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Considering Sustainability from the Perspective of Accountability: Rethinking Consumerism and the Environment

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The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes in various shades, creating a modern and dynamic feel. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, some semi-transparent, layered on a white background.

Considering Sustainability from the Perspective of Accountability: Rethinking Consumerism and the Environment

Tabassum Ruby, Christine Recchi, Madeline Mulcahey

March 9, 2022

YouTube clip

- ▶ **Global Wealth Inequality - What you never knew you never knew**
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWSxzjyMNpU>

Backstory

- ▶ Thinking from the perspective of an Islamic accountability



What is Ethics?

By Joan Woolfrey and Matthew Pierlott

- ▶ There are three categories of moral values:
 - ▶ 1) Consideration of the consequences of our actions
 - ▶ 2) Analysis of our duties and responsibilities
 - ▶ 3) Evaluation and development of our character or dispositions

Consideration of Consequences

- ▶ The Greatest Happiness Principle requires us to consider two different directions:
- ▶ 1) Giving equal weight to the interests and values of others as we do to our own as we make our calculation
- ▶ 2) We must anticipate the consequences of our actions

Globalization as colonization

- ▶ Globalization is the continuation of colonization:
 - ▶ Subsuming the multiple diversities of economies and cultures
 - ▶ The control of a few multinational corporations
 - ▶ Structural adjustment programs
 - ▶ Military conflicts
 - ▶ Racist attacks on immigrants
 - ▶ The communities who pay the real price, have no decision-making power

The myth of catching up: Vandana Shiva & Maria Mies

- ▶ The north American consumer lifestyle is the model of “the good life”
- ▶ It is based on the south’s exploitation of resources
- ▶ The consumer lifestyle is viewed as progress and development
- ▶ But the planet has a limitation

The myth of catching up: Vandana Shiva & Maria Mies

- ▶ The poverty of the underdeveloped nations is the direct consequence of overdevelopment of the rich industrial countries
- ▶ Without colonization
 - ▶ Neither rich countries be rich
 - ▶ Nor subordination of women possible
 - ▶ Nor ecological destruction be understood

The myth of catching up: Vandana Shiva & Maria Mies

- ▶ Adopting “the good life” model means:
 - ▶ Accepting the colonizers’ lifestyle
 - ▶ Devaluing one’s own lifestyle
 - ▶ Destroying one’s own culture, work, lifestyle, values, and social institutions
 - ▶ Changing one’s own laws
 - ▶ Creating economic dependency

Double think state

- ▶ Most people know about the greenhouse effects, the destruction of the ozone layer, and about environmental damage due to human activities
- ▶ But most people continue to uphold the belief of living a consumer model life
- ▶ Industrialized countries exert coercion and violence on to the global south to keep the good life model

Catching-up does not liberate women: 4 reasons

- ▶ 1) Liberation means having self determination. But the good life model treats women of the global south as commodities and manipulates their desires and needs
- ▶ 2) Since the good life model cannot be extended to *all* women as the planet has a limitation, most women of the global south cannot be free

Catching-up does not liberate women: 4 reasons

- ▶ 3) Under the good life model, no real international women's solidarity is possible because women of the global north's good life depends on the women of the global south's exploitation
- ▶ 4) Ecological destruction effects women of the global south in more intense ways

The food and nutrition crisis

- ▶ Cash crops results into hunger, displacement of small farmers, and degradation of biodiversity
- ▶ Monocultures are ill-suited to the provision of people's food entitlements
- ▶ *Bathua*



The water crisis

- ▶ The water crisis contributes to 34.6% of all child deaths in the global south
- ▶ Industry, industrial agriculture, deforestation, dams, air-conditioning, hotels, urban-industrial complexes, are among the reasons of water crisis
- ▶ Unclean water means poor people must buy clean water

Dispensability and the dominant paradigm

- ▶ Population control argument: a large number of poor people are a drain on the world resources (the victims are transformed into villains)
- ▶ But the resources are destroyed and exploited by the rich
- ▶ Women's fertility itself is threatened due to industrial pollution

Some of the facts about garbage, consumption, and pollution

- ▶ American produce 25% of pollution compared to all globally produced pollution
- ▶ Wealthy 10% take 59% of the world resources
- ▶ 1/4% of the world population consume 75% of the energy

Voluntary simplicity and consumer liberation

- ▶ Although many people understand the need to change their life-style, they often leave the responsibility for change to the politicians, the governments or scientists and entrepreneurs
- ▶ However, politicians will be inclined to introduce measures if they are convinced that people will accept them

Voluntary simplicity and consumer liberation

- ▶ Therefore, a consumer liberation movement must start from the consumers themselves
- ▶ When such a movement becomes strong and widespread, the politicians and entrepreneurs will follow them

The concept of Sustainability

- ▶ The Brundtland Report's (1987) "sustainable development" concept has shaped climate change discourse for the subsequent decades
- ▶ "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"
- ▶ The Report suggests techno-solutions such as "the green economy" that have perpetuated capitalist and colonialist strategies of privatization

The concept of Sustainability

- ▶ But “sustainable development” fails to address root causes of the climate crisis
- ▶ The Report calls for continued economic growth which is an unsustainable endeavor on a finite planet
- ▶ The Report completely omits discussion of the North's high levels of production, consumption, and disregard for the environment

Robin Wall Kimmerer: The honorable harvest

- ▶ Sustainability: “the management of natural resources and social institutions in such a manner as to ensure the attainment and continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations” (pp.189-190)
- ▶ According to the elders, this definition means, “They just want to be able to keep on taking like they always have.... Our first thoughts are not ‘What can we take?’ but ‘What can we give to Mother Earth?’” (p.190).

The honorable harvest

- ▶ “The Honorable Harvest asks us to give back, in reciprocity, for what we have been given. Reciprocity helps resolve the moral tension of taking a life by giving in return something of value that sustains the ones who sustain us. One of our responsibilities as human people is to find ways to enter into reciprocity with the more-than-human world. We can do it through gratitude, through ceremony, through land stewardship, science, art, and in everyday acts of practical reverence” (p.190).

Environmentally Unsafe Products

Christine Recchi (with Colin Lanzoni & Aiden Preston)

Why This Topic?

- ↓ Easy to find eco-friendly alternatives
- ↓ Cleaning products have a large environmental impact
 - ← Many different types, different chemicals, same effects
- ↓ We do not tend to notice what is bad for our environment, even if we use it everyday
- ↓ There are a lot of hidden ingredients that people are unaware of their dangers to the environment

Laundry Detergent: The environment

- ↓ Phosphates = eutrophication
 - ↪ Foreign minerals/chemicals are added to a body of water
 - ↪ Helps growth of algae
 - ↪ Toxic to aquatic life
- ↓ Surfactants
 - ↪ Break down oil layers on fish
 - ↪ Make it easier for pesticides to absorb into water
- ↓ Plastic containers
 - ↪ Make their way to the ocean
 - ↪ More plastic

Laundry Detergent: Chemical Ingredients

- ↓ Powdered or liquid
- ↓ Phosphates
- ↓ Surfactants (lower surface tension between two substances)
 - ↳ Stearic acid
- ↓ Enzymes
- ↓ Certain ingredients target different stains/soils
- ↓ Many more chemicals
- ↓ Plastic containers



Laundry Detergent: The solution

- ↓ Phosphate content is already regulated if not banned
- ↓ Seek greener detergent alternatives
 - ← SoapNuts
 - ↓ Grow off trees in Himalayas
 - ↓ Contain saponin
 - ↓ Grown without pesticides
 - ← ECOSNext Liquid Laundry Detergent
 - ↓ Soapy squares that dissolve in wash
 - ↓ No harmful chemicals
 - ← Dropps
 - ↓ No toxic chemicals
 - ↓ Biodegradable pods
 - ↓ Ship with Carbon neutral processes

Laundry Detergent: Sources

- ↵ Krososky, Andrew. “How Does Laundry Detergent Affect the Environment?” *Green Matters*, Green Matters, 2 Nov. 2020, <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/detergent-environmental-effects>.
- ↵ Hirsh, Sophie. “The Most Innovative Zero-Waste Laundry Detergents on the Market.” *Green Matters*, Green Matters, 16 Oct. 2020, <https://www.greenmatters.com/p/zero-waste-laundry-detergents-innovative>.

Sunscreen: Chemical ingredients/The problem

- ↓ Hydrogen peroxide
 - ← Some sunscreens, when hit with UV light, produce this chemical which kills phytoplankton
- ↓ Oxybenzone
 - ← Contributes to bleaching coral
- ↓ Octinoxate
 - ← May damage human DNA
 - ← Another concern for coral
- ↓ Plastic containers

SUNSCREEN CHEMICALS AND MARINE LIFE

How sunscreen chemicals enter our environment:

The sunscreen you apply may not stay on your skin.

When we swim or shower, sunscreen may wash off and enter our waterways.

How sunscreen chemicals can affect marine life:

GREEN ALGAE: Can impair growth and photosynthesis.

CORAL: Accumulates in tissues. Can induce bleaching, damage DNA, deform young and even kill.

MUSSELS: Can induce defects in young.

SEA URCHINS: Can damage immune and reproductive systems, and deform young.

FISH: Can decrease fertility and reproduction, and cause female characteristics in male fish.

DOLPHINS: Can accumulate in tissues and be transferred to young.

Chemicals in some sunscreens that can harm marine life:

- 3-Benzylidene camphor
- 4-Methylbenzylidene camphor
- Octocrylene
- Benzophenone-1
- Benzophenone-8
- OD-PABA
- nano-Titanium dioxide
- nano-Zinc oxide
- Octinoxate
- Oxybenzone

Here are a few ways to protect ourselves and marine life:

Consider sunscreen without chemicals that can harm marine life, seek shade between 10 am & 2 pm, and use Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) sunwear.

Seek shade | Umbrella | Sun hat | Sunscreen | UV Sun glasses | Sun shirt | Leggings

Revised Sep. 2020 | oceanservice.noaa.gov/sunscreen

Sunscreen: The solution

↓ Regulations

- ↪ Palau and Hawaii have bans on sunscreen with harmful chemicals
- ↪ In US, FDA published specific labelling for safety standards

↓ Alternatives

- ↪ Green People Organic Sun Lotion
 - ↓ Nontoxic to humans
 - ↓ Plant based recyclable tube
 - ↓ 84% organic ingredients
- ↪ Waxhead Reef Safe Sunscreen
 - ↓ Biodegradable
 - ↓ Eco-friendly production
 - ↓ Donates to Coastal Conservation Alliance



Sunscreen: Sources

Sánchez-Quiles, David, and Antonio Tovar-Sánchez. “Sunscreens as a Source of Hydrogen Peroxide Production in Coastal Waters.” *Environmental Science & Technology*, vol. 48, no. 16, 2014, pp. 9037-9042., <https://doi.org/10.1021/es5020696>.

“11 Eco-Friendly Sunscreens (That Are Biodegradable and Reef-Safe).” *Cool of the Wild*, <https://coolofthewild.com/eco-friendly-sunscreen-biodegradable-reef-safe/>.

Aerosol

- ↓ What are Aerosols?
- ↓ Aerosols contain volatile organic compounds (a type of air pollutant)
- ↓ Make up for 6.1 percent of all VOC emissions in the UK.



Solution

- ↖ Deodorants
- ↖ Air Fresheners
- ↖ Paints
- ↖ Hairsprays



Sources

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/explainer-what-are-aerosols>

<https://inews.co.uk/news/deodorant-and-air-freshener-sprays-are-a-worrying-source-of-toxic-air-pollution-scientists-warn-977147>

Makeup Wipes

- ↵ An everyday product that is dangerous to the environment:
 - ↵ Is not recyclable OR compostable
 - ↵ They can take up to 100 years to decompose
 - ↵ Brands disclose what they infuse into wipe fibers, but there is not requirement to list fiber content
 - ↵ Most are bound to be made out of spun plastic

Makeup Wipe Eco-Friendly Substitutions

- ↶ Rinsing makeup up off with warm water and a cloth
- ↶ Subbing a fabric cloth for the cotton ones
 - ↶ Requires no plastic packaging

Environmentally friendly makeup wipe brands:

- ↶ NudeSkin
- ↶ Wipe. Compressed Towels
- ↶ Almay
- ↶ Simple

Although on the more expensive side, these brands promote decomposita



Sources:

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2021/10/10706304/fall-winter-skin-care-tips-2021>

<https://www.greenpeople.co.uk/blogs/the-beauty-hub/cleansing-wipes-why-we-should-avoid-them>

Palm Oil

What is it?

- ↻ The oil is used in food manufacturing, in beauty products, and as biofuel.

Why is it dangerous?

- ↻ Leading causes of deforestation
- ↻ Destruction of local animal life's habitats

What is it in?

- ↻ Several everyday products
 - ↻ Lipstick and lip balms
 - ↻ Detergents
 - ↻ Soaps and shampoo/ conditioner



Palm Oil Sources

https://www.orangutans-sos.org/take-action/learn/palm-oil/?gclid=CjwKCAiAhreNBhAYEiwAFGGKPGIfbTPzMoQLqRLrgFarseq8kdRtxGRQMucZ-N7o8_0gSKjRXwa2URoCHBEQAvD_BwE

https://earth.org/how-palm-oil-contributes-to-environmental-destruction/?gclid=CjwKCAiAhreNBhAYEiwAFGGKPL76ZN6kcVohw9dRyOxikb_gM2Rb3IMHzdeELbH76UacVjfpGi1f/RoCfLQQAvD_BwE

Sustainability in the Beauty Industry

Maddie Mulcahey (with Deja Pyles & Melisa Posner)

What Makes a Makeup Product Environmentally Friendly?

- Reusable/recyclable packaging
- Vegan ingredients
- Cruelty Free
- Important symbols to look for on makeup and beauty products:
 - ← Leaping Bunny
 - ← USDA Organic Seal
 - ← Certified Vegan
 - ← Fair Trade Certified
 - ← Recyclable



Relevance and Ethical Concerns

Why We Care:

- ↓ We use makeup often
- ↓ Care for the safety of animals
- ↓ Societal beauty standards

Ethical Concerns:

- ┌ Is it tested on animals?
- ┌ Is it made of vegan products?
- ┌ Is the packaging biodegradable?

Resources

Cruelty Free Kitty

#	Avalon Organics	Cailyn Cosmetics
100% Pure	Aveda*	California Tan
3INA	Axiology	Captain Blankenship
A	B	Cargo
A Perfume Organic	Babo Botanicals	Carol's Daughter*
Abba*	Badger	Caswell-Massey
Acure	Baja Bae	Cate McNabb
Adorn Cosmetics	Balm Balm	Catrice
Adwoa Beauty	Barefaced Beauty	Celeb Luxury
Aesop	BareMinerals*	Certain Dri
Aether Beauty	Barry M	Chantecaille
Afterglow Cosmetics	Beauty by Earth	Chi Chi Cosmetics
AG Hair	Beauty Bio	China Glaze
Aila Cosmetics	Beautyblender	Christophe Robin
Alaffia	Becca*	Ciaté
Alba Botanica	Bellapierre	CleanWell
Alima Pure	Ben Nye	Clove + Hallow
Amika	Benecos	Cocofloss
Anastasia Beverly Hills	Besame	Coloured Raine
Andalou Naturals	BH Cosmetics	Colourpop
Annabelle	Bite Beauty*	Conair
Antipodes	Black Radiance	Concrete Minerals
Antonym	Blinc	COOLA
Arctic Fox	Blissoma	Copycat Beauty
Ardell	Booda Organics	Cosmedix
Ardency Inn	Boots*	Cover FX
Aromi	Boosy Cosmetics	Cover Girl*
Arquiste	Botanics*	Crazy Rumors
As I Am	Briogeo	Crystal
Atanich	Bulldog*	CYO Cosmetics*

Ulta Beauty



OSEA

OSEA has been creating vegan skincare since 1996—with sustainability consistently top of mind. For example? You'll find OSEA products in glass bottles and jars. The brand also uses recycled materials for its boxes whenever possible. OSEA is a Climate Neutral Certified brand and has plans to reduce its 2021 emissions even further by removing paper inserts from product boxes and using more recyclable materials for all packaging.

[Shop Osea](#)



Featured Brands

Reduce, reuse, recycle—and refill. These brands take all of the above to heart.



eva·nyc

Eva NYC is here for good hair days that are also kind to the planet—100% (literally). Certified vegan, cruelty-free and GMO-free products with 100% recyclable packaging. Plus, once the aluminum packaging is recycled curbside, it can pop back up on shelves in as quickly as 60 days. The brand avoids ingredients such as sulfates, parabens, and phthalates and continues to prioritize upholding down-to-earth beauty standards.

[Shop Eva NYC](#)



Juice Beauty's commitment to protecting the environment dates to 2005—and the brand continues to focus on these efforts. First up? Ditch virgin plastic. Juice Beauty designs and converts all plastic bottles to recycled Ocean & Land Waste Plastic or Bioresin, and approximately 40% of their products are in glass containers. Plus, they use 100% FSC paper and 90% Bioresin sample and travel tubes.



How does Cruelty-Free Kitty help?

We verify brands by contacting them directly, and each brand added to our cruelty-free list has been carefully vetted and has answered all our questions.

One of the differences between Cruelty-Free Kitty and organizations such as PETA or Leaping Bunny is that we're the ones reaching out to companies, while PETA and Leaping Bunny certification is done on a voluntary basis. By reaching out to brands, we gather animal testing policies from companies that are otherwise overlooked. This is why our database includes over 850 brands, including all the popular brands found in stores.

Many big brands try to trick consumers with misleading claims and incomplete policies. We publish their full animal testing policies and expose those that are not truly cruelty-free. Examples of such brands include Wet n Wild, Physicians Formula, L'Oreal, Origins, MAC, and many more.



Clear Science at a Glance

Our unbiased rating system gives you an easy-to-understand overview of the health impacts associated with a product and its ingredients.

10 - 8

Strong and conclusive evidence show these ingredients have long-term health impacts.

7 - 4

Moderate and inconclusive evidence show these ingredients have moderate health impacts.

3 - 0

Insufficient or no known evidence to show these ingredients are harmful ingredients.

N/R

Products and/or ingredients have not yet been rated.



(Think Dirty


Maybelline
9


Maybelline Great Las...
★ 0.0

DIRTY
HALF N' HALF
CLEAN

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS i

TITANIUM DIOXIDE 3

INACTIVE INGREDIENTS i

BUTYLPARABEN 9

METHYLPARABEN 8

QUATERNIUM 15 8

BEESWAX (APIS MELLIFERA) 3

MICA 3

PROPYLENE GLYCOL 3

QUATERNIUM 22 3

SHELLAC 3

SIMETHICONE 3

SORBITAN SESQUIOLEATE 3

Disclosure
NE
3

(Think Dirty Inc.)

Resource: Animal Cruelty Chart

- Follow the chart to see if the product you're using resulted in animal testing
 - There is a common misconception that all American beauty products that are sold in China result in animal testing

Are Cosmetics Required To Be Tested on Animals in China?

www.ethicalelephant.com



Connection to Global Issues

Our **lifestyle and consumption patterns** contribute to global issues related to sustainability and ethics.

The beauty industry furthers:

- ↻ Environmental degradation
- ↻ Inequities between nations
- ↻ Societal standards that harm women

The natural resources and people (specifically women) of the global South are exploited to sustain the average American's lifestyle (Shiva, 70-88).

“Buying new clothes or cosmetics is an attempt to compensate for the lack of value generally experienced by women in our society” (Mies, 258).

Addressing Our Concerns in the U.S.

↓ We propose:

- ↪ Requiring that all beauty product packaging is made with recycled material
- ↪ All packaging must have the ability to be recycled post-use
- ↪ Source ingredients without exploitation



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