grace, Joy, and Hope.

I asked my participants to choose their pseudonyms so that they may recognise their contributions to my thesis. I felt this approach balanced the often taken-for-granted ethical requirement for anonymity with respect for my participants’ agency and voices (Niamh Moore, 2012). My suggestion was that for fun, a pseudonym was chosen that represented the most cherished item of their SHC which worked as a very effective icebreaker to our conversations. A brief description of the characteristics of my participants that emerged during my conversations follows for readers' context.

Orange Multipurposesportstop. ‘Orange’

Orange, a vibrant Baby Boomer, has an elegant kind of efficiency that implies capability and practicality. Now enjoying retirement, she has led an international life but smiles as she recounts a rural upbringing with a penchant for making do and mending and describes the joy she still feels in finding a suitable garment at an excellent price for herself or others.

Floral Dress. ‘Floral’

We meet via Zoom link and move on quickly from the slight awkwardness of those not entirely familiar with digital meetings. Floral, a younger Baby Boomer, learnt her considerable dressmaking skills from her family. Growing up, clothes were made, not bought. Her skills are embodied, and with her eye for the weft and weave of good fabrics, they are frequently applied to complex, time-consuming upcycling tasks.

Satin Andlace. ‘Satin’

We chat easily over cups of tea in a local café; she is demonstrative and smiles broadly. An older Baby Boomer and recent immigrant, following her grown-up family and grandchildren to Aotearoa. Satin loves beautiful things, believing fabrics of “yesteryear” are more elegant and desirable than those found these days. She is blessed with creative and artistic talent and loves the tactility of “thrift shopping”, as she calls it, and finding good quality things to spruce up through repair or laundering to sell or gift.

Pink Fluffycoat. ‘Pink’

Pink chooses to meet me on the quiet, shaded terrace of a gourmet ice-cream shop on a hot day. She is eager to discuss fast fashion's unethical, inhumane, and destructive environmental impacts. For her, as for many of her Generation Z peers, the threat of climate change looms large and buying SHC represents a rejection of the systems that she believes are “wrecking the planet”. She is aware of corporations’ “shitty” tactics to ‘greenwash’ their businesses and is not fooled by them.

Greensilk Ballgown. ‘Greensilk’

Greensilk belongs to Generation X, she is easy-going, warm, and friendly. We had already enjoyed a lengthy chat in the op-shop, so meeting again felt comfortable and relaxed. Greensilk described op-shopping and SHC as a family trait in her genes and loved the “thrill of the hunt”. She cannot abide waste and seldom buys anything new as she considers this wasteful when there is “so much good second-hand stuff around.”.

Beachyblue Dreamcatcher. ‘Beachyblue’

Millennial Beachyblue wears her politics as proudly as her SHC. We have coffee at a local café. She is a young woman with worldly experience, and her forthright yet kindly demeanour is engaging. Related to Greensilk, she too has inherited the genes for op-shopping, enjoying the thrill of the hunt and the sense of wonder where “you don’t know what you will find”. Choosing to spend her dollar where it is most useful, she likes supporting worthy community causes “of the people, for the people” and rejects the spoils of capitalism.

Apricot Linen. ‘Apricot’

We meet for the first time on a Zoom call. Any potential shyness in a first meeting is seen off noisily by her adorable Jack Russell terrier. Apricot is a younger Baby Boomer, semi-retired from an interesting and eclectic working life, including working in the clothing industry in the UK, where she gained a broad knowledge of fabrics and various methods for their proper care. From a family of “beach people”, she is confidently skilful, capable and practical.

Lozz. ‘Lozz’

We meet at her home, keeping an appropriate social distance given that we are just out of COVID-19 lockdown. Lozz is a younger Baby Boomer who typically, does not buy many SHC. She did not have a favourite item to use as a pseudonym but was careful to tell me that she always donated her clothes. Newly retired from work situated in shopping malls, she is very aware of the pressure to consume and admits succumbing to impulse purchases at times.

Interviews

Choosing a pseudonym worked well as a conversation icebreaker; one participant even brought me the item she had chosen. The time and place for interviews were by mutual agreement and ended up being two home-based, four café based, and two zoom meetings. Meeting a participant at their home can be risky for both researcher and participant, I mitigated the risk to me by ensuring my next of kin knew where I was going and had the address, phone number and name of my participant. I ensured that participants had my information sheet (appendix A) with the names and contact details of my supervisors should they have any concerns

I began interviews by double-checking consent, re-iterating the recording methods, and clarifying when the recording was about to start and end. I also reminded the interviewees that discussion topics and questions were voluntarily answered, and they may stop or refuse to respond at any time. I used a small Dictaphone for in-person interviews, each conversation was transcribed almost verbatim - I removed the ‘umms, errs, ah-hems, and giggles’. I sent the transcript back to the interviewees within a week to check that they were correct. I also transcribed the Zoom recording as was requested by my interviewees.

Coding and analysis

Transcriptions were thematically analysed through the coding of words or phrases emphasising emic perspectives and enabling the data to narrate the story (Pulla, 2014). The identified themes were then mapped to show hierarchies, branches, and offshoots from which I could analyse relations between themes and dead ends. Although this technique has been criticised for being lengthy and perhaps placing too much emphasis on the knowledge gained from social constructions (Pulla, 2014, p. 21), it proved an appropriate method for this research because the social construction of SHC is precisely what I wanted to understand. I also used narrative analysis to interpret the deeper meanings associated with specific items of SHC, mainly where the previous clothes owners were known to the participants, be they swapped, handed down, or inherited. This approach complemented the participant led conversations by bringing their “stor[ies] of the world” (Mishler as cited in Bryda, 2014, p. 121) to the fore, creating a more holistic background to their subjectivity. This method also helped me identify my bias, particularly when referring to my field notes to cross-check how I was feeling and what I was thinking on that day, and constantly asking myself, who am I in this?

Ethics and Challenges

In principle and practice, this project did not have any significant ethical concerns and was deemed low risk by Massey University Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix C) and given approval: number 4000024510. As noted, each participant was given an information sheet and encouraged to ask questions; written consent was gained before interviews (see Appendix A). I was concerned that moving my recruitment and interviews to digital media changed the terms of my approved research ethics application, so I reapplied stating the changes and was advised to continue. This change gave me the opportunity to experience digitally based methods which I found awkward at first, but as I progressed, I realised that the advantage of Zoom, despite being intense, was that conversations could be held without intimidation or distraction from the surrounding environment. Participants needed to consent to recorded Zoom interactions rather than tape recordings, although storage and disposal would be subject to the same standards of care. I used the same information sheet and consent forms for online as other for interviews (see Appendix A)

I also had ethical concerns regarding the potential of introducing my participants to new information about the commercialisation of SHC in Aotearoa. I felt this could be perceived as 'bomb dropping' or catching them out, and that this might interfere with or change the research landscape. At the beginning of my research, I was shocked to learn that Aotearoa imports and exports SHC. I wanted to understand how widely known this was and to test the transparency of what was becoming a growing industry. In order to avoid the bombshell, I asked my participants about their awareness of the global trade in SHC, referring to recent media articles they may have seen as grounding for this information. When asked, I shared information in general terms unless explicitly asked about Aotearoa's trade. I did not share the complete data from Stats NZ – Tatauranga Aotearoa at the time of the interviews, which was beneficial because it enabled insight into feelings and attitudes toward this trade generally without the distraction of complex data.

Non-ethics related challenges

The first challenge I faced was believing in myself as a researcher. At the beginning of fieldwork, arrival at the research site can be pretty daunting. I felt very awkward in the shop at first, unsure what to do while I observed and unsure how to observe. Sorting days were easier as I occupied myself with tasks and chatted to the volunteers as we worked. As I grew more confident and relaxed, I began to enjoy working in the shop and would happily chat with customers, often finding myself in quite intense discussions. I missed my research site during the COVID-19 lockdowns and the embodied thinking and feeling of research. It was challenging to keep the sense of research alive from my 'armchair' study; I was grateful for the notes I had made, particularly those describing how I felt, as they helped to conjure the feeling of being there

Zoom interviews were challenged by stuttering internet connections and pauses that seemed exaggerated and uncomfortable in the intensity of face-to-face communication. I felt I had to work much harder to build rapport online and tried to optimise any potential for distractions as icebreakers, such as a barking dog or an interesting background. I was again reminded of the embodied nature of participant observation research, and how much we take for granted as we touch and are touched by the environments we work in, interpreting and responding to the myriad sensory messages exchanged. On reflection, the awkwardness of the Zoom meetings was short-lived if intense, and perhaps the anxiety was mine; my participants seemed very comfortable 'at home' both figuratively and literally. As Marnie Howlett (2021) suggests, the

digital medium enabled a co-presence and an intimacy that a more public co-location may not have achieved. My participants freely led the conversation, narrating, referring to and showing me artefacts. These actively narrated encounters with artefacts gave insights into the essence of the participants, far beyond the image of a large and almost disembodied head on a screen.

The first theme to emerge from volunteering and interviews was morality which persisted throughout the research in various guises. Most notably was the generational pattern that emerged within the social, economic, and political frames pertinent to different social groups. Accordingly, my findings chapters commence with this theme.

5 Morality

Introduction

To begin to respond to the question of why people chose to buy and donate SHC, in this chapter, I describe how my participants expressed different notions of morality and analyse what this may reveal about their SHC consumption practices as individuals and as members of social groups living in contemporary Aotearoa. Contextually, I analyse the notions of morality, supported by anthropological theory, and observed through a generational lens. Although the reasons given by my participants were varied, they were all imbued with a sense of morality that followed a generational pattern (Miller, 2001, 2012; Wilk, 2001). The morals or ethics cited were similar within, but differed between generations, evocative of a generational moral zeitgeist. As such, I have used generational descriptions common in popular culture and pertaining to my participants as introduced in the previous chapter: Baby Boomer (older and younger within this generation), Generation X, Millennial and Generation Z. The delineation between generations may vary depending on the source. However, I have used the Stats NZ – Tatauranga Aotearoa definition as cited in Eriksen (2021).

After building rapport with chit-chat and giggles about the stories behind the choice of pseudonyms, I began the more specific part of the conversations with questions that asked interviewees to describe their overall interaction and interest in SHC (see Appendix B). The participants started with comfortably generic descriptions of their practice such as buyer, seller, donor, trader, or combinations thereof. They moved with varying pace and confidence towards their particular and personal interest in SHC. Some were more forthright and expressive than others. Still, throughout each conversation, they shared glimpses of their inner selves and personal values through storytelling, giving valuable contextual insight into the development of their subjectivity of their lived experience of their social world. According to Kirin Narayan, our social worlds are shaped by individual and group responses to the “constraints of larger social structures” (2012, p. 48) in which we live and our experience of navigating within them. One such structure is economic. In Aotearoa, we live in a capitalist economy with dominant consumer culture. That is, our lives depend upon the consumption of goods produced in various locations often distant from ourselves, be they local, national, or global. It is not surprising then that conversations with my participants invariably included social and political views about consumer culture and consumption, in general and particular terms. Indeed, each conversation was imbued with a sense of morality, ethics, values, virtues, and vices, suggesting that their SHC

consumption practises were accompanied by some personal feelings of righteousness that when overlaid with demographics formed a generational pattern. As Fassin (2012) observes, “moral questions are embedded in the substance of the social; it is not sufficient to analyse moral codes or ethical dilemmas as if they could be isolated from political, religious, economic, or social issues” (p. 4). Fassin could have used ‘generation’ as a factor also, as evidenced by my findings further along. As such, I have interpreted my participants’ commentaries as representative of underlying moral or ethical beliefs associated with consumption generally, and SHC consumption in particular, within the milieu of their social worlds.

Conversations with my participants revealed how SHC are infused with moralistic notions and ethical stance-making. I interpret and position my commentaries within a wider body of anthropological literature, particularly the work of Daniel Miller, Richard Wilk and Didier Fassin, to support and enable me to think more broadly about these findings of morality. According to Fassin (2012), contemporary moral philosophy tends to be presented within these genealogies in the form of three ethical paradigms: virtue ethics, including consequentialist ethics³ (Aristotelian origin), and deontological ethics (Kantian origin). Briefly characterised, Aristotelian morality is described as “an inner state nourished by virtue and nourishing action: it is a process” (p. 8). In contrast, Kantian morality is regarded as “the set of values and norms that determine what agents are supposed to do and not to do” (p. 7). It is beyond the scope of this thesis to comprehensively analyse either the genealogy, the moral philosophies, their impact upon anthropology or, more broadly, across the social sciences. However, it is important to note that moral philosophies have played various roles in multiple disciplines and continue to contribute to contemporary moral anthropology individually or in combined and sometimes inseparable ways (Fassin, 2012). I use the concept of morality in a broad way that subscribes to neither genealogy particularly. I also acknowledge the growing popularity of the word ‘ethics’ and the increasing tendency to use the word ethics interchangeably with morality. Jo Littler (2007) suggests that this tendency has grown from a desire to avoid the problematic connotations of morality as a “comfortably smug and relatively unreflexive stance” (p. 10). And that the preference for ‘ethics’ as a word is because it is “deemed to be more porous, more open to be used in multiple ways” (p. 10).

³ Consequentialist ethics also based on Aristotelian ethics, although the term ‘consequentialist’ is said to have been coined by British Philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe in 1958

Morality and Second-hand Clothes.

Each participant considered buying or donating SHC a better consumption practice than the various alternatives available for multiple reasons, particularly purchasing mass-produced ‘cheap’, poorly made clothes. This indicates that their interactions with SHC are influenced by their perceptions of morally good and bad that justify their consumption choices. Notions of morality relating to SHC consumption ranged from expressions of frugality, thrift, waste avoidance, environmental sustainability, upcycling/creativity, individual and societal responsibility to recycle, and a rejection of fast fashion and capitalism. In some cases, the secondhandedness of the clothes provides a reconciliation between the potentiality of condoning the ills associated with fast fashion and the needs and desires to dress well.

Although diverse, my analysis reveals that the notions of morality are not arbitrary. When compared, a pattern emerges that exposes some important political and social issues that reflect the moral zeitgeist of the generations. This intrigues me for three reasons. Firstly, I realise that I, too, ‘take my morality shopping’ and that the particular focus of my moralising has developed over the years to reflect changing personal, political, and social issues. Secondly, because of a tendency to assume our views of morality are universally shared or even considered to be the ‘right’ views and, as such, may be taken for granted. And thirdly because, as Fassin (2012) suggests, “The object of a moral anthropology is the moral making of the world” (p. 4), in this case, it is the moral making of SHC. The making of what is ‘right’ is joined inextricably to the making of what is ‘wrong’. As anthropologists and outsiders to the area of study, there is a need to “[shift] our usual vision of moral facts” (p. 4) and question *what* it is that is being taken for granted in our own and others’ moralising. The following analyses aim to do just that, by examining what assumptions my participants are making about the consumption of SHC as a moral or ethical stance and how this links to their generation’s defining political, social, and economic circumstances.

Baby Boomers: Frugality, Making do and Doing right

The Baby Boomer generation refers to people born between 1946 and 1964, now aged between 57 and 77 years old. They are a large generational cohort, the most affluent generation ever and the first to embrace a consumer culture fully (Eriksen, 2021). In Aotearoa, generous state welfare and increased availability of consumer goods enabled the Baby Boomer generation to accumulate wealth quickly while becoming more reliant on consumer goods not just as

necessities for life but for recreation and status. There are differences within this cohort as with any other, and although all were born post-World War two, some were closer to it than others. The impacts of the various restrictions of wartime, such as rationing (Pollock, 2013), were felt more or less severely, depending on where they lived and where they came in their families. Five of my interviewees are Baby Boomers, including Satin, Orange, Apricot, Lozz, and Floral.

Orange and Satin are older baby boomers brought up by parents likely to have clear memories of the second world war and the restrictions imposed, instilling values of frugality, waste avoidance and making do. Orange attributes her value of frugality to growing up in rural Aotearoa, where access to goods was limited, even if they were affordable. She regards SHC consumption as a practical and sensible choice. Orange has practised SHC shopping for years, both here and overseas, she tells me. We speak of frugality as a personal quality and a valuable skill that one should devote both the time and effort to acquire. “Why pay \$300 when you can get something really good for \$10?” she remarks rhetorically, suggesting that her sense of frugality was a taken-for-granted virtue and therefore normative.

We are frugal people, but we are better with our money than people who waste money. I like saving money. All my life I’ve tried not to spend a lot on clothes. I’ve had my clothes a long time; I tend to keep them; anything useful I’ve always donated. It takes a lot for me to put things in the rubbish bin. I guess it’s frugality, which is in-born growing up in the country.

Satin loves fine things and takes pride in recognising quality and a bargain with the potential to fetch more with a bit of care. She speaks of reusing and recycling as a way of life rather than a “buzzword”.

I was recycling long before it was a buzzword... We would separate plastics/ glass and paper. Many of my children’s clothes I bought second-hand, or I would buy bits of fabric to make things.

Her frugality is nuanced with canniness; she has used her skills to find gifts for others and to generate additional casual income for most of her life,

It’s not always only for me – if there is something lovely, for a few dollars, I’ll take it, spruce it up, wash it. I want to give those things to people who need them, like homeless people. I like to give them something lovely, you know, someone can wear it and enjoy it.

Orange and Satin practice their particular act of virtue: frugality through waste avoidance, albeit in different and nuanced ways. They transform and sanctify the potentiality of wasteful consumption into good consumption through sprucing and reusing SHC. In doing so, they restore or maintain their view of social order.

Lozz, Apricot, and Floral are younger boomers born closer to the end of the generation and have grown up alongside the transition to a more fully fledged consumer society (Eriksen, 2021). During their lives, goods and services became more available, and personal incomes increased over the years. Clothing was no exception; as production methods became cheaper, clothing became more widely available and affordable. Some refer to this period as the “democratisation of fashion” Lipovetsky (as cited in Horton, 2018, p. 516) that changed perceptions of newness and diminished the influence of the wealthy on taste and style (Horton, 2018).

Lozz, Apricot and Floral reminisced about the skills of their mothers and older sisters and the homemade or handed-down clothes of their youth. Floral remembered her delight at the first tee-shirt and pair of jeans she bought, which was “unheard of in my family” she laughs and explains, “I had a bit of money because I worked in Woolworths”. All three women inferred that they considered buying SHC a question of budget and what was affordable. The adage ‘If you could afford it, you bought new’ seemed to be taken for granted. Lozz states, “I worked for so many years, so I just used to buy my clothes”. I interpret this comment as she can afford new and therefore doesn’t *have to* buy SHC. This is amplified as she speaks of a friend who she says, “Never bought new, I mean you know, she earned good money, but she used to go to this designer place in Newmarket, you know it was like a ‘Remuera’- wear it once and then recycle”.

According to writer Veronique Greenwood (n.d), the average number of times clothes are worn has been declining steadily. In the United States, clothing items are estimated to be worn between seven and ten times, compared to twice that amount 15 years ago. She attributes this to the fact that since the 1950s, clothing has become much cheaper. As a desirable quality, durability seems to have been surpassed by a preference for fashionability, rapidly cycling styles and poor-quality manufacturing. Not only are clothes worn less, but they are also *designed* to be worn less.

Apricot and Floral share the association of SHC with budget and affordability. Apricot acknowledges her sister’s affluence and cites it as why her sister would not buy SHC. Apricot describes her attraction to SHC as a love of nice materials like silk, linen and cotton and a desire

to recycle; she refers to SHC as “recycled clothes”. Recycled clothes enable her to have a more extensive wardrobe and allow her to “change clothes frequently”.

Acknowledging and lamenting the increased popularity of SHC, Floral speaks of those who can’t afford new clothes as being more deserving of SHC; she comments: “I like to see people who aren’t op-shopping because it’s trendy; they are doing it because it is all they can afford. They deserve to have first dibs.” According to American historian Michael Katz (2013), the question of deservedness of forms of assistance, including charity, is morally charged and stems from British Elizabethan Laws that attempted to classify ‘the poor’. Those whose circumstances were deemed unavoidable, such as the sick or the old, were considered deserving of assistance, others whose assumed personal inadequacies that kept them from work were deemed undeserving (p. 3).

Floral uses the notion of deservedness in opposition to being ‘trendy’, which suggests a deep-seated belief in the purpose of charity and SHC for those in need, as well as a correlation between fashion and overconsumption. “All they can afford” suggests a necessity, whereas “op-shopping because it’s trendy” indicates a discretionary choice, a wanting. The division of perspectives has its roots in the struggle between the privileging of individuals versus community and questions the depth and limits of social obligation (Katz, 2013, p. 4). Floral and Lozz demonstrate their belief in social obligation through their desire to share their affluence through donations.

Lozz indicated feeling pressured into over-consumption. She had worked in a shopping mall and disclosed that she felt “bombarded by the environment”; consequently, she ‘impulse’ bought a lot. She sheepishly admits to excesses by suggesting, “I’m almost frightened to tackle my shoes, half of them look like they’ve never been worn, and I’m never going to wear them again.” A justification follows this: “I’m good at recycling household stuff and my clothes; I donate or give away.” Suggesting that her recycling and donating act as a sort of atonement for previous impulsive actions that might be construed as over-consumption.

The three younger boomers indicated that the extension of charity should be toward those less affluent than themselves. The baby boomer generation is often described as the most affluent generation yet (Eriksen, 2021); however, my research would also suggest that within this cohort, some have a moral sense to use that affluence to help the community and care for those less fortunate than themselves. These may be notions of cultural Christianity rather than indicative of any religious practice. For these women, the moral virtue seems to be in donating their unwanted

clothes to those they deem less affluent than themselves. Their affluence appears to create a moral duty and social obligation for them to contribute suggesting that it is justified and sanctified by fulfilling their social obligation through the virtuous act of donating.

Generation X: Waste Avoidance, Upcycling, Recycling and Reuse.

Generation X refers to those born between 1965 and 1980 (Eriksen, 2021). Greensilk belongs to this cohort, as do I. I recognise her rationale in describing her interest in SHC and the experiences that have influenced and shaped it. Generation X lasted for a relatively short period at only 16 years, compared to its neighbours (Baby Boomers 20 years and Millennials 18 years). They are sometimes called the lost generation, swamped by their neighbours, and not deemed a large enough cohort to make a notable social difference on their own (Fitzsimmons, 2018).

Greensilk rejects being told what to wear and the concept of a fashion dictate, rather than the fashion style itself, preferring to forge her own blended style rather than obeying the latest trends. She describes herself and her SHC shopping: “I’m not really into fashion, so regardless of the fashion of the day, I’m more likely to find something in an op shop. I know what I like and what suits me, so that helps, it’s a thrill”. Despite her primary interest being in the materiality of the things themselves, the fabric, colour, and shape, she shares with me her firm moral condemnation of the fast fashion industry, citing “sweatshops” and describing the industry as “despicable”. Visibly moved by the knowledge that the end-of-life destination is typically a landfill, she shakes her head, and sucking breath through her teeth, she admits: “I feel guilty when I buy new, I can’t bear to think of waste... I would like to find a way of re-using second-hand fabrics, upcycling them sewing them into new things.”

This indicates that for her, ‘new’ is synonymous with wastefulness that, in her view, is unnecessary and causes her to feel guilty. There are glimpses of Veblen’s critique of consumption as “diverting capital from useful ends” (as cited in Wilk, 2001, p.247) within this moral framing and hence for her, clothes bought new represent a ‘bad’ consumption choice. She likes mending and repairing, enjoying her skill and connection with the garment. She shows me a creative patch she has made on the jumper she is wearing, sharing an embodied knowledge of the many ways repairs are possible as her hands mime the stitching required to complete the mend. She has a practical sense of adaptability, “find[ing] ways of reusing second-hand fabric”. She corresponds with the fabric and answers to it until “sentience and materials twine around one another” (Ingold, 2013, p. 108) and creates something new. It feels like she has an intuitive

sense of the potentiality of things and their capability to be revived, renewed or become something else. Creative waste avoidance through making and mending becomes the virtue with which she negates the waste she “can’t bear”.

Millennial Generation: Social equality and Community support.

The millennial generation, born between 1981 and 1996 (Eriksen, 2021), is the largest generation since the Baby Boomers. Perhaps the size of this cohort, rather than any other assumed group trait, attracts so much attention. While much has been written about this group’s apparent self-focus, much has been reported to counter this view. For example, Joel Stein (2013) refers to evidence of narcissism and entitlement, whereas Douglas Main (2017) contrasts this with findings of open-mindedness and equality. I do not know many young people in this group, but those I know have a healthy sense of self and a good sense of community. I regard movements like The Student Volunteer Army – the formation of a large group of student volunteers in Christchurch, NZ, following the 2010 earthquakes (Student Volunteer Army, 2022) as representative of this group’s sense of civic duty and community.

I fondly remember the conversation with BeachyBlue and the surety with which her views of morality emerged. She is amiable with a broad smile and ready wit, and her passion for SHC shopping is evident in her enthusiasm to talk with me.

Me: Can you tell me why you chose to buy and donate second-hand clothes?

Beachy-Blue: Do you mean because fast fashion is so bad environmentally and has a terrible human rights record? Or maybe because you can buy more-or, you don’t want to look the same as everyone else-or, you don’t like waste-or, you like supporting community projects-run by the people-for the people, and not the rich.

She says this quickly in a ‘well, duh!’ kind of way, not unkindly, just as if this was already obvious and universal.

These comments suggest that her sense of community is as important as her individuality, her choice of SHC shopping represents a rejection of an established social norm:

I get really frustrated with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer; It really irks me. I use op shops and thrift as a solution to that; it’s for the community, by the community for the community, not for the people up here [she gesticulates with her hand

above her head and continues] – they have more than enough. It is inspiring when little people vote with their dollars. I chose to spend my dollar where it is the most useful.

Her gesticulation causes me to discern that she regards herself as belonging to the “little people” social group who “vote with their dollars”. Her choice to “put her dollar where it will be most useful” suggests she is aware of her agency within the market and is actively engaged in doing what she believes is morally right. She chooses types of consumption that meet her moral and ethical values of social equality, community and a more even distribution of resources. This suggests that for BeachyBlue, SHC shopping is a political act, a micro-activism, and a micro-virtue. She justifies the act of consumption through connotations of the worthiness of the recipients of her ‘useful’ dollars and as a negation of a capitalist economy that favours “the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer”.

Generation Z: Climate change, human rights, and eco-consciousness.

For generation Z or those born from 1997 to 2013, issues of climate change and environmental degradation loom large (Eriksen, 2021). As global thinkers and visionaries, they are the generation who have organised global school ‘strike for climate’ marches called *Fridays for Future*, propelled into popular culture by the now famous Swedish student and activist Greta Thunberg who speaks of her activism in moralistic terms. When defending her protest against a perceived lack of government action, she sat outside the Swedish Parliament in 2018 and refused to attend school. Thunberg explained simply, “It is my moral responsibility to do what I can” (Crouch, 2018, para. 6). In 2021, Thunberg turned her focus and displeasure toward the fashion industry by disclosing her preference for borrowing or buying SHC and ‘tweeting’ the following:

The fashion industry is a huge contributor to the climate-and ecological emergency, not to mention its impact on the countless workers and communities who are being exploited around the world in order for some to enjoy fast fashion that many treat as disposables (‘Thunberg calls out climate impact,’ 2021).

Like many young women, Pink is negotiating between the importance of her appearance and the highly publicised ethical dilemmas inherent in the fast fashion industry. For her, SHC shopping represents an important ethical choice. I notice that she speaks of ‘ethics’ rather than morals, more akin to social rules or standards than personal emotional nourishment. From our conversation, it is clear that Pink has adopted some responsibility to change the current system.

And by choosing SHC, Pink is rejecting the fast fashion industry to avoid participating in the perpetuation of well-documented human rights abuses and environmental issues that she believes are associated with it. The transformed status of the clothes from new to second-hand acts as a negation to the various violence exposed within her view of the unethical production of those same clothes.

I feel bad going to the other big places because I know they are probably not that ethical and stuff. I feel guilty supporting companies that don't pay their people, have bad human rights, they get abused, and I don't want to support it.

Pink is very aware of how the production and consumption of fast fashion and consumer behaviour, including her own, adversely impact other humans and non-humans. It represents an unsustainable social order that needs to change, but it is difficult as she feels "it's a cycle we've been trapped in for a long time". She earnestly explains,

As a young person, this is my planet; I don't want to destroy it; I want to live in it, I want it to last. By buying second-hand, I am not supporting those companies that are wrecking it

Ideally, she regards the solution as quite a simple one:

I think companies should stop making clothes unsustainably and unethically, and I think people should stop buying clothes that are unsustainable and unethically made.

However, she acknowledges that this is aspirational and that several complex socio-economic barriers prevent this and perpetuate the status quo.

Everybody wears clothes, and everybody buys clothes, and a lot of people need to buy clothes cheap ...clothes that are not ethically produced *are* cheap clothes...so what are you supposed to do? I can't afford sustainably made clothing, so I think going to the op-shop instead or making my own clothes is a better option for me.....I am doing my bit, and I can.

In this sense, she morally frames the production and consumption of fast fashion as bad. She believes that by choosing SHC, she avoids participating in the excessive production and consumption of new clothes and the rapidly cycling whimsies of fast fashion. This suggests that her choice of SHC becomes a good choice that serves to justify her fashion consumption while negating the ethical dilemmas that fast fashion represents to her. Through their

secondhandedness, the clothes are semiotically transformed from bad to good and absolved of their association with unethical production.

I am inspired by her confidence and ability to negotiate between the social pressure of her appearance as a young woman, her budget, and the strength of her conviction to do ‘the right thing’. Choosing “A better option for me” infers personal responsibility and an acknowledgement of the consequences of her clothing consumption. Environmental activism has firmly established sustainability and eco-consciousness as critical moral and ethical priorities for generation Z and others. Thunberg’s notion of moral responsibility is echoed in Pink’s affirmation that “I’m doing my bit, and I can”.

Conclusion

The reasons my participants choose to buy and donate SHC are varied, yet all conversations were imbued with notions of morality, ethics, values, virtues, and vices, suggesting that some personal feelings of righteousness accompanied their SHC consumption practices. Although reliant on consumption for life, historical and contemporary narratives tend to portray consumption as immoral, excessive, or even pathological, placing it on the bad side of a moral good/bad dichotomy such that sanctification or justification of consumption is required (Miller, 2012, Wilk, 2001).

Among my participants’, notions of morality relating to SHC consumption ranged from expressions of frugality, waste avoidance, environmental sustainability, upcycling/creativity, social responsibility to recycle, and a rejection of fast fashion and capitalism. Although varied, these are not as arbitrary as they may seem. The pattern that emerges is that notions of morality are generational. Consequently, I have discussed the moral rationale for buying and donating SHC among my participants within the popular generational grouping of Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z.

Within these groupings, I have analysed how SHC are infused with a moral and ethical stance that links to wider social and political themes that express a moral zeitgeist within and between generations. And discussed how the secondhandedness of the clothes could conjure moral notions as diverse as deservedness, atonement, sanctification, greed, waste avoidance and social obligation, as well as nullifying the ills associated with the production of fast fashion. My participants use these moral and ethical stances as instruments to transform their practice of

buying and donating SHC from being associated with ‘bad’ consumption into more moral or ethical choices and making them ‘good’ consumption choices. The secondhandedness of the clothes provides the medium through which morals become the instruments to sanctify or justify consumption and is offered like “the sweet savour” (Miller, 2012, p. 78) to the higher moral power pertinent to the individual and social group.

The relevance of these findings is that by understanding why my participants buy and donate SHC, the growing increase in the popularity of SHC may also begin to be understood. The moral or ethical framing of SHC leads to increases in demand and supply. The increase in volumes of SHC (as with all textile and clothing) has local and national implications for efforts to minimise and manage clothing waste, particularly synthetic clothing, often derived from plastics with a greater propensity to pollute and cause environmental harm than organic clothing. These findings also raise the question of how moral or ethical SHC really are?

The next chapter addresses the materials and materiality of the clothes themselves through conversations regarding preference for SHC places, spaces and why some clothes matter more than others.

6 Materiality

Introduction

This chapter aims to understand perceptions of the materiality of SHC through the qualities, values and meanings assigned to the practice of SHC shopping, the particular clothes sought after and those cherished and cared for. The working definition of materiality is the human significance of both the active component materials and the artefacts (clothes) within a processual and relational understanding of world-making. Just as the previous chapter examined *why* my participants choose to buy SHC. In this chapter, I draw on qualitative data to analyse *what* they are attracted to about SHC shopping, how they go about it, and what kinds of clothes they look for and buy. I examine why amongst the plethora of new and SHC available, including those gifted or swapped within social groups, some clothes matter more to my participants than others. Further, I discuss how SHC shopping practises and spaces differ from mainstream retail and, in addition to my own participants' accounts, explain why these sites and experiences provide them with a more pleasurable experience than more mundane shopping activities.

The work of Tim Ingold (2007, 2018), particularly his works on making and crafting and the focus on the materials of materiality, helps consider the innate materiality of all things and their capacity for processual and relational transformation. His examination of the intrinsic properties of materials using James Gibson's division of the environment into "medium, substance and surfaces" (as cited in Ingold, 2007, p. 4) enhances my analysis of the properties of fabrics or, as Gibson describes "affordances" (as cited in Ingold, 2018, p. 40), regardless of any human interaction or realisation of them. The intrinsic properties include the haptic qualities, softness, smoothness, roughness, fluffiness, at various processual stages, their durability and longevity including the wearing in and wearing out, breaking down and rotting, and perhaps neither, in the case of some synthetics. Further, I examine how these 'affordances' are recognised and interpreted through the sense of touch; how touching and being touched in return build knowledge and meaning that combine to form an embodied, and relational experience of SHC.

Miller's work (2005a, 2005b) helps examine the assignment of 'good/bad' dichotomies to SHC and the contradictions that might be implied through the various forms of materiality expressed by my participants, where and what notions of value were assigned, and to what items.

Consequently, I discuss the relative material 'weight' and significance of SHC exchanges and the importance of touch in my participants' evaluation of the clothes.

SHC shopping requires different knowledge, skill, and sensory evaluation to ‘find something good’. I explore how through these descriptions, SHC shopping spaces and practices become more akin to hunting or foraging, although not out of necessity or survival, in the case of my relatively affluent participants, but more for pleasure or entertainment. Like hunting or foraging, Satin says: “It takes energy. You need to be alert and focussed”, and it is precarious in that “you might not find anything”, but without the pressure of need. This suggests that although more challenging, my participants find SHC shopping more pleasurable compared to the relatively perfunctory, predictability of mainstream retail experience.

For some, the appeal of SHC shopping was in its direct opposition to mainstream shopping and, by association: mass consumption. Because clothing sold in second-hand stores is pre-worn, a value of sustainability is assigned to an otherwise unsustainable new product. SHC, then, may be constructed in such a way as to provide distance from the unjust production processes, which include environmental injustices, exploitative resource extraction and unfair economic and labour practices associated with new clothing.

I analyse how my participants describe their SHC shopping practices and examine how the clothes' identification, assessment, and meaning are made through touching and feeling. According to French philosopher Serres, touching and being touched in return by items allows knowledge to go beyond the intellectual recognition toward more sensory and embodied knowledge (as cited in Whitehead, 2018 p. 229). As a second skin, clothing is a surface that shields us from the elements of a physical and cultural world. It is sensory, intimate, and yet beyond the manufactured cloth artefact, only a few of my participants knew what materials afforded these qualities to the clothes, despite the significance or materiality to them. As consumers rather than producers of clothing, knowledge of the component materials, their unique properties and the processes used in manufacture have been abstracted away in varying degrees through the production of ‘ready-made’.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d), the meaning of ‘ready-made’ is “bought or found in a finished form”. As Ingold (2007) points out, by focussing on the ‘finished’ object “, materials appear to vanish, swallowed up by the very objects to which they have given birth” (p. 9) and ignore the processes and transformations that materials perpetually undergo. Clothing wears in and wears out at varying speeds depending on the ‘affordances’ of materials and their utility. The participants who worked intimately with fabric by sewing, crafting and manual laundering ‘know’ the properties and disposition of the fabric and how it was likely to respond to

usage and environments. This embodied knowledge afforded them the ability to not only distinguish the types of fabric, particularly the difference between synthetic and natural fabrics but further enabled them to predict body feel, wear and utility. Curiously my younger participants made no further associations beyond body feel and could not discern natural from synthetic fabrics, nor did it appear important for them to do so. Reflexively, I found it interesting that in each discussion about choosing the clothes, the focus and enthusiasm were for the fabric rather than the style of the clothes. Fabrics evoked sensory, emotional commentary, whereas the style of the garments was obliquely referred to as “my style” or “what suits me”. If fashion was mentioned, it tended to be dismissed or regarded negatively.

Certain types of clothing held more gravitas than others. For example, the term ‘clothes’ was associated with good quality and well-made items, whereas the word ‘fashion’ signified poor quality. Miller (2005b) describes this relative assignment of significance to objects as “registers of materiality” (p. 19) that are manipulated by various forces such as social structures and dynamics of power that influence the spatiality and temporality of their placement within the register. For example, for most of my participants’, clothes made from natural (organic) fabrics were deemed well-made and of higher quality than those made from synthetic materials giving them a more prestigious status in the register.

To assume that the power or importance of objects is bestowed upon them by humans is an anthropocentric view that does not entirely explain the potential agencies of the things themselves. Some participants spoke with deep affection about the beguiling effect of clothing that had belonged to or borrowed from a known person. Their desire to wear, care for, or just admire these items, is a form of materiality that is more difficult to explain than the aesthetic quality of the clothes. Jane Bennett (2004) describes this as “Thing Power: the curious ability of inanimate things to animate to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle” (p. 351). ‘Thing power’ challenges the existing western Cartesian dualisms that have shaped, and continue to shape, the epistemologies and ontologies about the world in which we live and share with a variety of other ‘things’. Within the Cartesian framework, all things are pushed, sometimes uncomfortably, into a rigid dualistic classification of mind/matter, subject/object, nature/culture, animate/inanimate, and some cannot be fully explained in this way. Clothing is no exception, in the final sections I turn to more relational ontologies to explore the relative value of items beyond their current economic or aesthetic value, such as remodelling clothes, engaging with them to remember a loved one or ensuring their respectful care and containment.

Second-hand shopping places and practice.

This section analyses how SHC shopping is experienced by my participants and the factors that influence their choice of clothes. My research found that SHC shopping is described as a highly emotive experience. For example, my participants recalled experiences of excitement, apprehension, delight, intrigue, and mystery. It is unpredictable, sometimes challenging, regarded as a choice rather than a necessity for most of my participants. The conversations suggested it was a discretionary yet highly pleasurable and sometimes rewarding experience, much like a treat.

Beachyblue: There is a sense of wonder walking into an op-shop. You don't know what you will find.

Greensilk: It really is about the thrill of the hunt: I go into a store not knowing what to expect and find a real surprise.

Floral: It's like an Aladdin's cave...you never know what you might find. You just might find a treasure in the moment.

Pink: I don't really have an idea of what I want to get, and then I find little hidden gems and stuff. It's exciting for me.

These comments suggest that the treat lies in the purchase and anticipation of a purchase, like finding "a treasure" hidden from general view and requiring a skilled and intuitive discovery. Like other notions of a treat, it stands apart from the mundane because it is extraordinary, unusual, infrequent, and importantly, not a necessity. Consequently, it is more rewarding than a regular necessity, occasion, or item (Gregson and Crewe, 2003). Pink and BeachyBlue speak about the "illusion" of choice created by the volumes displayed in mall shopping. As Pink laments, "You don't get much of a choice. It's just what is popular". The diversity and unpredictability of SHC shopping represent a surprising, "thrilling" experience and, in some cases, resistance to the homogeneity and predictability of mainstream retail. As Floral says of a SHC shop, "You don't want it like Smith and Caughey, [a well-known Auckland department store], there is no mystery to that".

Satin describes her practice: "It's like hunting, you can't rush it. I don't go if I'm not in the mood...It takes energy". Floral likes the semi-organisation of some shops. She says, "You want

it junky, but not so junky that you can't find anything". Apricot describes herself as a "fossicker", while Pink prefers order: "I like shops that have everything hung up. I don't like digging through things". Equally, the precarity of finding a suitable item sometimes annoys rather than excites her: "There is only one of each item, and sometimes it doesn't fit, and that's annoying. Or if it is damaged or has stains and stuff". SHC shopping requires considerable sensory fortitude in contrast to the typically consumer-oriented orderliness and ease of the mainstream retail shopping experience, which is curated to be pleasurable, relaxing, and requires as little effort as possible (Gregson and Crewe, 2003). By comparison, SHC shopping represents a wild, unpredictable space that demands vigilance and care. Navigating within this space *is* more akin to hunting because it is a learned practice of responding to the environment and the things within it (Ingold, 2013). It requires knowledge, patience and skill, and an acceptance of the ever-present risk of returning empty-handed.

When asked if there was anything she did not like about SHC shopping, Greensilk suggests, "Not really, some people don't want to know about op-shops. They seem to think of the germs, or the smell puts them off". SHC may indeed have stains, creases, and smells that are residues of who or what has gone before. As Hetherington (2004) argues, "The absent can have just as much of an effect upon relations as recognisable forms of presence can have" (p. 159). Meyer (2012) adds that to understand better why absence matters, it may be regarded as "a trace and as something to be traced" (p. 107). Meyer (2012) defines a trace as: "something that points to, something that is incomplete, something that once was" (p. 107). Previous wearers leave 'traces' on SHC, known or unknown, leading us toward or away from "other places, other directions, other times" (Meyer, 2012, p. 107). The saleable clothes are not usually washed by the op-shop, thus as the previous wearers' absence is wafted into presence, we may be attracted or repelled, as Greensilk suggests.

Reflexively, I am surprised that the smell of SHC shops was not a more common feature in my conversations. I remember my first few days working in the op-shop; I was pleasantly surprised by the lack of troublesome smells. Despite my trepidatory little sniffs initially, I only ever detected the merest hint of mustiness. Not the sour, neglected kind, but familiar and common in old buildings. The absence of previous owners made present via lingering odours suggests that absence is agentive, requiring engagement and response; sometimes it is inviting, other times a rejecting; consequently, "Absences matter" (Meyer, 2012, p. 104). I have experienced other shops with less fastidious sorting processes, which are unpleasant and off-putting. There seemed too much vital materiality left behind as traces by the original owners in the clothes, lingering

malodourous, uninviting, and untouchable. I was repelled, led away by the traces, and I did not want to touch the clothes.

Touch and the embodiment of knowledge

This section discusses how ‘touch’ serves my participants as an embodiment of knowledge about SHC and fabrics. It examines how this knowledge is shaped by culturally encoded meanings that influence the perceptions absorbed from and projected onto our outside worlds as they become embodied. My participants described touching the fabrics as a critical part of their SHC shopping practice. They use ‘touch’ as a way of ‘knowing’ the fabric (Ingold, 2013) through the “millions of bits of information that help us to apprehend and make sense of our worlds” (Whitehead, 2018, p. 229). Touch is used to identify the material and recall or assign multiple social and cultural meanings. Thus, knowledge goes beyond the intellect to become embodied.

I asked my participants how they go about assessing and choosing SHC. Satin replies, “You have to feel the fabrics. It’s a very tactile thing”. I interpret this as having to touch and feel to know and “respond” to the clothes (Ingold, 2013, p. 11) to build social relations through the haptic properties that influence perspectives on materiality. Clothing provides a surface that our skin touches and through which the outside world (physically and culturally) touches us and is perceived and remembered. Colloquially, clothing is often referred to as our ‘second skin’ or, even more poetically, our “chosen skin” (Ryan, 2021). As Whitehead (2018) explains, “Our skin (the largest organ of the human body) is continually in a position of touch with its environment and surroundings” (p. 229). The work of James Gibson (as cited in Ingold, 2007) divides the environment into mutually constituted layers of medium, substance, and surfaces. The air acts as a medium that enables humans to exist and experience movement, smell, touch, sight, and hearing, and thus perceive the surroundings. The more solid, resistant substances offer physical support, and between medium and substances, there are surfaces that we touch and are touched by. As Ingold (2007, p. 5) describes:

“Surfaces are where radiant energy is reflected or absorbed, where vibrations are passed to the medium, where vaporization or diffusion into the medium occur, and what our bodies come up against in touch. So far as perception is concerned, surfaces are, therefore ‘where most of the action is’.”

Thus, skin and clothes would constitute Gibson's surfaces. But this should not suggest superficiality as might be implied through western ontologies that tend to regard the inner being as being a more authentic version of the self and surfaces such as clothing as "shallow and contrived" (Miller, 2005a, p. 3). Many of these 'actions', such as the weather, body heat, sweat, and the gaze of others admiring or rejecting, are perceived, and experienced through the comfort or discomfort of our clothes. Floral shares how precious memories of her mother become embodied when clothes are fitted on her.

You know, when I get someone to mark the hem of a dress for me, it still takes me right back to Mum fitting clothes on me. Mum *sewing something for me* was special. [Her emphasis]

The loving act of a mother is embodied through fitting a second skin, a surface, to her child to wear as comfort and protection from a physical and cultural world full of 'actions' that touch but are not always kind.

Good and Bad Clothes

This section focuses on the social coding of 'good' or 'bad' associated with various fabrics. Touching and feeling the clothes enables associations and assumptions to be made about the types of fabrics and the quality of the clothes. All but two participants associated a pleasant sensory experience with what they considered to be 'natural' fabrics and, by association: of good quality. I questioned which fabrics they deemed to be natural, and those mentioned were linen, cotton, bamboo, viscose, silk, and wool. Interestingly, animal products were only mentioned when prompted and described as leather, suede, and fur, suggesting that animal skins were distinct from animal hair, fleece, or cocoon silk. My participants all mentioned the importance of the feel of the fabrics. To most, natural fabrics felt soft, comfortable, and lovely and were socially encoded as beautiful, glamorous, comfortable, well-made, not toxic, and as 'good' clothes. Lozz compares her 'good' clothes to her daughter's 'bad' clothes:

I like the cottons and linens, the natural fabrics. They are good clothes, you know it wasn't rubbish, it doesn't come apart. When I think of my daughter, she had a wardrobe full of that cheap - Glassons etc. It's throw-away fashion.

This suggests an implicit correlation between perceptions and expectations of ‘good clothes’ and ‘well made. ‘Good clothes’ are not rubbish; they are natural and don’t come apart, whereas fashion is deemed throw-away.

I returned to these words in a second interview with Lozz:

Me: I noticed you seemed to make a distinction between clothes and fashion last time we spoke. I wonder if we could explore that a little more deeply?

Lozz: Yes, well, I meant that fashion is just cheap throw-away stuff, worn a couple of times and then thrown away. It’s not supposed to last. It’s not *made* to last.

To my older participants, particularly Lozz, good clothes are socially coded as more substantial, significant, and more valuable than items of ‘fashion’. Put simply; they matter more. It is not unusual nor unlikely that some things should matter more than others in various situations and societies. Still, exploring why this is the case and in what circumstances it occurs or is changed is intriguing. Daniel Miller (2005b) refers to these hierarchies as different “registers of materiality” (p. 19) that operate in accordance with social structures, and power dynamics that influence what matters more. Before fast fashion, clothing was comparatively more expensive. Hence new clothes and styles were reserved for the affluent. Even so, people had fewer clothes and wore them more frequently (Greenwood, n.d). Jane Bennett (2004) argues that it is the constant cycle of purchase and throwing away required in the pursuit of a materialistic lifestyle that devalues materiality. For example, in the rapid cycling of fast fashion, clothes are devalued in the constant process of throwing products away to make room for the next ones. The rise of fast fashion may have had a democratising effect and shifted some of the power dynamics of clothing, namely style or fashion, away from the affluent (Horton, 2018). However, it would appear that, at least for some, it has done so at the expense of the perceptions of its materiality. In effect, fast fashion's low-cost, rapidly cycling production has devalued clothing to the extent that some regard it as ‘throw away’ as if it were valueless.

Just as some clothes are coded as ‘good by my participants’, others are coded as ‘bad’. My older participants' unequivocal preference for ‘natural’ fabrics suggests a mutual and embodied dislike of synthetic fabric. When I asked what they did not like about synthetic fabrics, the responses were similarly visceral. Greensilk, eyes closed and mouth downturned in disgust, shakes her head and, with her hands (outstretched and fingers splayed), replies, “Urgh, it’s the feel of it. It just does not appeal”. Apricot is characteristically straightforward in her reply: “Ghastly products! Horrible to wear, you get overheated, it doesn’t breathe, collects deodorant, it’s

difficult to wash the deodorant out of it". Floral's dislike of synthetics is also centred on the feel of the fabric, on and off the body,

I would never sew or knit anything polyester-ish. I just don't like dealing with it. I don't want to wear it. I don't think it is really necessary when we have all of these beautiful natural fabrics that have wicking properties.

Synthetic fabrics may be unnecessary for some but unavoidable for less affluent others and are becoming more difficult to avoid for all. The increasing use of synthetics in clothing manufacture poses a challenge to notions of the availability and affordability of natural fabrics.

Interestingly, the two youngest participants did not firmly distinguish between natural or synthetic fabrics. But similarly, the fabric had to feel 'nice and soft', although these sensations or messages were not immediately socially coded as 'natural'.

Me: Do you have certain types of fabric that you prefer?

Beachy Blue: Not really, just so long as it's soft. I have to feel good in it. Feel is very important to me....it has to feel nice and soft; I can't bear any itchy fabrics.

Pink: I like things to be soft or fluffy and warm.

Undoubtedly synthetic fabrics have improved in look and feel since their initial popularity in the 60s and 70s. While younger people may have been spared the embodied clammy memories, itchy red skin rashes and embarrassing rivulets of perspiration through touching and wearing, they may also have been deceived (Stanes and Gibson, 2017). Over time manufacturers have improved the haptic properties of synthetic to better mimic organic 'natural' fabrics, such that the plastic derivation, particularly of polyesters, is now more "passively concealed" (p. 28) and "appeals to the senses as light, flexible and soft, its composition measured by embodied and sensory perceptions of comfort" (p. 31). These are notably similar perceptions of materiality that my older participants associated with natural fabrics, and as Suzanne Kuchler (cited in Stanes and Gibson, 2017) suggests, "polyester now increasingly appears as the 'new natural'" (p. 31).

Good and Bad Materials and Methods

I noticed that these conversations were centred on the fabric in its form as a manufactured cloth rather than the materials from which it is made. The materiality of the fabrics mattered to my

participants, primarily manifesting in the feel of the fabrics, but what of the materials and processes that created them? I wanted to explore further which fabrics were perceived and valued as ‘natural’, despite the multiple extraction and manufacturing processes, many of which have detrimental human and environmental consequences (Brooks, 2015; de Castro, 2021).

Further probing into the materials that constituted the ‘natural’ fabrics, the responses were mixed but generally revealed that beyond the names of fabrics, a lot less was known about their origins and how they came to be. Following are some responses I received when I asked, “What do you know about the materials and processes used in making natural fabrics?:

Lozz: I guess I don’t really think about it too much.

Green-silk: I love the feel of silk. I turn a blind eye to the dying worms. Linen is flax, right? Harakeke. Leather is cowhide. I don’t think of it as skin though, and I would never wear fur. Hmm, I do wear wool though...

Apricot: Cotton is a plant; natural, organic cotton is a tort; they still use chemicals to defoliate and force flowering.

Floral: Silk is gorgeous, are the worms killed? – I suppose they are. Viscose is wood, isn’t it? Bamboo is bamboo. I don’t know how it is made into fabric. Wool is sheep fleece, goat, or llama, washed and spun and knit into something.

I sense that these responses are not unique to this cohort, and it is certainly not a criticism. When I examined my feelings, I found it ironic and sad that the materials that afford the fabric its natural constituents and reputation has somehow been overlooked or lost to us and we fail to acknowledge the properties and qualities of the materials, “the affordances” (Ingold, 2018, p. 40) that make manufacturing the object possible. Those with the most knowledge of materials and manufacturing processes also had a skilled tactile relationship with the fabric. Greensilk explains her tactile knowledge, “I’ve done a couple of courses, workshops using harakeke [flax], you can really understand its uses through working with it. It’s amazing, versatile, we made putiputi [flowers]”. Others talked about working with some fabrics in sewing and laundering. They knew how to coax the fabric into making clothes and how to care for them once completed. In other words, they understood the material’s properties or ‘affordances’. In working with the materials, they have an embodied knowledge of these ‘affordances’, their hands moving in a gesture of touching, feeling, rubbing, and pulling while we speak as if they are working with a piece of cloth.

Lozz says: “[We] don’t really think about it too much” because, as consumers rather than producers, we do not have to know the materials or fabrics nor depend on this knowledge for clothes. Consequently, the material is distant, as is the production process of most items. The focus on consumption practices rather than production enables producers, often global or transnational entities, to contribute to the distancing from source materials and processes and, in some cases, benefit from it. Globalisation moves the extraction and manufacturing processes to locations often distant from the consumer markets, typically in countries with lower environmental and labour standards and less global power (Brooks, 2015). Further, the invention of names on clothing labels, such as Merinomink (merino wool and possum fur), Viscose, Lycra, Tencel and Lyocell, serves to mask the organic or inorganic materials of the fabric and the process of manufacture (Stanes and Gibson, 2017).

Touch as a way of embodied knowledge enables my participants to assign notions of value and materiality to SHC. Through touch, clothes are socially encoded as either good or bad. For older participants, ‘good’ was associated with natural fabrics, good quality and durability. While the younger participants did not discern the nature of the fabric through touch, their preference, and hence their notion of ‘good’, was for the body feel of fabric that felt soft, warm, or fluffy. Although both are socially encoded messages embodied through touch, the messages were quite different, suggesting that the social relations and associations with the nature of the fabric were changing, synthetics are becoming encoded as the ‘new natural’ as Kuchler suggests (cited in Stanes and Gibson, 2017, p. 31).

Transforming ‘bad’ to ‘good’ through second-hand

This section aims to examine how items oscillate within the ‘registers of materiality’ (Miller, 2005b) firstly through changes in the social structures that re-imagine discarded ‘good’ clothes as having retained their material value, and secondly, how clothes once socially coded as ‘bad’ are re-materialised as ‘good’ through their enrolment in second-hand material flows.

Some of the appeals of buying ‘good’ clothes second-hand were that they had already proven their durability. To my participants, the materiality was maintained or possibly increased through wear, rarity, or previous ownership. Hence as SHC, they were still considered to be ‘good’. Orange rationalises her SHC shopping as “better than all those cheap dress shops and spending heaps on cheap clothing...You just learn to get amazing stuff. Why pay \$300 when you can get

something really good for \$10?” Lozz describes the suitability of her clothes for donation: “good clothes...made to last”. There is contradiction in this. When participants described ‘good’ clothes as durable, they implied that the clothes stayed in shape. Natural fabrics will wear in, wear out, break down, and rot. The synthetic materials typical of ‘throw-away’ fashion garments, however, while showing little signs of wearing in and hardly ever wearing out, are not ‘made to last’ because they ‘come apart’. Yet, as fabrics, synthetics, particularly those derived from plastic, are infinitely durable, their plastic inheritance affords them a much greater and somewhat disturbing lifespan.

For others, the appeal of SHC is in the reuse of materials already extracted or grown, avoiding further exploitation of humans and non-humans. The secondhandedness of the clothes provides a shield from the ills associated with the first-hand manufacture, sometimes transforming them into “more sustainable” and hence ‘good’ clothes, echoing the moral choices discussed in chapter one.

Green-silk: I would rather buy leather secondhand. I think it’s more sustainable than buying new leather. Having said that, I buy leather shoes new.

Floral: I have a small mink opera cape that I will upcycle. Even though it is mink, it is better to use it than throw it away, surely?

While the fabric (and its materials) are an integral part of the materiality of the garment and a ‘surface’ through which we experience the world, the materiality of the fabric discussed by my participants is curiously and inconsistently signified as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. It can be suggested that the significance, i.e., materiality, is inherently neither good nor bad: rather, it is relational. Items oscillate within ‘registers of materiality’ such as in this context, ‘good’ clothes, ‘bad’ clothes, SHC, and ‘throw away’ fashion, due to numerous, complex layers of social coding, embodied knowledge, and manipulation by producers.

More than good or bad.

This section aims to explore the materialities of SHC, handed-down clothes expressed by my participants that do not fit snugly into the Cartesian dualisms typical of western ontology, such as mind/matter, subject/object, nature/ culture, animate/inanimate. I use Amy Whitehead (2018) to think through more relational ontologies such as (new) animism that are helpful to understand

how, through the treatment of SHC, the “moments of active relational engagement” (p. 82) the boundaries between subject and object are blurred. Jane Bennett (2004, 2010) is helpful to comprehend the agency of things which she terms “Thing power” – that is, the ability to affect others, particularly for items that cannot be rationalised through use-value. The section begins by discussing the relational materiality of clothes handed down within families and swapped amongst friends and ends with a discussion about the ‘thing-power’ of unique items that are more than just clothes.

Hand-me-down clothes

Some of my participants spoke with mixed affection about wearing clothes previously worn by other family members. While this was a common and normalised practice among my older participants that conjured deep affection and desire for some, I sensed that it caused embarrassment bordering on shame for another. A younger participant spoke about the fun and camaraderie built through regular and temporary swapping or borrowing clothes among her social group that extended their wardrobes, and I suspect their friendships in the process. These relatively similar acts had very different meanings for the individuals implying that the materiality of these clothes included not only the personally chosen clothes but *whose* clothes they got to choose or wear.

Orange: I grew up with an older sister, and all I ever wanted to do was to wear her clothes. Nothing was ever right on me. It broke my heart not being able to wear her clothes.

This suggests that for Orange, her sister’s clothes held more meaning and were, therefore, more desirable than hers. Earlier in the chapter, I suggested that through touch, previously worn clothes maintained some vital materiality where traces of the persons who wore them lingered. In this case, it is the connection with the essence of a particular person that is sought through touching and wearing their clothes. Serres refers to this connection as a “co-mingling” (as cited in Whitehead 2018, p. 232) and used in relation to how devotees seek to touch and be touched by religious statues, ‘co-mingling’ with them and becoming “momentarily inseparable” (p. 232). I did not get the impression from Orange that her heart was broken because of the inability to wear a particular but ill-suited style; I suggest her lament was wholly due to the exclusion from ‘co-mingling’ with her sister through her clothes, therefore, remaining separate and unconnected.

Other clothes handed down from known persons or swapped among friends held a special status for the recipients that went beyond a physical necessity or the attributes of the clothes, imbued as they were with essences of the previous owners. These ‘known’ garments held memories, shared stories, conjured desires, aspirations, respect, jealousies, and friendships.

Pink: My friends and I will swap clothes if they have something that I like or vice versa. There’s a tie-dyed top that cycles around the friends because everyone likes it so much.

The sharing of clothes for Pink and Orange has a feeling of camaraderie, friendship, and shared utility. I imagine Pink’s social group bound together by a tie-dyed top, “co-constitut[ing], co-mingl[ing] and co-creat[ing] (Whitehead, 2018, p.85), worn by all, making and collecting stories. The clothes that Pink and Orange want to wear contain traces of specific person(s) and imply sharing, mutuality, and equality, their relational materiality is enhanced by something ‘more than their materials and manufacture.

In contrast, Lozz infers that her hand-me-downs were borne of necessity rather than choice. “I’m one of five girls. We had hand-me-downs, we had new clothes too, but that’s just how it was”. She said this with some resignation and regret as if it were an embarrassment and never-to-be-repeated event. Hand-me-downs are typically from an older to a younger sibling, not necessarily chosen or wanted and generally unequal. I sensed that whoever’s clothes they were, they were not inviting or something Lozz wanted to connect to or ‘co-mingle’ with.

More than the aunt’s dress.

I am particularly touched by the love with which Floral describes the remodelling of dresses previously owned and made by her aunt. We talk about the dress from which her pseudonym is derived: it was one of several chosen by her aunt as a potential burial outfit. In the final hours, however, it hadn’t quite made the cut and had remained in Floral’s care for ten or more years. One of the COVID-19 lockdowns provided the perfect opportunity with sufficient time to begin the substantial task of remodelling the dress for reuse. Floral, a slender person with small, fine features, described her aunt as “a little potato on legs”; thus, the dress required careful, painstaking remodelling. She laughs at herself and questions the efficacy of such a task that not only reveals her skill but a deep and heartfelt connection with the clothes, the fabric, and the lingering traces of her aunt.

You sit there for hours, unpicking it all. Why? You know it would be quicker to start with new fabric, but the sentimental value, [she pauses awhile in thought] ... because it was *hers*.... it's *her* sewing. I really like that. I will sew her name label into the hem or something.

Although Floral is an avid recycler, very capable and creative with a talent for upcycling, there is more to this than straightforward reuse. A personal and deeply cherished connection is being held through the dress, which she describes as 'sentimental value'. Her treatment of the dress is respectful, caring and sustaining. In life, Floral's aunt had been a talented seamstress who "knew about fabrics", so the perceived quality of the fabric and the workmanship could be assured. Floral admits, "I wouldn't have done it if it was polyester. Yet, she shows me a remarkable Bri-Nylon nightie that had also belonged to her aunt and that she thought had a promising future as a series of food covers, should time and energy allow. Clearly, they did not, as seconds afterwards, she concludes, "Nah, someone might want it for dress-ups, so I'm parting with that".

I noticed that she said, 'parting with' and not 'chucking-out' or 'throwing-away'. 'Parting with' as if once attached, as one might be with another person, another being, or something held dear. Despite her aversion to Bri-Nylon as material, this suggests Floral treats its disposal as a kind of abeyance to avoid the possibility of it becoming rubbish (Hetherington, 2004). How might this form of materiality be explained or interpreted? It is one that troubles and goes beyond a Western ontology of dualistic classifications, and the rigid distinction between the cognitive and the material, subject/ object, animate/inanimate is deficient in this regard, as is the English language (Henare, 2007; Ingold, 2007, 2010; Whitehead, 2018). To describe something as having sentimental value infers an emotional connection from the subject to the object that tends to blur a more rigid divide. Things, including clothes, can "co-constitute, co-mingle, and co-create" (Whitehead, 2018, p. 85), and in this sense, they can be considered relational. Some clothes are not merely representational reminders or symbols for human interpretation; they are more than objects but not quite subjects, yet, they are capable of affect (Bennett, 2004, 2010).

More than a Wedding dress.

During the conversation with Apricot about the materials and composition of fabrics, she revealed an astonishing knowledge about the care and laundering of various fabrics. She understood the warp and weft of fabric construction and the properties of the materials that made

them. This is what Ingold (2018) refers to as the “affordances, that is, the intrinsic properties of the objects in themselves, regardless of whether any living being is there to realise them” (p. 40). This knowledge enabled a deep understanding of how materials are transformed within a “current of materials” (Ingold, 2007, p. 7), naturally occurring or imposed through human acts such as laundering. This knowledge made her more than a fantastic laundress; it suggests she is more like a curator of clothes as she describes her care-taking treatment of family heirloom clothes.

Apricot: You know, I still have my grandmother’s and my great grandmother’s wedding dresses. My great-grandmother was married in 1879! –It’s a rust brown colour, made of slub silk, you know, the bobbly kind. The underskirts are made of scrim. It’s amazing, and it has kept better than my grandmothers, who was married in 1905.

Me: Wow, do you have them there? What do you do with them?

Apricot: No, they’re in storage. They are tiny; I mean 18-inch waists. They’ve never fitted me, maybe when I was nine or something. No, I just keep them. I get them out once a year, give them a good airing, and make sure they are all right, not going mouldy or anything. I hang them in the room for a while, and well, just look at them, admire them.

Me: Why do you keep them?

Apricot: Why? [She repeats as if it had never occurred to her that it was a choice and says] Because they are beautiful. They are art.

Apricot is an immensely practical person, we have spoken about her knowledge of fabrics, how they are made, and very important for her, how to care for them “properly”. There is nothing perfunctory about her care for clothes. Laundry, she tells me, requires care, the right cleaning materials, and the right environment. Therefore, I am initially surprised by this seemingly impractical act of keeping and caring for artefacts such as these dresses that have no apparent use value to her. She offers no inkling of sentimentality in her succinct explanation, yet I sense that these are a source of pride for her. She offers to show me them “next time they are out”.

Upon reflection, I realise these are not opportunistic treasures found in the dusty enclaves of op shops. Beautiful and rare, they are not for recycling, upcycling, or repurposing. These beautiful dresses are family heirlooms, collectively cherished and cared for across time and generations. They contain traces of the matrilineal line of a family across four generations, 142 years, they are and will continue to be relationally part of the family and family’s story. I imagine how

momentous a wedding day is for a petite young woman in a beautiful dress. The rustle of slub silk joined with the ceremonial verses that blessed the union from which four generations have since bloomed. They are more than objects, and not quite subjects. The dresses have “Thing-Power” (Bennett, 2004, 2010). They have affect; the ability to produce an effect on other beings. They have vital materiality that hovers somewhere between the subject/object, immanence/transcendence dualisms. They are agential and have elicited reverence and care for 142 years. They have inspired beauty, are considered art, wonderful, and awesome, and built networks around themselves as they have mixed and mingled, physically, metaphysically and relationally. I suspect they will continue to do so well into the future with other networks of familial, human, and non-human. There is nothing passive about these ‘objects’.

Conclusion

This chapter aims to understand perceptions of materiality in SHC through the qualities, values and meanings assigned to the practice of SHC shopping, the clothes sought after and those cherished and cared for. Simply put, why some clothes matter more than others to my participants and how good/bad dichotomies both present themselves and persist throughout the SHC exchange and experience.

To understand this, I have examined how SHC practise and spaces differ from mainstream retail and provide a more pleasurable, less prescribed, and more intuitive experience, negotiated through touch and requiring embodied knowledge, more akin to hunting than mundane shopping practices and in their precarity, considered more of a treat. This has also been viewed within a political context where SHC experiences are positioned in opposition and as a solution to injustices perceived in mainstream retail.

I have explored how knowledge of fabrics becomes embodied and socially coded through the sense of touch and the ‘affordances’ of materials becoming known through touch and indeed mimicked by synthetic fabric producers. By analysing the social coding of natural fabrics, the manipulations of this social coding have been revealed, leading to notions of synthetics becoming the ‘new natural’. In this sense, I note how items oscillate within ‘registers of materiality’ influenced by social systems and power and how clothing became fast fashion, deemed less important than clothes and indeed considered ‘throw away’. Further, it is noted how

those once coded as bad can become good through their distancing from production in their being second-hand.

I have explored how my participants expressed the materiality of SHC, which defies the binarism of western ontology and Cartesian dualism and tends toward relational ontology. I examine how an absence presence is invoked through the traces of previous left behind on the clothes that may repel or invite but “always lead” (Meyer, 2012). Finally, the agential possibilities of SHC are explored through clothing that is relational and far more than clothing.

As this chapter ends with the subtle mysteries of ‘thing-power’, the next chapter explores the mystery of the largely unknown realities of SHC disposal flows in and out of Aotearoa. In some ways, it demonstrates how research co-emerges between researcher and participants and how all are transformed in the mutual discovery process. Practically, it concerns the little or unknown scale of the industry of SHC in Aotearoa and highlights the mysteries, gaps and obfuscations involved in the SHC industry that is still considered a ‘charitable’ and thereby a morally good endeavour.

7 Mystery

A long chain of charity and commerce binds the world's richest and poorest people in an accidental intimacy. It's a curious feature of the global age that hardly anybody at either end knows it.

(George Packer, New York Times magazine, March 2002).

Introduction

Following morality and materiality, this chapter is titled 'mystery' because of a personal love of alliteration in language. Equally, it could be titled 'puzzle' or 'conundrum' to capture how the seemingly innocuous act of buying and donating SHC can transverse the social, economic, and political expanse between local charity shops and global trade, spawning notions as diverse as charity and waste colonialism as it flows. Further, and perhaps more mysteriously, is that so little is commonly known about this growing trade in Aotearoa, such that those closest to the clothes themselves; the volunteers in the op-shop and seasoned consumers, (myself and my participants), were unaware of Aotearoa's participation in this global trade.

This chapter aims to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding SHC in Aotearoa by questioning how and why the beliefs and narratives surrounding SHC can be so divergent from reality. To do this, as Fassin (2012) suggests in chapter one: To understand morality, there is a need to "[shift] our usual vision of moral facts" (p. 4) and question *what* it is that is being taken for granted in our own and others' "moral making of the world" (p. 4). I use qualitative analysis of the conversations with my participants, alongside narratives found in local and global media to help answer these questions.

Preparing for my research, I learned that SHC are traded globally, and that Aotearoa participates in this growing trade via imports and exports. The divergence between the general social construction of SHC and global trade felt paradoxical. I wanted to understand how and why the beliefs about SHC could be so divergent from reality. I respectfully questioned my participants' knowledge of the global trade in SHC, cautious of introducing new information that could change the research landscape and burst their passionate bubbles of understanding. Their responses and the co-emergence of knowledge in my research have led to a deeper analysis of the contradictions associated with SHC and to questions about the opacity of the SHC industry.

The works of social scientists and anthropologists Andrew Brooks (2012), Karen Tranberg-Hansen (2004, 2005, 2019), Lucy Norris (2012), and Joshua Reno (2015) have aided my examination of how the social construction of SHC as a social ‘good’ is perpetuated through media accounts that valorise these narratives locally while simultaneously depicting the international trade in SHC as global north-to-south waste transfer and exploitation. Combined, these narratives serve to obfuscate the realities of global north-to-north transactions, particularly Aotearoa’s growing participation in the international exchange of SHC through imports and exports and the flow-on effects this has on clothing and textile waste in Aotearoa. Hetherington (2004), and Miller (2010), have extended my analysis of SHC as a resource and as waste, and the critical role disposal (or divestment), plays in maintaining social relations and social order.

The chapter begins reflexively as I grappled with handling the co-emergence of knowledge ethically within my research and describes the flow of conversational context from the global to the local, using recent media stories as references to provide grounding for the enquiry. While all participants were curious about global trade, more interest was shown in Aotearoa’s participation. I analyse the construction of SHC as a charitably industry established for the betterment of society and discuss how this view has prevailed from a historical to a contemporary context and how and why it persists.

I examine how my participants (mis)conceptions borne from a lack of industry transparency can feel like social deceptions from the industry, and the institutions supposed to govern them. I discuss these (mis)conceptions within the philosophical frame of a hypothetical social contract between a citizen and the governing body and consider how, when unchallenged, social norms become taken for granted social rules, that underpin the hypothetical social contract. SHC are conceived as sold for charity, and that they contribute to reusing, and recycling donated clothing already circulating in Aotearoa. Media narratives support this construction and frame SHC as a social ‘good’ while ignoring the contribution of SHC in the global textile waste problem and to the global triple threat (and as a threat multiplier): pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change. The lack of economic transparency and social and environmental policy regarding SHC in Aotearoa is perceived as a breach of a social contract that has enabled and supported the social construction of SHC as charity, or not-for-profit.

The general antipathy expressed by my participants regarding the importation and exportation of SHC in Aotearoa has led me to explore the correlation and contradictions apparent in the social constructions of SHC as a resource and as waste. This necessitates an analysis of the temporality

and spatiality in the social construction of waste and the critical role multiple acts of disposal play in the social relations and management of that which is deemed either resource or waste. Absence presence is discussed alongside the role of disposal in social relations.

The growth in clothing and textile waste illustrated in the introduction, is problematised through the lack of policy and legislation of clothing waste in Aotearoa and the lack of knowledge about the clothing waste cycle among my participants. This leads to a discussion about the efforts of companies to rectify or utilise the gap in legislation to develop more circular economies (UsedFULLY) or merely ‘greenwash’ their existing practices (Hennes & Mauritz, H&M). The efficacy of textile recycling is discussed through the innovative work of Aotearoa clothing and recycling company Little Yellow Bird who generously agreed to an interview with me.

The Co-emergence of Knowledge in Research

At the beginning of my research, I learned that Aotearoa was both an importer and exporter of SHC. I found an interesting Master of Business thesis from Auckland University of Technology (AUT) titled “Global production network for second-hand clothes from New Zealand to Papua New Guinea” by Maria Hernandez-Curry (2018). The thesis abstract begins; “It is not general public knowledge that each year, thousands of tonnes of second-hand clothing donated by New Zealand households is exported to Papua New Guinea.” (Hernandez -Curry, 2018, p. 2). I was intrigued by this research as I was unaware that Aotearoa participated in the global trade of SHC. I had assumed from other readings (Brooks, 2012; Hansen, 2004, 2005, 2019; Norris, 2012) that the exportation of SHC referred to export from the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom and Europe. Rather conceitedly, I had assumed that this practice was being conducted *there* and not *here*, by *them*, and not *us*. I was perplexed and a little embarrassed by this. I had assumed that when buying SHC, I was virtuously participating in the reuse and recycling of clothing already circulating nationally, supporting worthy causes, extending the useful life of clothes, and reducing waste sent to landfills, albeit temporarily. In chatting to fellow op-shop volunteers, I learned that they too, did not know Aotearoa imports and exports SHC. As my curiosity grew, questioning the transparency and accessibility of general information about the commercialisation and commodification of SHC became a secondary aim of this project.

I asked my participants what they knew of the global trade in SHC. I questioned carefully and answered their specific questions dispassionately, referring to recent news articles, such as

Besser (2021) and Shaw (2021). I did not share import/export data from Statistics NZ when I spoke with my participants, which enabled more significant insight into the social construction and meaning of SHC without the distraction of complex data. I knew that my participants regarded SHC shopping as a pleasurable experience, so I did not want to sound remonstrative, shatter their virtuous intention, or spoil their treasure-hunting fun. Conversations are shared back and forth during research, knowledge is co-emergent and co-learned, and the researcher and participants are impacted and sometimes changed by the experience. Knowledge, Ingold (2014) says, “grows and is grown in the forge of our relations with others” (p. 391). I approached my conversations in keeping with the spirit of these words and objectively answered questions, offering information when asked, alongside an ever-present ethical duty of care as an anthropologist (ASAA/NZ, 2016).

Conceptions of SHC Retail as not-for-profit.

My participants conceived SHC through a lens of charity and good works. Although I recruited my participants through the small op-shop that was my research site, I asked if they had other favourite or familiar places where they liked to shop for SHC and why. Through the descriptions of their preferred shops, my participants reconfirmed their moralistic notions and charitable conceptions associated with SHC alongside other physical preferences.

Lozz spoke of her admiration for Hospice, Pink prefers small local charity shops “...that sell things more cheaply” than larger chain stores that “[don’t] feel like an op-shop”. She expresses a sense of delight and privilege at supporting charities as she shops. Twinkly-eyed and smiling, Satin admits, “I like them all. I look at them all. I like shopping!” She also likes that “other people benefit from the proceeds of charity shops.” Pink also exudes her support for donating:

I like donating. I don’t like being wasteful. It’s not going to the trash, it gets repurposed, and it’s good for the planet. When other people get the clothes, they are not supporting those companies wrecking the planet either. I am doing my bit, and I can.

Although varied, these responses suggest an underlying expectation that buying or donating SHC is charitable and supportive rather than purely mercantile. Charities have a long history of collecting and redistributing SHC to less affluent people and have developed retail store sales of SHC since the 1950s. Added to this is a growing belief that SHCs are more environmentally sustainable through waste avoidance and maximising the utility of items while also creating

funds for charities that enable their “good works” (Norris, 2015, p. 130). Unchallenged, these shared assumptions and narratives become enculturated as social norms that operate like implicit rules of how to behave, co-operate and what everything means to uphold the social order. A citizen’s beliefs and expectations of social practices such as these are often referred to as a social contract. Although commonly associated with moral and political philosophy, social contracts theory is a helpful framework for anthropological work to help analyse how this might apply in the real lives of people. To coin a well-known suggestion, “Anthropology is philosophy with the people in” (Ingold, 1992, p. 696).

The theory of a social contract originates in various forms among the Greek and Roman philosophers. It has been reanalysed by notable scholars such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau from the 16th to the 18th century as a solution to the problem between individual freedoms and the legitimacy of political power. It can be broadly defined as a hypothetical contract between individual citizens and a governing state that explicitly or implicitly sets out the principles by which society judges the behaviours of individuals or institutions as right or wrong, just or unjust. Citizens agree to give up some of their freedoms, such as abiding by the Law, in exchange for the protection and benefits provided by the State body (Friend, n.d; Chung, 2021).

Citizens who patronise charitable organisations do so with an expectation that they contribute to the ‘good works’ done by these organisations such that it forms part of a social contract. Aware of the good works, Greensilk generously proposed, “I have a tendency to pay more if it’s a charity”. My participants’ responses illustrate that their buying or donating SHC is conceived as support for the betterment of society through various charitable and not-for-profit good works and their own beliefs of what is good. In acknowledgement of the social contract, in Aotearoa charities hold a different entity status than for-profit entities; and are treated differently; for example, they are granted tax-free status by governing systems (Inland Revenue Department, 2022). In turn, charities have a responsibility to Governments, customers/donors, and their causes in a mixture of implicit and explicit expectations or ‘contracts’. Citizens’ reactions to perceived breaches of accepted norms and social contracts, as with any other contract, can vary in severity. For example, Oxfam and Red Cross staff in Haiti brought about global outrage, when found to be participating in the sexual exploitation of vulnerable citizens and demands were made for senior resignations and withdrawals of sponsorships from some prominent donors (BBC, 2018).

New Conceptions of SHC Retail as a for-profit.

My questions regarding awareness of global and local trade in SHC piqued the interest of my participants. While all were curious about global trade, more interest was shown towards ANZ's participation. When I was asked about Aotearoa's participation, I shared some of the information about global trade and Aotearoa's importation of SHC largely from the USA and exportation of SHC largely to the Pacific Islands. I did not share the precise data. Some of the responses to this new information are as follows:

Greensilk: So, it's a business? I did not know that.

Apricot: I did not know that.

Floral: I didn't know it was a commercial operation... I don't feel good about donations being traded.

Pink: Oh wow! I know nothing about that.

These responses correspond with researchers in the United Kingdom (Norris, 2012; Hansen, 2004; Gregson and Crewe, 2003), who assert that there is a general lack of awareness of the circulation of SHC beyond their initial donation to charities. Similarly, they suggest that beliefs about the virtues of SHC are constructed through narratives of waste avoidance, charitable good works, and environmental sustainability. Combined, these narratives connect and build upon each other to create and perpetuate "a network of mutually reinforcing values" (Norris, 2012, p. 130) that maintain the social construction of buying and donating SHC as a public good. Additionally, Hansen (2004) observes that this construction is further bolstered by media depictions "Shrouding the export of second-hand clothing in a rhetoric of giving and helping, news accounts hide the economic process – including the cultural construction of demand from view" (p. 3). The perpetuation of similar narratives is becoming increasingly evident in Aotearoa media, such as the articles by (Beckett, 2021; Consumer, 2021; Grimmer & Grimmer, 2022; Shaw, 2021; Webb-Liddall, 2022). This suggests that, similarly, my participants' conceptions, understanding, and expectations of SHC are potentially shaped and reinforced by such media accounts that help to build the 'cultural construction of demand' yet fail to reveal the entire life cycle/ supply chain and its social and environmental impacts.

The consumption of SHC in Aotearoa is valorised by media stories such as Consumer (2021), whose association of SHC with chic personal style and as a 'greener' clothing choice helps to

drive demand meanwhile obfuscating the growing importation of SHC and ignoring the end-of-circulation realities for clothing and textiles. Reusing clothing certainly extends its utility, avoiding its disposal in landfills, but it is a temporary avoidance. The vast majority of textile and clothing waste in Aotearoa ultimately ends up in landfills estimated to be 220,800 tonnes (220,800,000 kgs) per year (Casey and Johnston, 2021, p.10). Therefore, the importation and exportation of SHC raise questions of whose landfill is being avoided while another is being filled.

The conversations regarding the importation and exportation of SHC in Aotearoa revealed an antipathy that ranged from a disappointed but resigned acceptance to an outright abhorrence and outrage. Shaking her head slightly in a resigned kind of disbelief and disappointment, Orange responds practically to the knowledge that Aotearoa exports SHC to the Pacific Islands; sighing, she optimistically suggests, “I’d like to think they sent sensible things to the islands; you know, they don’t need sweaters and things”. In contrast, this new information is discomforting for Pink, who states, “That’s kind of scummy! It feels wrong to me”. She pauses as if searching for justification for her reaction. With a perplexed expression, she adds, “Something’s not right, encouraging people to donate clothes here, it’s a front! We should know where things come from, we should know how this was made and who made it?”. The phrase “it’s a front” suggests something is being hidden from view. Whether deliberate or not, the lack of general knowledge about the importation and exportation of SHC in Aotearoa suggests that the industry is not as transparent as it could reasonably be expected to be.

Meanwhile, the demand for SHC is constructed as supporting a not-for-profit, charitable, and a morally good endeavour. Earlier in our conversation, Pink had described her SHC donating and shopping as “doing [her] bit” towards being “good for the planet”. Using the term “doing my bit” suggests that she feels a personal responsibility to participate and contribute to what she perceives as a common social good and part of shared responsibility where others ought to be doing *their* bit too, and holding up their part of the hypothetical social contract. The obfuscation of knowledge, particularly that which citizens feel ought to be known, denies society the ability and the democratic right to agree or disagree with the terms proposed. Therefore, a lack of transparency is fertile ground for feelings of deception and sentiments such as “it’s a front” because it feels contra to the shared social understanding and hence it feels like a breach of the social contract.

The Contradictions of SHC as a Resource and as Waste, and the role of Disposal in the Social Relations of SHC.

Among my participants, the imports to and exports from to other countries seems to cause a contradiction between conceptions of SHC as a resource and as waste. SHC already circulating in Aotearoa, are regarded as a recyclable resource (with value), but when purposely imported or exported to and from other countries they are conceived as waste (without value). Throughout my research, the social and economic conception of SHC as valuable was neither doubted nor denied which suggests the question of SHC having value was not a prominent issue. This indicates that the antipathy towards the importing and exporting of SHC was not necessarily focused on the SHC themselves but more concerned with perceptions about their transnational disposal method.

Floral rolls her eyes and asks rhetorically, “Oh, for goodness’ sake, why are we importing other people’s rubbish? Our own is enough of a problem”. This suggests that other nations’ SHC are regarded as unwanted waste (rubbish) and that they are burdensome (a problem). I am drawn to the seeming contradiction in Floral’s words that seems to question the value of SHC through their distribution and placement rather than their inherent qualities. It seems contradictory to refer to imported SHC as “rubbish”, implying they are valueless yet, those SHC already circulating in Aotearoa have value suitable for reuse or repurposing. It seems a little nationalistic, that, no qualms are made about reusing clothes unwanted by people in Aotearoa but importing SHC unwanted by people in other countries becomes problematic. It transforms reusing and recycling locally, into waste dumping transnationally and transforms the SHC from a valuable resource to something more akin to waste as a social construct.

Disposal may not necessitate wastage (Evans, 2019), it may also mean spatial riddance or to be held in abeyance (Hetherington, 2004). SHC provide an interesting if troublesome object through which to analyse the conflation of disposal and waste. Rather than being seen as an integral part of the holistic social activity of consumption, disposal is commonly regarded as “a final and singular act of closure” (Hetherington, 2004, p. 159) that has become synonymous with waste. This view not only overlooks the often-multiple acts of disposal that have a “dynamic and performative role within consumption” (p. 159), but it also disregards the agentic and recursive properties of waste enabled by this role. SHC, by their nature, demonstrate the recursion of unwanted ‘things’, spatially disposed of in one place and purposely returned in another, such as donations to the op-shop, international shipping for trade or indeed taken to a landfill. When

viewed as a recursive process within the social activity of consumption, disposal can be seen as constitutive of multi-scalar social relations and activities that span individual, transnational, and global relations (Hetherington, 2004; Reno, 2015).

Acts of disposal may be considered as a series of movements between absence and presence; some items are made present by their absence. Social relations, according to Hetherington (2004), can be as much about what is absent as what is present, and the absent is never fully absent; it is “only ever *moved along*” (p. 162) via conduits or methods of disposal. Satin’s lamentation that “fabrics of yesteryear are so much more beautiful and often you can’t get them anymore” become present through their absence. The care with which Floral altered her, now deceased, aunt’s dress and Apricot’s curation of heirloom wedding dresses carry the notion of a relational absence presence. These agentic items bring the absent into presence through what Floral described as a “sentimental value”. Just as things are moved along, the divestment of things, spatially and temporally may assist in the process of moving through human emotions such as the grief associated with the loss of a loved one or a broken relationship (Miller, 2010).

In this vein, appropriate conduits or methods for disposal such as, recycling, saving for future use, handing down, gifting or indeed sending to landfill become vital because they maintain the social order by ensuring things are moved along and placed in appropriate places to enable their care, reuse, or avoid the possibility of a burdensome return. Within this context, waste management infrastructure such as collection and landfilling, becomes more about moving waste along despite its official social capacity construed as final riddance. Waste is made invisible through disappearing acts that construct the illusion of the existence of an away, such as landfill or incineration, for social and political reasons, not because it is wholly possible (Reno, 2015).

The question of what constitutes ‘waste’ has been an interest to anthropology since Mary Douglas’s pioneering work in the 1966 book *Purity and Danger*. Douglas asserts a structuralist view in the construction of social worlds whereby social meaning is determined relationally through the classification and placement of ‘things’ in binary oppositions rather than any inherent attributes of the items. This leads Douglas to define dirt as ‘matter out of place’ because of *where* it is rather than *what* it is.⁴ More contemporary analyses and critiques have contributed to this discussion by considering further dimensions, such as the materiality and transformation

⁴ For example, soil on a dinner plate rather than in the garden is consequently ‘matter out of place’ and hence referred to as dirt or dirty. In this context, disorder represents a dangerous and mysterious space, that threatens to ‘pollute’ the social order. As such the boundaries between ‘places’ are carefully managed, often by ritual, to ensure that pollution does not occur. An unclassified matter that does not have a specific place or is unknown is mysterious and threatening to social order.

of waste, the temporality as well as the spatiality of waste, and the inseparability of waste and waste disposal from human and non-human relations and importantly, the power structures that classify and contain waste (Bennett, 2010; Hetherington, 2004; Ingold, 2007; Liboiron, 2019; Reno, 2015). Therefore, contemporary answers to what constitutes waste lie in a complex plurality of meanings, such as: What it is? What else could it be? What will it do? And what will it become? as well as Where is it? Whose is it? Who classifies waste? Broader social meanings, including notions of waste and value, are derived from unique and sometimes murky combinations of these meanings at particular points in time and are subject to change; hence 'things' are said to have a social life (Arjun Appadurai, 1986).

Orange's observation that "One person's cast off is another person's joy" highlights the changing nature of what is valued, when it is valued, and by whom. Hetherington (2004) argues that Douglas's 1966 analysis does not explore the mutability of waste, nor the ability of waste to return within different frames of value via disposal choices. As Appadurai (1986) famously proposed, "economic objects circulate through different *regimes of value* across space and time" (p. 4) in that they may appreciate, depreciate, or vice versa. Such is the case with houses, cars, and clothing; when they return outside of their fashionable period, they are often referred to as classical or vintage, having gathered multiple forms of value, sometimes beyond their original economic, aesthetic, or sentimental value. Individual disposal behaviours, as well as municipal waste management processes or "regimes of waste" (Reno, 2015, p. 564), become entwined in the 'regimes of value' through their management of the realisation, revival, or denial of value extraction from waste. For example, individuals storing or collecting items for later use or the irretrievable burial of items in landfills and incineration that may still have use and value.

Disposal processes are of critical interest to anthropology and social sciences because of their entanglements within the socio-material politics and performance of social relations. Such as the notable works of Marcel Mauss, Richard Titmuss, and Robert Hertz that focussed on the rituals and social relations involved in gifting, potlatch, and burial rites (as cited in Hetherington, 2004). Floral expresses her pleasure and responsibility at transforming her aunt's dress from "... something that was hanging in the wardrobe...a burden really, into something I can wear". The sentimental value still attached to the item requires respectful and careful 'moving along' and forbids an inglorious chucking out, thus creating a responsibility, and sometimes a burden. The conduits for disposal or divestment have many permutations hinged upon presumptions of value and materiality. For example, the family heirlooms that must be handed down within the family rather than thrown away, or the seeming inability to 'part with' items owned by someone close,

expensive, once loved, or specially gifted, even if disliked or of no more use. A sense of burden is created by not being able to dispose of something in a manner that reflects its social relations.

Lozz describes feeling overwhelmed, “I actually feel burdened by all this stuff. I look at it and think, where is it all going to end up? It’s a worry”. This suggests she is overwhelmed not by the items themselves but by the responsibility of their disposal. On a larger scale, items such as toxic chemicals, plastics, synthetic clothing, and electronic waste that do not have adequate or safe disposal methods and may become harmful to humans and non-humans become highly politicised and, in some cases, internationally regulated. For example, the Basel Convention signed in 1986 and effective in 1992 controls the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. According to Max Liboiron (2018, 2019), the question of what constitutes and defines waste, value, and how and where waste should be disposed of is one of power. Liboiron (2019) suggests “where there is a system of power, there are necessarily rejected elements (or dirt) and one way to investigate systems is by studying what they reject, abject, and oppress”. The transboundary movement of ‘waste’ from countries with higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to those with lower GDP is referred to as waste colonialism because of the power structures involved. This term was first used in 1989 at the United Nations Environmental Programme working group and is used to describe that “waste and pollution are part of the domination of one group in their homeland by another group” (Liboiron, 2018). Despite this term being used to describe the more nefarious dumping of toxic waste than the seemingly innocuous SHC trade. In countries without the means to recycle textiles, such as Aotearoa and the Pacific Islands it is anything but innocuous. SHC cause pollution throughout their lifecycle, particularly if made from toxic or synthetic materials, for example, a 2019 study by Scion industries (cited in Casey & Johnston, 2021) calculated that up to 87% of micro plastic pollution in Auckland harbours comes from clothing fibres via domestic washing. And pollution continues beyond their eventual disposal in landfills or illegal burning or dumping through toxic gases and leachate (BBC, 2022; Besser, 2021).

Disposal(s) then, become about socially appropriate placement rather than absolute riddance (Hetherington, 2004). The difference being that where conduits for disposal are available, e.g., municipal waste, they are supposed to secure the contents and keep them safely contained to prevent an unwanted return. The international shipping of unwanted clothing from or into Aotearoa may be regarded as socially inappropriate placement or disposal of SHC to my participants. Thus, they represent an unwanted return in Aotearoa of something that could have, and perhaps should have, been disposed of differently, in the *originating* country. Unwanted

clothes have limited options for what might be considered a safe disposal. In Aotearoa, they are landfilled, where, if the material is organic such as cotton, linen, wool and silk, they emit carbon as they decompose contributing to carbon emissions estimated at 397,440,000kgs CO₂e per year (Casey & Johnston, 2021). Little is known about the decomposition of synthetic fabrics given their longevity. Absolute riddance of SHC is not possible, they will continue to transform into other elements and materials that will have impacts to humans and non humans along the way. None of my participants were fully aware of textile and clothing waste processes and issues, they assumed they were landfilled, given that is the primary method of waste management in Aoteroa.

Responses to Clothing and Textile Waste in ANZ

There is growing interest in textile disposal and waste in ANZ, pioneered by the Wellington-based UsedFULLY Organisation, among others. In their government white paper, Casey and Johnston (2021) draw attention to the growing problem of textile disposal in landfills and the absence of current legislation governing textile disposal. Following research conducted between 2020 and 2021 with over two hundred industry stakeholders, including second-hand clothing retailers, they make six recommendations in Table 1, reproduced with permission from UsedFULLY (see Appendix E)

Table 1.*Casey and Johnston's Industry Recommendations (2021)*

01.	02.	03.	04.	05.	06.
Government procurement contracts to include the requirement and budgets for end-of-life processing of textiles and clothing	Review of the priority products for diversion from landfill to include synthetic textile products in plastics category and natural fibres textiles and clothing in organics category	Co-investment in crucial resource processing plant and infrastructure	Mandated Product Stewardship Responsibility Contribution (levy) on all textile products brought to market to fund end-of-life solutions	Explore incentives to catalyse the transition to a circular textiles economy	Ban on all textiles from landfill

The Textile Product Stewardship programme launched in March 2022 is Stage Two of the UsedFULLY programme. It is “proving a pilot scheme, testing waste to value pathways and providing recommendations to the government of an appropriate vehicle to administer an accredited Voluntary Product Stewardship Scheme for Textiles in Aotearoa” (UsedFULLY, 2022).

Corporate voluntary initiatives of product stewardship have a somewhat problematic legacy. In other industries, they have been used to create the appearance of the industry taking responsibility for ensuring sustainable business practices to avoid mandatory government sanctions. In reality, such initiatives have accomplished little other than delaying formal sanctions. In *Talking Trash* (2020), Changing Markets illustrates a ‘corporate playbook of false solutions’ that corporations have used to avoid legislation and regulation regarding their plastic waste. Such legislation would require them to change their behaviour which would undoubtedly negatively impact their profit profiles. The authors use the term ‘playbook’ because their tactics have been successful in high-profile industries such as tobacco, fossil fuels, and agriculture. Typically, well-published voluntary industry initiatives are used to distract, delay and derail potential legislation such as mandatory product stewardship, transparency of supply chain, and

measurement and reporting of sustainability goals. These frequently used tactics include causing delay by lobbying, withholding data, and convincing governments that their voluntary initiatives will render mandatory measures unnecessary or continually requesting changes to proposed legislation. Distraction and derailing tactics include creating confusion and doubt about the validity of environmental or public health concerns and the introduction of challenges that question who is responsible, often including emotive languages, such as “litterbugs” intended to shift the blame onto the consumer. These tactics are all designed to uphold the current state (and profits) for as long as possible. However, consumers' growing awareness of these tactics is mainly through the work of NGOs such as Greenpeace Organisation and multiple academic contributions that term these behaviours ‘greenwashing’.

‘Greenwashing’ and Corporate Deceptions.

The term ‘greenwashing’ initially coined by environmentalist Jay Westerveld in 1986, refers to the “dissemination of false or deceptive information regarding an organization’s environmental strategies, goals, motivations, and actions” (Karen Becker-Olsen and Sean Potucek, 2013, p. 1318) is becoming more widely used, more elaborate and organised, as consumer become more aware and less tolerant of corporate marketing tactics.

Pink was aware of this type of deception,

A lot of the time, stores use greenwashing and stuff; they just use words to convince the consumer that something is ethical and it’s not. It is something that I am aware of and try to be aware of because I try to avoid such stores. It’s really shitty stuff to do. Because people are becoming more aware, they are trying to convince us that they are doing it responsibly and they are not. They are just trying to make more money and get more consumers.

As discussed in chapter one, notions of environmental sustainability emerged as the reason several participants preferred SHC. Greensilk, Beachyblue, and Pink felt slightly more strongly than the others. For them, buying and donating SHC also represented a firm rejection of the fast-fashion industry. Increasing public awareness of the environmental damage caused by toxins and waste in the fashion industry, as well as the labour and human rights abuses, is forcing fashion retailers to review their supply chains and publicly manage the reputation of their brands. Sustainability strategies and initiatives are commonly advertised on corporate websites and retail

stores. However, multidisciplinary academic analysts and political activist groups frequently question the efficacy of such initiatives (Brooks, 2012; Littler, 2009; Wohlgemuth, 2022)

The current lack of legislation regarding textile waste in Aotearoa means that clothing retailers do not yet have to change their business models. However, in anticipation of future changes, pre-emptive ‘virtue signalling’ is apparent and intended as a distraction from the issue of textile waste from fast fashion. Pink’s comments prompted me to explore potential greenwashing attempts in Auckland. I noticed that H & M Hennes & Mauritz AB (H&M) offer a 15% price reduction on new items purchased when accompanied by a bag of unwanted clothes of any brand, which they refer to as a ‘donation’, co-opting the language of charity. H&M were unwilling to disclose precisely where the donation ends up other than a ‘recycling plant’ overseas. (see Appendix F). There is no co-ordinated textile recycling infrastructure in Aotearoa currently nor the southern hemisphere to my knowledge. Further there is no incentive or responsibility for manufacturers to build disposal into their product costs.

Olga Speranskaya, Chief Operating Officer of Little Yellow Bird, a Wellington-based ethical clothing company that also recycles 100% cotton clothing, confirmed my spatial assumptions regarding recycling textiles and explained some hindrances to textile recycling in general. She referred to a lack of genuinely circular technologies for separating and recycling fibres from synthetic and synthetic blended fabrics, or ‘Frankenfabrics’ as they are known in the industry. In recycling, only well-suited fabrics, such as 100% cotton, can be pulped and processed for reuse to manufacture new fabrics. The reference to ‘Frankenfabrics’ reminded me of a conversation with Floral about fabrics. She referred to several fabric manufacturing processes from leather to silk, cotton and polyester and described them all as “horrendous”. We laughed ironically knowing it was not really humorous to either of us.

The likening of synthetic and synthetic/ organic blended fabrics to a famous monster character composed of chemically enlivened body parts from the deceased, and becoming immortal in the process, is a chilling metaphor. While the invention of synthetic fabrics may have been regarded as a chemical and economic triumph by manufacturers such as Du Pont, the legacy of their continued manufacture is proving disastrous for the environment through the pollution it creates. (Rich, 2016). Just as in Mary Shelly’s (1818) book, the monster’s suicide is somewhat ambiguous, as no one witnesses his death. The transformations of synthetically blended fabrics once discarded in landfill is unknown mainly because of the estimated length of time it takes to break down. Although trite, the scientific cleverness in creating synthetic fabrics may indeed

have created a monster. Synthetic fabrics ability to return in unexpected forms creates an ongoing environmental and social burden that will haunt future generations until safe disposal or transformation is found. Much like other legendary accounts of the ‘undead,’ their disposal should be called into question. As Hetherington (2004) suggests, “Failure to do this effectively can mean more than feeling spooked, it carries risks with it as the ongoing cases of unmanaged disposal in consumption associated with global warming...all illustrate”. Floral ends our conversation thoughtfully, “I think we just do not know enough about how things are made, how flax becomes linen, or how petrol becomes clothes”.

Conclusion

The co-emergence of knowledge during my research led to a deeper analysis of the mysteries surrounding SHC in Aotearoa as the divergence between the beliefs and narratives of my participants’ social constructions of SHC and the realities of Aotearoa’s growing trade became apparent. This chapter finds that the reasons for this divergence are multifaceted and encompass social, economic and political elements. Together, these elements perpetuate the prevailing social construction of SHC as a not-for-profit, moral endeavour, while simultaneously growing the economic opportunities (supply and demand) of the SHC. Contradictions between SHC as a resource and SHC as waste, and the politics of materials and materiality emerged in participant responses to the importation and exportation of SHC to and from Aotearoa that had been disposed of elsewhere.

My participants were unaware of Aotearoa’s participation in the global trade of SHC. Socially, SHC are steeped in a historical context of charity and good works that has been extended contemporarily to include other worthy causes such as environmental sustainability and waste avoidance. This social construction is reinforced by diversionary local media narratives that, on the one hand, perpetuate notions of ‘good’ alongside those of eco-consciousness and chic fashion statements. And on the other hand, it portrays the export and trade of SHC as a global north-to-south exploitative waste transfer practice that overlooks the growing international north-to-north trade. The lack of transparency in Aotearoa’s participation in this trade caused feelings of deception among my participants, which can be likened to breaches of the social contract between citizens and the producers, industries and the Government.

By questioning and comparing the constitution of SHC as a resource to SHC as waste, I have analysed the critical role that disposal plays in forming and maintaining social relations that ensure the appropriate placement of items within the social order. My participants were unsure of the disposal methods for SHC and experienced feeling burdened by things with unclear or incomplete disposal pathways. Their antipathetic responses to the importation and exportation of SHC without knowing the quantities involved suggest that they also feel it is an illegitimate means to dispose of unwanted clothes from other countries.

I have used a waste management lens to problematise the growing burden of clothing and textile waste in Aotearoa, acknowledging the transition of SHC from a valuable resource to clothing waste as an inevitable outcome via the disposal method chosen, e.g., this may be donation to a charity shop or it may be collected as municipal waste. The lack of legislation for clothing and textile waste is highlighted through the work of the UsedFULLY organisation and the six recommendations made to the New Zealand Government to manage the growing burden. In contrast to the recommendations posited by UsedFULLY and prompted by Pink's reference to 'greenwashing' tactics, I have used a recent campaign by H&M to discuss how the social construction of donating SHC as 'good' creates an opportunity for them to present their sustainability goal of recycling as a 'greenwash' to sell more products. In turn, this caused me to question the plausibility of clothing recycled into new clothes, given the proportions of synthetic blends in clothes. Aotearoa company Little Yellow Bird helped me to understand some of the difficulties in clothing recycling, such as the necessity for 100% cotton clothes and the requirement to ship post-consumer textiles to recycling plants in the northern hemisphere due to the absence of suitable textile recycling infrastructure in Aotearoa or the southern hemisphere. The chapter closes by using the industry term for synthetic and blended fabrics: 'Frankenfabrics', as an analogy to express the environmental risks posed by the immortality of synthetic and blended fabrics that, unlike organic fabrics, do not break down and are not subsumed by soil in their final disposal. Perhaps the greatest mystery is what they become as they mix and mingle with humans and non-humans and find an effective conduit for their final disposal.

The importance of these findings is that they have highlighted a disconnection between the social construction of the buying and donating of SHC and the reality of Aotearoa's participation in international trade. They have also highlighted the ways in which social construction is reinforced by media accounts that fail to present the full life cycle of SHC in Aotearoa. This

disconnection implies that it has the potential to contribute to the growing social, economic and political problem of textile and clothing waste in Aotearoa.

8 Conclusion

The abundance of cheap clothing leading to rapidly cycling fashion styles, consumers purchasing more, wearing items less, and discarding them more regularly. Many of those discarded items end up in SHC cycles, swamping traditional outlets, increasing global trade, and ultimately increasing the amount of clothing waste in landfills. By 2028, the global trade in SHC is predicted to reach US\$64 billion, surpassing fast fashion by some US\$20 billion.

It is little known that Aotearoa participates in the global trade of SHC through imports and exports. Without clothing and textile recycle infrastructure, most clothing waste in Aotearoa ends up in landfill and without legislation to govern clothing waste, or plastics from clothing, clothing waste is becoming a significant social problem. There is a significant gap in research regarding SHC consumption, practice, and the externalities associated with this trade in Aotearoa. My research contributes towards filling this gap by telling a cultural story contributing to the increase of SHC in Aotearoa and offering a unique view of the drivers for demand and supply, via a micro-segment of SHC shopping and its consequences. Although this research began by questioning why people buy or donate SHC, observation during research and participant interviews expanded the question to include, what was purchased, why some SHC mattered more than others, and what the social consequences of the growth in SHC were.

While the consumption and practice of SHC buying and donating are conscious, intimate, sentient, and deemed a ‘good’ consumption choice. There is little knowledge and information about Aotearoa’s participation in the global trade of SHC and the growing problem of clothing waste. Similarly, there is declining knowledge of the materials used in clothing production and their propensity for recursion as pollution or greenhouse gas. The three main themes to emerge from my research are: morality, materiality, and mystery.

Morality

The Morality chapter discussed the cultural construction of the consumption of SHC as ‘doing the right thing’ in terms of the self, society and the environment. This moral assumption is reinforced by popular culture in media narratives that perpetuate these virtues reaffirming SHC as a ‘good’ consumption practice among many narratives that tend to label consumption as ‘bad’ per se, and as hyper-consumption despite the necessity to consume items to sustain life, e.g., food, medicine, water. Research found that the notions of morality, rather than being arbitrary

had a generational pattern, that highlighted the particular social, economic and political aspects of moral stance making within and between generations.

The morality of consumption has long been debated in anthropology and across the social sciences. Although the specific moral or ethical virtues varied among my participants when overlaid with demographics, they take on a generational pattern suggestive of a moral zeitgeist that connects to the period's wider political and socio-economic issues. The construction of SHC as a morally 'good' consumption choice, is used by my participants to justify their choices. SHC provide the medium through which the various virtues become the instruments through which the justification, or 'sanctification' in Miller's (2012) analogy, of consumption, is practised. Through their secondhandedness, the clothes are transformed from 'bad' to 'good' consumption choices, absolved of their association with the many social, environmental, economic and political ills of fast fashion and mass consumption.

Materiality

The materiality of SHC is complex, confounding and loaded with contradictions. Research found that participants 'knew' the clothes through an embodied sense of touch that, in some cases, enables an assessment of the fabric and the anticipation of its body feel and wearing potential. The 'affordances' or properties of natural fabrics are increasingly being mimicked by synthetic fabric manufacture leading to a decrease in the ability to tell the difference between natural and synthetic while maintaining the desire for the haptic properties once associated with natural fabrics. SHC contain traces of the previous wearer that evoke an absence presence that may elicit repulsion or a deep and abiding connection, as the 'traces' of previous wearers are followed into other times, places, and relationships. Stories of more-than-clothes give rise to the agential possibilities of SHC to build and maintain sentient and corporeal networks of social relations and draw new imaginings of value.

The materiality chapter describes how perceptions of materiality in SHC are consciously or unconsciously formed and embodied through the lingering 'traces' of previous wearers and the materials used in clothing manufacture. The qualities, values and meanings that are assigned to the practice of SHC shopping, the types of clothes sought and those cherished and cared for explain why some clothes matter more than others to my participants. The preference for SHC among my participants was attributable to its opposition to mainstream shopping. SHC shopping required skills, knowledge and sensory alertness more akin to hunting than the mundane aspects

of provisioning. Where mainstream was predictable, homogeneous, and chore-like; SHC shopping was exciting, precarious, and treat-like.

The good/bad dichotomies that present themselves and persist throughout the SHC exchange and experience are explained alongside those that trouble these rigid classifications and hover somewhere in between. Materiality is relational which is to say that “meaning emerges from the *relationships between things*” (Grauer, 2020, p. 76). The social positioning and relative assignment of significance to ‘things’ human and non-human, is influenced by broader social structures and the dynamics of power that operate within them, construed as a hierarchy or “register of materiality” as Miller (2005, p. 19) suggests. In short, the forces that determine what matters and what does not, are steeped in the wider social, economic and political issues rather than being an entirely personal choice. SHC are pre-worn, they are assigned a value of sustainability unattainable for their new counterparts. When my participants spoke of fashion, they did so disparagingly and associated the product with poor quality, synthetic fabrics and cheapness. leading to fashion being materially insignificant beside the more significant, serious and sturdy conception of clothes. Further, my research implies that materials of materiality are important, and there is a preference for organic materials among those who are able to discern them. This ability appears to be disappearing as the ability for synthetics to mimic natural fabrics improves and consumers become further disassociated from the material origins of clothing.

The social coding of SHC and fabrics as good or bad is relational rather than inherent, influenced by multiple social codes and personal experiences, some of which defy the classification imposed by western ontology. Extraordinary clothes, borrowed, gifted or inherited are agential, they have a ‘thing-power’ that extends their value, and affects their treatment, care, and reverence. Agency also commands the responsibility and method of disposal. This accounts for the difficulty in parting with unwanted gifts from loved ones and family heirlooms and their requirement for careful and considered disposal.

Mystery

The mysteries of SHC discuss the capacity of the seemingly innocuous act of buying and donating SHC can transverse the social, economic, and political expanse between local charity shops and global trade. Further, this raises questions about the contradiction of waste and resource, the recursiveness of disposal and its role in mediating the boundaries between them. Equally mysterious is that so little is known about the growing trade of SHC in Aotearoa. The disparity between the social construction of SHC and the realities of the trade call for an increase

in transparency and public awareness of Aotearoa's participation and support of this global trade and Aotearoa's ability to manage the growing volumes.

The Mystery chapter addresses the contradictions between the social construction of SHC in Aotearoa and the realities of the growing SHC trade. The mysteries of SHC in Aotearoa are multiscalar and diverse, raising questions as detailed as the chemical breakdown of their materials, to the consequences of their global trade. None of my participants were aware of Aotearoa's participation in the global trade of SHC raising further questions about the transparency of this trade and the availability of information about it. The predominant narratives in Aotearoa reinforced by media accounts, promote notions of charity and sustainability, that obfuscate the realities of for-profit trade, and the growing problem of clothing waste management. The divergence between the social construction of SHC as charitable and the reality of the trade felt like deception to my participants challenging some enculturated notions held within the hypothetical social contract. My participants believe that by buying and donating SHC they are supporting good works and contributing to the common good whereas research shows that this is not always the case despite the perpetuation of charitable narratives.

The importation of SHC questioned the construction of SHC as a resource to be reused, and SHC as waste – unwanted by other countries. The fluidity between these conceptions challenges notions of disposal as a final riddance rather than disposal(s) as active, recursive processes within consumption that in turn question the ability for anything to be entirely absent and conjectures that things are only ever 'moved along' in continuous process (Hetherington, 2004). This the social relations associated with disposal(s) are infused with the responsibility of those relations and notions of value, leading to the construction of appropriate means of disposal (and inappropriate).

Addressing the lack of current legislation for clothing waste the work of UsedFULLY organisation is presented alongside corporate tactics of product stewardship and 'greenwashing'. The growing awareness among consumers regarding corporate tactics such as 'greenwashing', succinctly framed by Pink as "a shitty thing to do" is exemplified using H&M in Auckland as an example of virtue signalling, and the co-option of language commonly used by charities – 'donation'. The difficulties in clothing recycling are discussed alongside the perils of incomplete or ineffectual riddance of clothing, particularly synthetic clothing, and that which is derived from plastics given their notorious breakdown into micro particles and longevity.

The implications of this research are that first, it gives a broad human-centric perspective of the social construction of SHC consumption in Aotearoa. Second, it interrogates SHC as a product commodity throughout the consumption phases of acquisition, appropriation and disposal(s). SHC circulate within Aotearoa under narratives of charity, not-for-profit and environmental sustainability that when taken for granted as normative, drive demand, grow the market and the volume of products, but fail to consider the social consequences of doing so. However, as stated there needs to be greater transparency and information about the trade and the impacts of the trade, so that Aotearoa is better prepared to manage the growing volumes of SHC. Information is available via Stats-NZ- Tatauranga Aotearoa but it requires dedicated research and time to extract.

These are important considerations for Aotearoa as an island nation, without textile recycling infrastructure as clothing waste becomes a growing class of waste in landfills. And raises issues such as the suitability of SHC as an imported commodity in Aotearoa, the reach of product stewardship within second-hand economies, the availability of information about the materials used in fabric manufacture, and the impact they have on humans and non-humans as they are worn and discarded. There are also issues regarding the propriety of Aotearoa exporting SHC to the Pacific Islands, and issues regarding the efficiency of waste management processes generally. These are large issues for Aotearoa, that would be well suited to further research and that could be expanded to understand the impacts, opportunities, and problems that SHC presents for the Pacific region.

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[stigma/11785608#:~:text=The%20term%20%22op%20shop%22%20was,shop%22%2C%20or%20op%20shop](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-12/history-of-thriftig-how-op-shops-shed-their-stigma/11785608#:~:text=The%20term%20%22op%20shop%22%20was,shop%22%2C%20or%20op%20shop)

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Appendices

Appendix A Information Sheet



Master of Arts (Social Anthropology)

Information Sheet

From Riches to Rags: A study of the changing social meaning and attitudes towards second-hand clothes in a small but affluent NZ town.

My name is Rachel Stansfield, I am studying towards a Master of Arts degree in Social Anthropology with Massey University.

I am interested in learning about social attitudes and the meanings people attribute to second-hand clothes.

If you are interested to share your thoughts with me, I warmly invite you to participate.

Your names and contact details (telephone and email) will be needed for purely logistical purposes and will not be shared or published. All information will be anonymous, pseudonyms will be used to protect privacy.

I will need approximately 1 hour of your time for our conversation. The time and place will be arranged by mutual agreement. I would like to offer you refreshments in the form of tea/ coffee, during our conversation as a token of my gratitude for your participation.

Our conversation will be voice recorded with your consent and the transcription will be sent to you to review. Any changes can be made up until 31st October 2021 when I will need the finalised version to analyse / write up the study. All raw data will be stored and then disposed of in June 2022. Study data will be primarily published in the thesis but may also be used in other academic publications and public documents. Outputs will be sent to participants on completion.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used and
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Project Contacts

My details and the details of my supervisors are given below. Please feel welcome to contact my supervisors if you have any specific questions or queries.

Researcher Rachel Stansfield



Supervisor(s) Dr. Trisia Farrelly
T.Farrelly@Massey.ac.nz

Dr. Amy Whitehead
A.R.Whitehead@Massey.ac.nz

Committee Approval Statement

- This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application _4000024510

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Fiona Te Momo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 43347, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz.

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz”.

If physical injury results from your participation in this study, you should visit a treatment provider to make a claim to ACC as soon as possible. ACC cover and entitlements are not automatic and your claim will be assessed by ACC in accordance with the Accident Compensation Act 2001. If your claim is accepted, ACC must inform you of your entitlements, and must help you access those entitlements. Entitlements may include, but not be limited to, treatment costs, travel costs for rehabilitation, loss of earnings, and/or lump sum for permanent impairment. Compensation for mental trauma may also be included, but only if this is incurred as a result of physical injury.

If your ACC claim is not accepted you should immediately contact the researcher. The researcher will initiate processes to ensure you receive compensation equivalent to that to which you would have been entitled had ACC accepted your claim.

MA Arts (Social Anthropology)

Research :

From Riches to Rags: A study of the changing social meaning and attitudes towards second-hand clothes in a small but affluent NZ town.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and I understand the Information Sheet attached as Appendix I. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded. (if applicable include this statement)
2. I wish/do not wish to have my recordings returned to me. (if applicable include this statement)
3. I wish/do not wish to have data placed in an official archive. (if applicable include this statement)
4. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Declaration by Participant:

I _____ [print full name]_____ hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B List of Guiding Questions

List of Guiding Questions

1. What is the most cherished garment you've ever bought second hand and why is it so special?
2. How would you describe your engagement with Second-hand clothes? For e.g. are you a Buyer? Collector? Donor? Trader or maybe combinations.
3. There are many types of shops now, what sorts of shops do you prefer?
4. How long have you been engaged with this?
5. What do you like or dislike about second-hand clothes shopping?
6. What do you know about the second-hand clothing industry in New Zealand? Such as where do the clothes come from and where do they eventually go?

Appendix C Ethics Approval

From: humanethics@massey.ac.nz <humanethics@massey.ac.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 June 2021 2:09 PM
To: Rachel.Stansfield.1@uni.massey.ac.nz; Farrelly, Trisia <T.Farrelly@massey.ac.nz>; Banks, Glenn <G.A.Banks@massey.ac.nz>
Cc: Human Ethics <gmhumeth@massey.ac.nz>
Subject: Human Ethics Notification - 4000024510

HoU Review Group
Prof Glenn Banks

Ethics Notification Number: 4000024510

Title: From Riches to Rags: A study of the changing social meaning and attitudes towards second-hand clothes in a small but affluent NZ town.

Thank you for your notification which you have assessed as Low Risk.

Your project has been recorded in our system which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named in this document are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you want to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Craig Johnson, Director (Research Ethics), email humanethics@massey.ac.nz. "

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish require evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to complete the application form again answering yes to the publication question to provide more information to go before one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

If you wish to print an official copy of this letter, please login to the RIMS system, and under the Reporting section, View Reports you will find a link to run the LR Report.

Yours sincerely

Professor Craig Johnson
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

Appendix D Shop Poster



Interesting people
needed to participate
in **interesting**
research about
second-hand clothing

Hi

I'm Rachel and I'm studying towards an MA in
Social Anthropology at Massey University.

I need interesting people **like You** to help
me with my research by giving me an hour of
your time to talk about second-hand clothes – all
confidential, very easy and enjoyable. I will even
shout coffee !

Call [REDACTED] or email
Rachel.Stansfield.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

Appendix E – Approval to use Table 1 from UsedFULLY

Peter Thompson <peter@usedfully.com>

20 Aug 2022,
16:45

to Rachel, UsedFULLY

Kia ora Rachel,

This email confirms permission to use the table from the white paper.

When published we'd be interested in reading your paper.

Ngā mihi nui,
Peter

Peter Thompson, CEO UsedFULLY + The Formary | +64 (0)21 241
3266 | peter@usedfully.com | www.usedfully.com | www.theformary.com

Appendix F – Email from H&M

Customer Service NZ (H&M)

Mar 21, 2022, 18:55 GMT+13

Hi Rachel,

Thank you for your email.

The sorting plants and production are based overseas and not in New Zealand.

You can find more information regarding I:CO here: [Company – I:CO \(ico-spirit.com\)](https://www.ico-spirit.com)

That's correct, all garments with a green label are sustainably made! They are either sustainability sourced or recycled material. You can find more about that here: [Reuse and recycling – H&M Group \(hmgroup.com\)](https://www.hmgroup.com)

We hope this information helps.

Kind regards,

CUSTOMER SERVICE

H&M HENNES & MAURITZ NEW ZEALAND

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