

Virtues, Thrift Stores, and Consumption

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Making a Good Decision

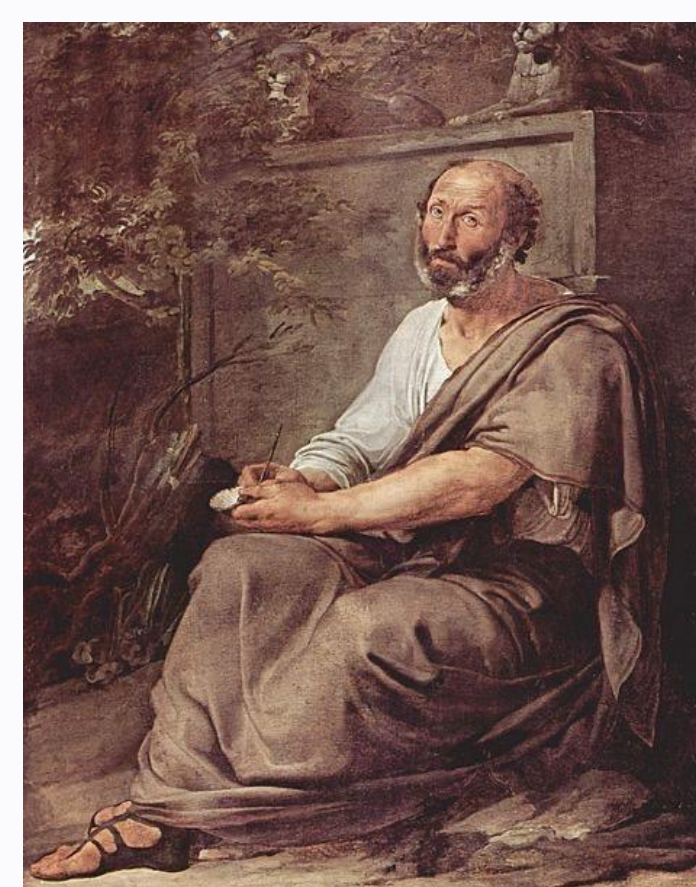
Argument:

1. Environmental crisis is caused in part by consumption norms
2. Consuming (and overconsumption) is done by human beings (companies & individuals)
3. Therefore, if we are to deal with the environmental crisis, then it is reasonable to claim that *individual* consumption norms and *decisions* must be evaluated to measure for moral sensibilities

* How do we make a good decision for the common good with *value pluralism*?

One approach to understanding and offering a solution is appealing to *Virtue Ethics*. *Virtue Ethics*: Theory in moral philosophy grounded in practicality. Its principal concern is human well-being. Virtues then are rational, emotional, and social *skills* aimed at the flourishing of a human being. Virtue Ethics claim *objective responsibility* and a duty for *you as individual* to be the individual with sensibilities (Proper Responsiveness)

Being virtuous must be *nurtured*. By *repeatedly* habituating the appropriate feeling towards a desired virtue, one habituates being virtuous.



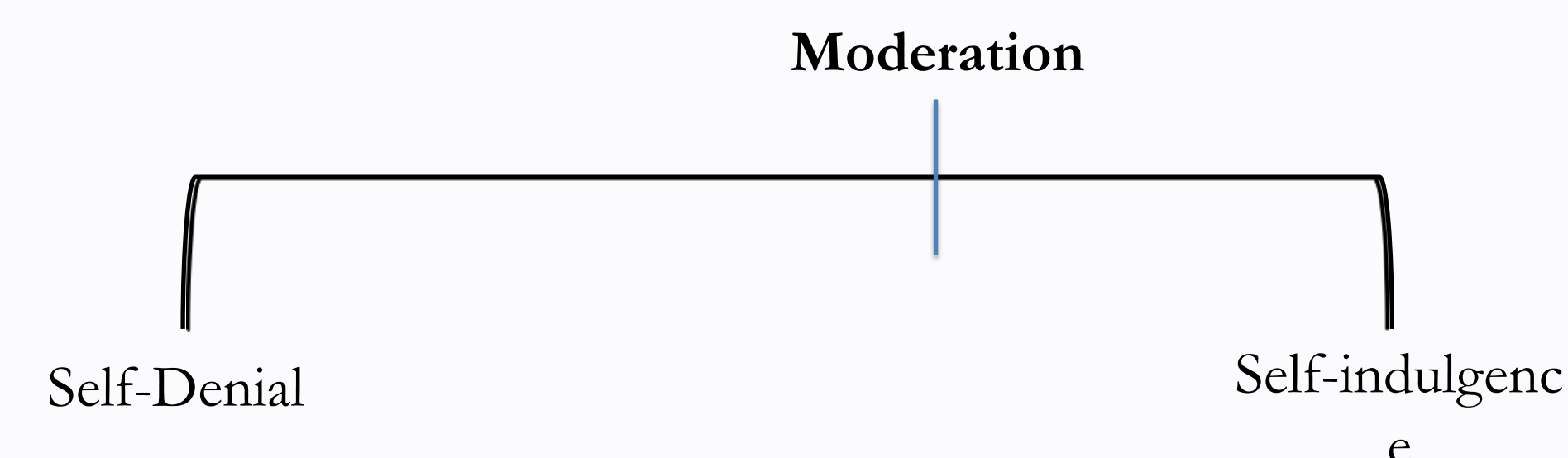
Virtue

Deficiency

Excess

New Clothes Consumption

- Fast fashion delimits who we could and can be, a *passive* activity
- Alienates consumer from sensibilities of clothing design, philosophies, artistry, producers, and one's authentic self



Authenticity

Imposter Syndrome

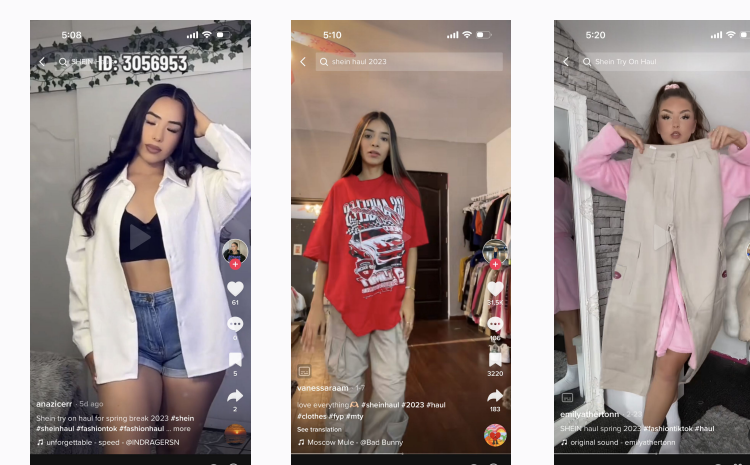
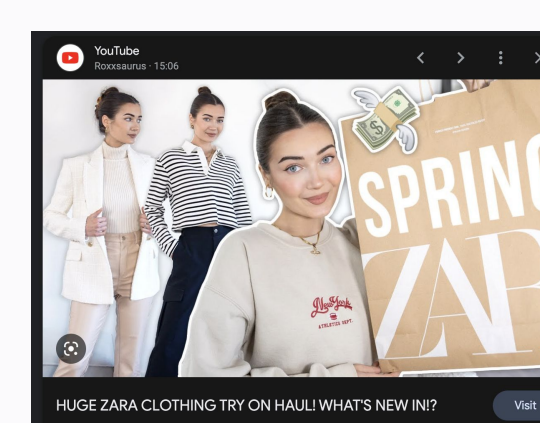
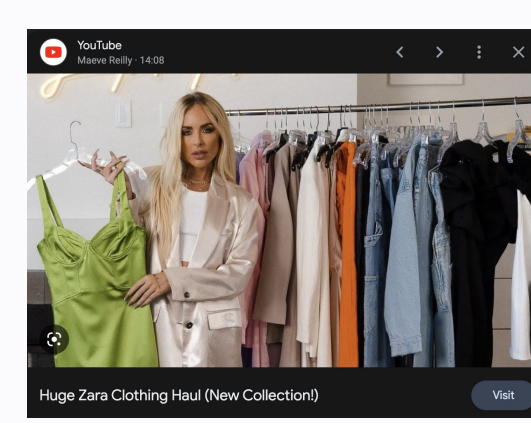
Boastfulness



- Department stores *limit* your opportunity to choose, doubt, or pause one way or another about a feeling that may lead to a *bad* decision
 - There is an entire psychology to *visual merchandising!* Items are arranged and displayed to be widely exposed, so you are more apt to pay for objects you don't necessarily *need* or are *right* for you.
 - Massive department stores normalize the idea that clothing production, maintenance, and access is infinite, all the while divorcing one's self and purchase from the producer of a garment

- **Considerations on Production and Trends:** As I see it the 'thrifed look' – a critique of capitalism, has become popular. Here is how capitalism capitalizes on its critique:

1. Trends and new clothing reflect past styles
2. As social beings, we desire to 'fit in'
3. Trends are a popularizing of what is taken to be 'cool'
 - a. The 'cool' people are typically alt, punk, or subversive persons rejecting traditional norms such as fashion systems – *they are thrifting*
3. Consumers desiring to 'fit in' are likely desiring the style of the subversive persons, *they are desiring the thrifed look.*
4. Clothing brands take up the trendy past-reflecting style and use *new* materials to recreate *thrifed* looking garments!

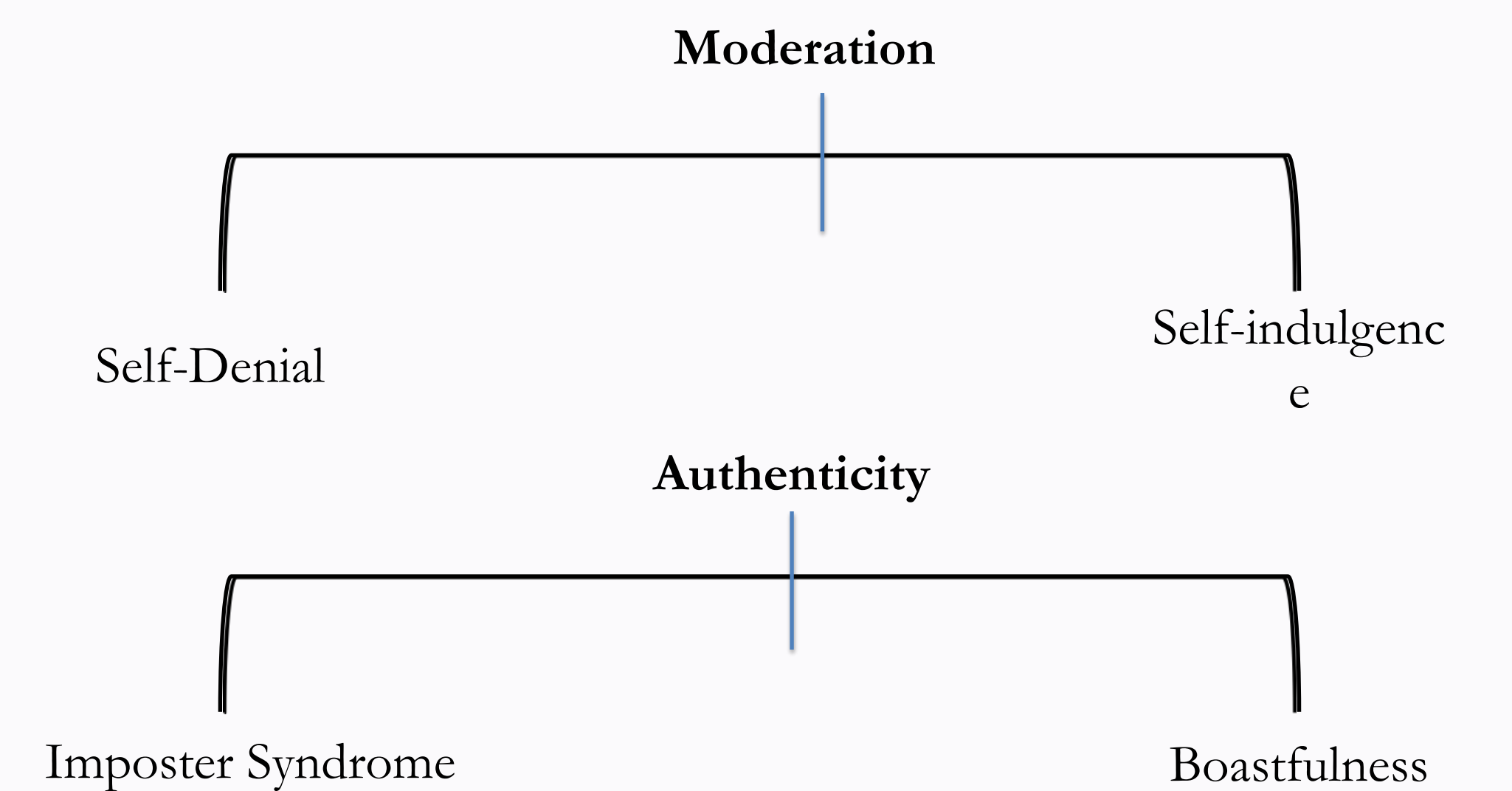


Thrift Consumption

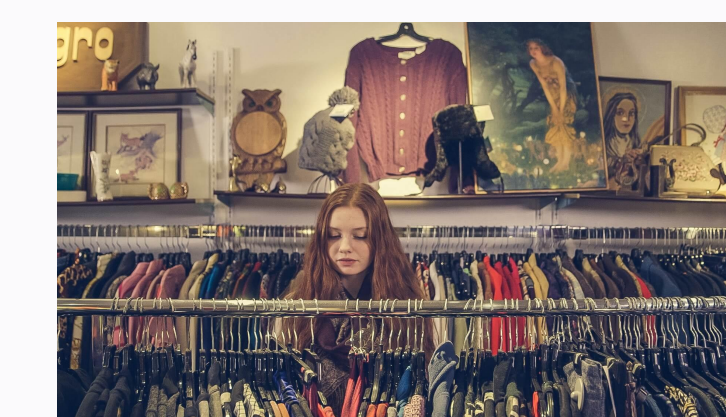
- An embodied practice – a meditation of self
- Thrift stores require individuals to be *patient*, to *pause*, and *discern* – to be mindful of one's self beyond the boundaries of traditional fashion systems
- *3 actions* that facilitate the development of personal standards, values, and ideals grounded in *practical deliberation*. – A potent source of self-reflection

- *Shrinking Time*: In the moment you are considering that which came before you you are shrinking the distance between space and collapsing time, *Creates a fundamentally different relationship* to the material world that existed before

- Thrift stores allow an opening to a conversation around consumption norms, of the value of clothing, and the value of human life.



- **Response to Considerations on Production and Trends:**
 - TS necessarily contain a greater potential of acquiring high quality unique and original garments from previous decades (past styles) at a low price.
 - TS allow consumer to be *ahead* of and even *set* trends.



How to Use Thrift Shops to Find Your Style Expression

Lotte: Clothes beyond Consumption

- Attempting to disrupt consumption patterns by offering professional styling, guided by tools to use with clothing in your *existing* closet.
 - *Expand*: "When it comes to style, nothing feels like you. Your clothes do not reflect who you are or want to become." \$172
 - *Renew*: "Your wardrobe is full, but you're ignoring most of it. You feel uninspired by your current wardrobe." \$150
- Styling sessions reconnects clients to their wardrobe, offers users tools for reimagination existing pieces



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Overconsumption & the Environmental Crisis

- *Expansion*: From self-made clothing produced by women for family unit to massive industrial scale, governments aided and abetted the transfer of textile production offshore to low-wage labor sweatshops, then filled new department malls with this imported clothing.
 - Massive department stores *normalize* the idea that clothing production, maintenance, and access is infinite

- Doubling the lifespan of a garment (30 to 60 uses) reduced its GHG footprint by roughly half (WRI)
- For every 2 million tons of textiles we keep in circulation and out of landfills, we can reduce carbon emissions equivalent to taking 1 million cars off the road (EPA)
- The largest driver of resource reduction is not *how a piece of clothing is produced*, but the *number of times it is worn*.

- While we're *entangled* in a series of relationships that make it difficult to meaningfully transcend the exploitation, overconsumption, and overproduction, **the individual can make better choices.**

