


# **BUYING, USING & DISPOSING FASHION**

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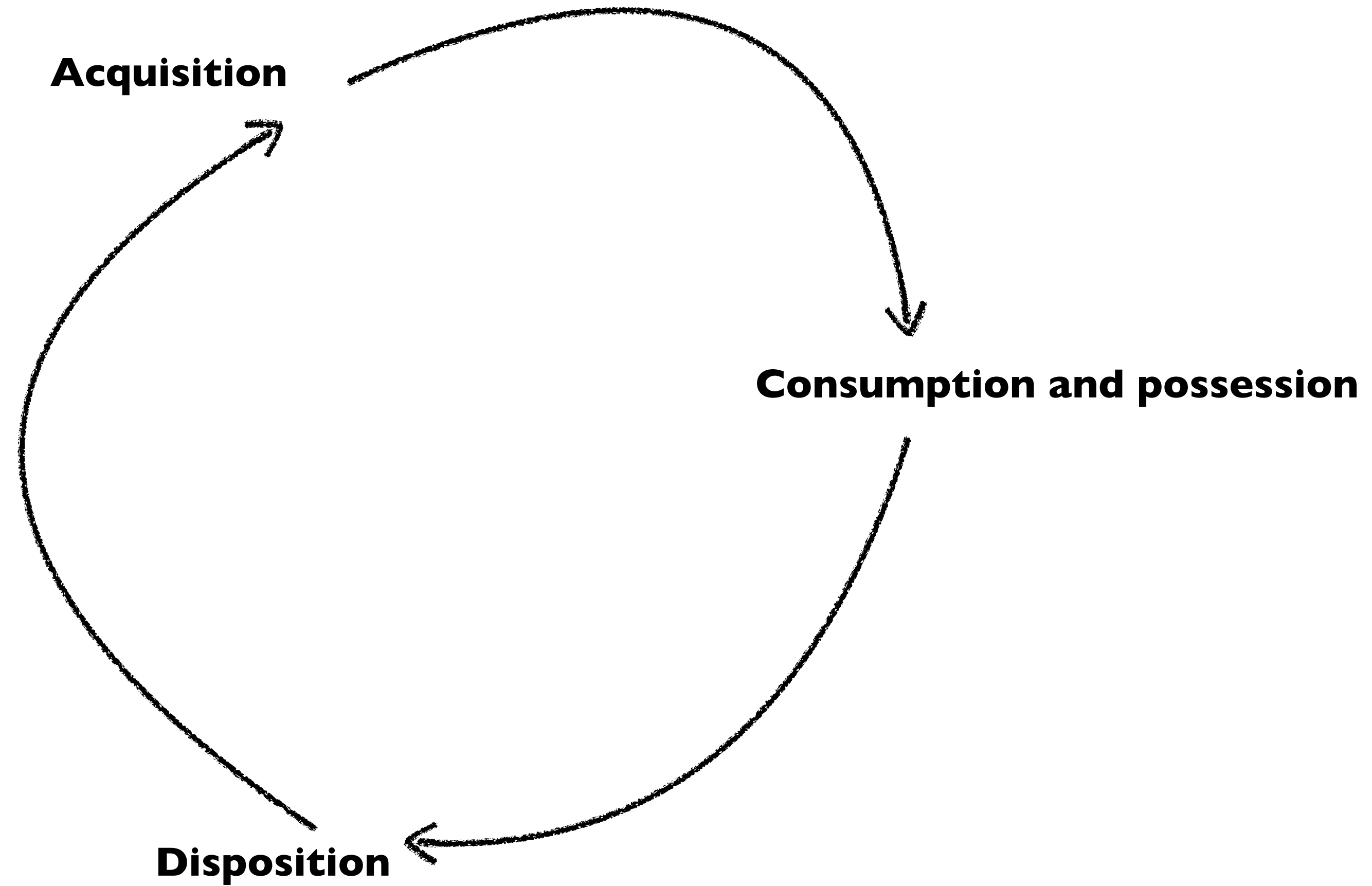
# AGENDA

1. Structuring fashion consumption through consumption cycle
  - Purchasing
  - Using and possessing
  - Disposing
2. Second cycle of fashion consumption

A hand is shown reaching upwards from a large, messy pile of various clothing items, including shirts, jackets, and jeans. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting. The overall mood is one of clutter and excess.

# **FASHION CONSUMPTION - WHAT IS IT?**

# CONSUMPTION CYCLE



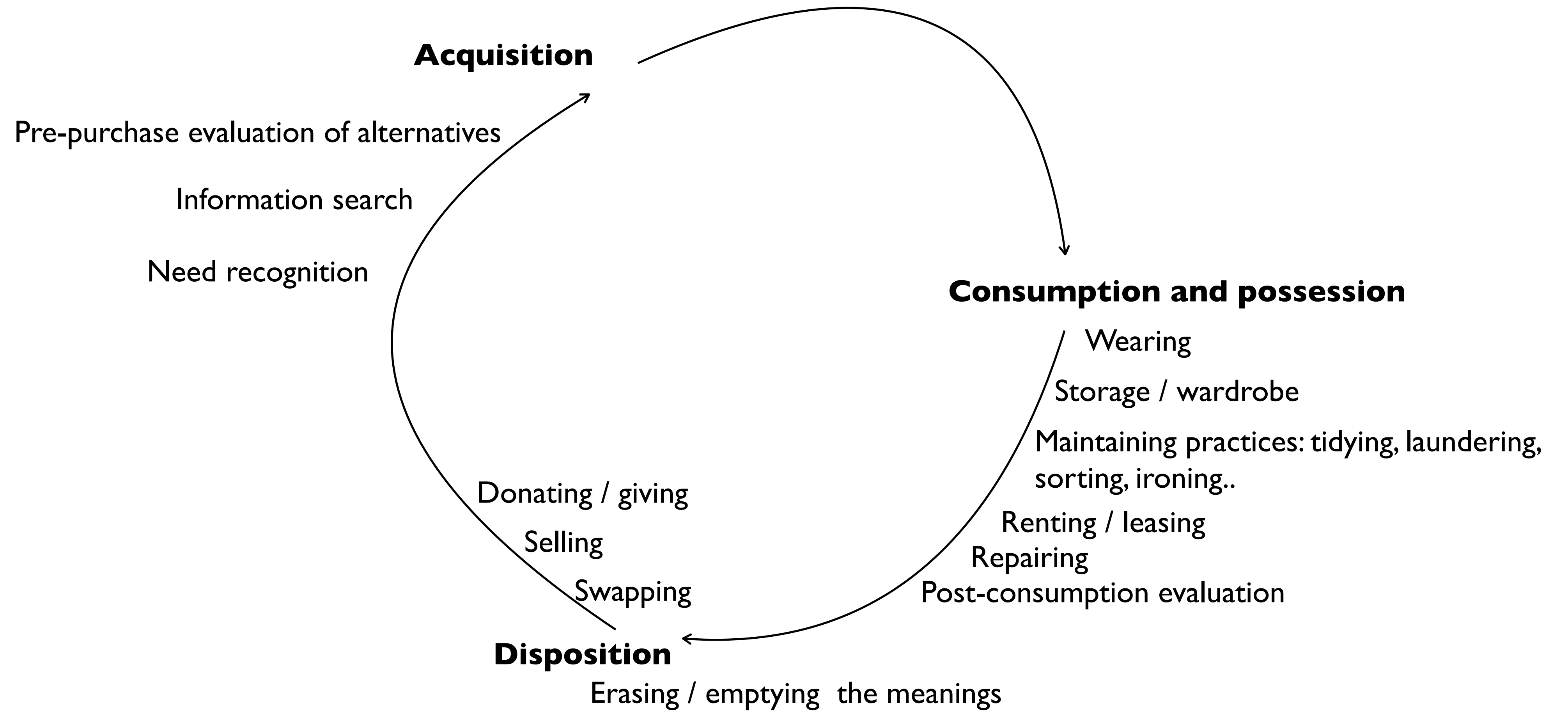
(Arnould & Thompson, 2005)

# 'PRODUCTION' OF FASHION

Fashion is in particular cultural industry: practices of cultural production are not shaped only industry's "internal" fashion production & meaning creation, but also in relationship to the seemingly "external" activities of fashion consumption.

*How are consumers interacting with garments?  
How are consumers involved in "production" of fashion?*

# FASHION CONSUMPTION CYCLE



(Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Blackwell et al. 2001; McCracken, 1986)

# CIRCULATION OF CLOTHING

- Circulation of clothes “inside of home”
  - Our practices influence on the circulation of clothes (how we wear, storage, maintain, repair, dispose)
- Circulation of clothes “outside of home”; clothes have lives beyond their initial possessors and lives which may exceed them (Gregson & Beale, 2004)
  - Wardrobes are not just containers of memory, but also “temporary” holding places in the lives of clothes (e.g. wedding dress vs. maternity clothes)
  - Lifecycle of garments > the cycle can start again after disposition of first consumer > circulation/flow in & out



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## Wardrobe matter: the sorting, displacement and circulation of women's clothing

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*Received 23 May 2003; received in revised form 1 February 2004*

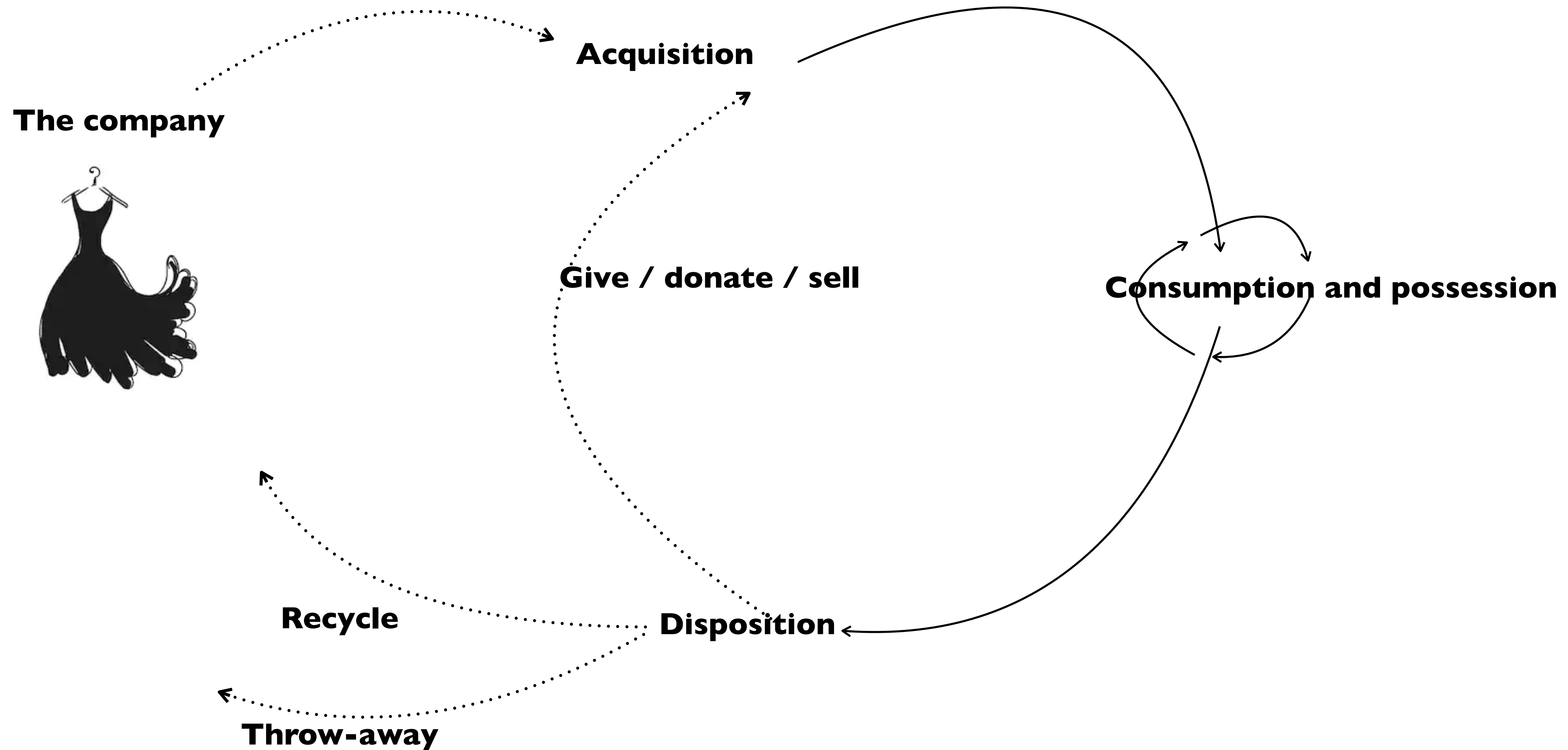
### Abstract

This paper develops a reading of the wardrobe which emphasises the wardrobe's location within the consumption practices of tidying, sorting and the displacement of clothing. Its emphasis is on the circulation of clothing matter and the transience of clothing consumption, not—as recent accounts have stressed—the accumulation, collection and wearing of clothing. Using primarily the example of maternity wear, the paper outlines how clothing matter circulates amongst and between women (between siblings, between friends and amongst neighbours and acquaintances) and accounts for this practice. It argues that maternity wear circulation is both an embodied divestment/recovery ritual and about the making of mothers, through its appeal to thrift, sacrifice and making-do. The paper concludes by reflecting on the significance of the absence of maternity wear from women's wardrobes and by suggesting that wardrobes need to be thought of not just as containers of memory, but as temporary holding places in the lives of clothes, and as pivotally positioned as a fulcrum for clothing movement, between wearing, storage and displacement.

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*Keywords:* Consumption; Wardrobes; Clothing circulation; Maternity wear

# CIRCULATION OF CLOTHING



(adapted: Arnould & Thompson, 2005)



A photograph of a fashion boutique interior. The room features several wooden clothing racks filled with garments in various colors, including beige, black, and dark blue. In the center, there is a plush, tufted red sofa set on a light-colored rug. In the background, a window display is visible, featuring mannequins dressed in dark clothing. The ceiling has recessed lighting tracks. The overall atmosphere is sophisticated and modern.

# PURCHASING FASHION

# WHY DO PEOPLE BUY FASHION?

- For **experiential** reasons: entertainment, to enjoy the shopping experience?
- For **expressive/symbolic** reasons: to belong, to differentiate?  
*(NOTE: This often relate to possessing & usage phase, 'to consume' fashion)*

Why do people buy *clothes*?

- For **functional** reasons: To be warm, to cover oneself?

# FASHION SHOPPING AND PURCHASING LITERATURE IS EXTENSIVE...

There exist an extensive body of literature related to purchasing and shopping fashion:

**shopping attitude** (e.g. Shim & Eastlick, 1998; Zhang & Kim, 2013)

**shopping motivation** (e.g. Arnould & Reynolds, 2003; Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010; Wagner & Rudolph, 2010; Nwankwo et al., 2014)

**shopping styles /orientations** (Turunen & Pöyry 2019; Eastman et al., 2013; Babin et al. ,1994)

**decision-making** (e.g. Häubl & Trifts, 2000; Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Riley et al., 2004; Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007)

**atmospheric effects & context** (e.g. Turley & Milliman, 2000; Bitner, 1992; Mattila & Wirtz, 2001)

**online/offline purchasing, retail experience** (McCormick & Livett, 2012; Pettinger, 2004; Blázquez, 2014; Kautish & Sharma, 2018)

# FASHION AS A CONTEXT OF PURCHASING

- Continuously evolving and changing. Fashion cycle: creating new desires, new seasons, redefining what is “in fashion”
- Rhythm of fashion purchases; to what extent fashion purchasing is tied to seasonality? What is the impact of micro-seasons?
- “The essence of fashion in clothes is that it compels us to discard a garment before it has outlived its usefulness”  
(Du Guy, 1997: 121)



# USING AND POSSESSING

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR?

**Using and possessing** fashion have received the most attention in previous fashion literature

- **Identity, self and fashion**  
(role in identity construction - signalling to self / signalling to others)
- **Belonging & differentiating** (tribes, subcultures etc.)
- **Meanings of specific artefacts; life transitions**  
(e.g. Gregson & Beale, 2004; Turunen et al. 2020)
- **Ritualistic dimensions / practices of usage**  
(e.g. possession rituals & grooming rituals by McCracken 1986; Cwerner, 2001)

# PRACTICES RELATED TO USING AND POSSESSING OF FASHION

Using and possessing fashion can be approached from different perspectives (e.g. Cwerner, 2001):

- **wearing** (often relates to identity, signalling, belonging etc.)
- **maintaining practices** (laundering, tidying, repairing etc.)
- **storage & wardrobe** (spatial practices: delimiting, organising etc.)

# NOT OWNING, JUST USING

## Alternative to possessing:

Fashion as a service, e.g. short/longterm renting

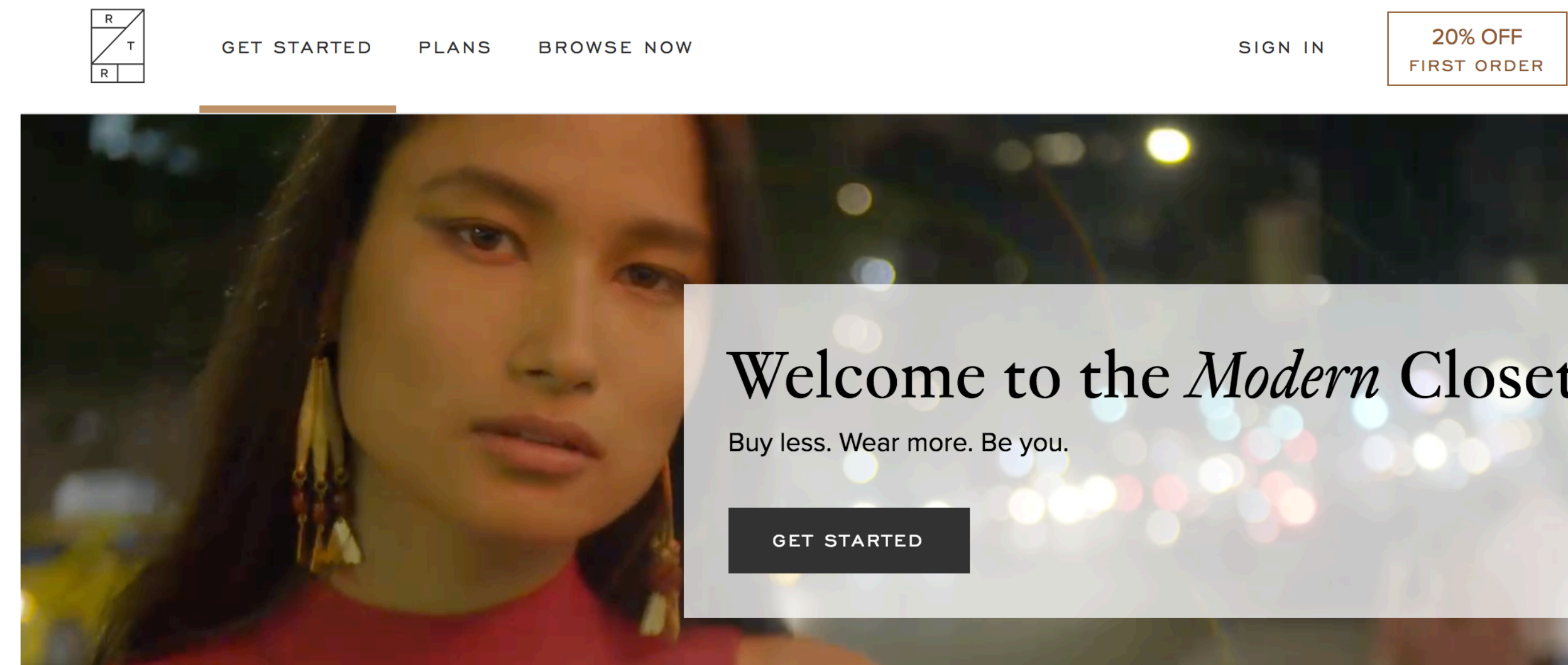
- How does the meaning of the garment change?
  - \* Functional / usage value: why to possess if the value comes from usage?
  - \* Status & signalling: possibility to use apparel & accessories that might not be otherwise available > “You are what you can access” (Belk 2014)
  - \* Emotional / personal attachment?
- Sustainability: company possess the garment, and take care of the garment’s lifecycle



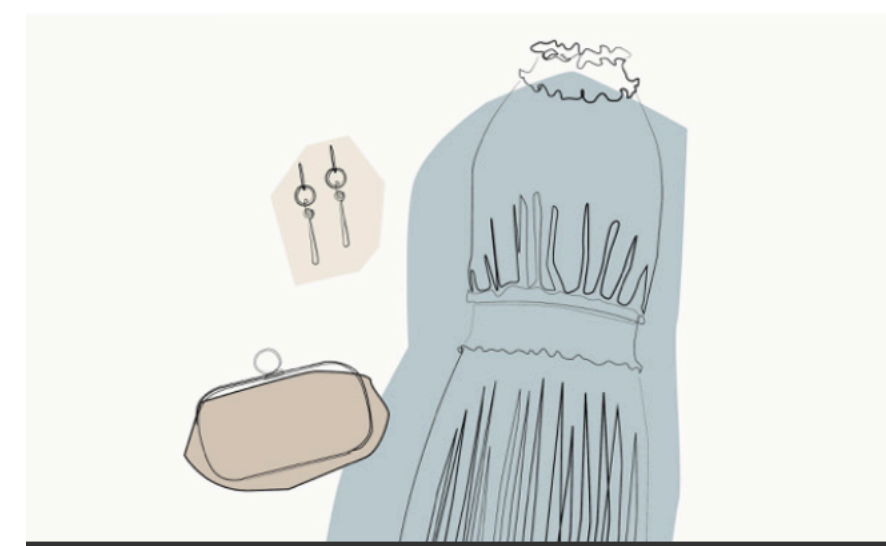


# ACCESS VS. OWNERSHIP

- The importance of ownership, once the symbol of success and accomplishment, is on the wain (e.g. Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2017)
- The meaning of possession is changing in many industries — streaming in music & film industry, renting in fashion industry, car-share etc..
- The changing role of possession opens up the door to the possibilities offered by a shared economy (e.g. AirBnB, Uber..)



## Three Ways to Access the *Dream* Closet



**RTR Reserve**  
starting at \$30/rental



**RTR Update**  
~~\$89/month~~ \$69 trial month



**RTR Unlimited**  
~~\$159/month~~ \$99 trial m

# LIQUID-SOLID SPECTRUM OF FASHION CONSUMPTION

*“...most consumer wardrobes are like the liquid-spectrum in miniature—you can find everything from “solid” personal treasures to soon-to-be-discarded “liquid” visitors”*  
- Rosenberg et al., forthcoming

**Consumer Desire and the Spectrum of Liquid and Solid Consumption: A Study of Clothing Library Member Experiences**

**LAURA ROSENBERG, HENRI WEIJO & IINA KERKELÄ**

## **Abstract**

The ongoing rise of liquid consumption manifests in the growing popularity of ephemeral, access-based, and dematerialized forms of consumption greatly differ from older, solid forms of consumption that emphasize possession and strong object relationships. Thus far the literature has lacked insights into how liquid and solid forms of consumption might co-exist and how individual consumers either liquify or solidify their consumption. This inquiry into two Finnish subscription-based clothing libraries addresses these two research gaps by highlighting the role of consumer desire. Findings reveal how changing desires prompt consumers to liquify or solidify their consumption through the help of access-based fashion. Overall, the study provides new insights on the spectrum of liquid and solid consumption and the nature of consumer desire.

*Keywords:* liquid-solid spectrum, liquid consumption, consumer desire, access-based consumption, fashion, clothing libraries.

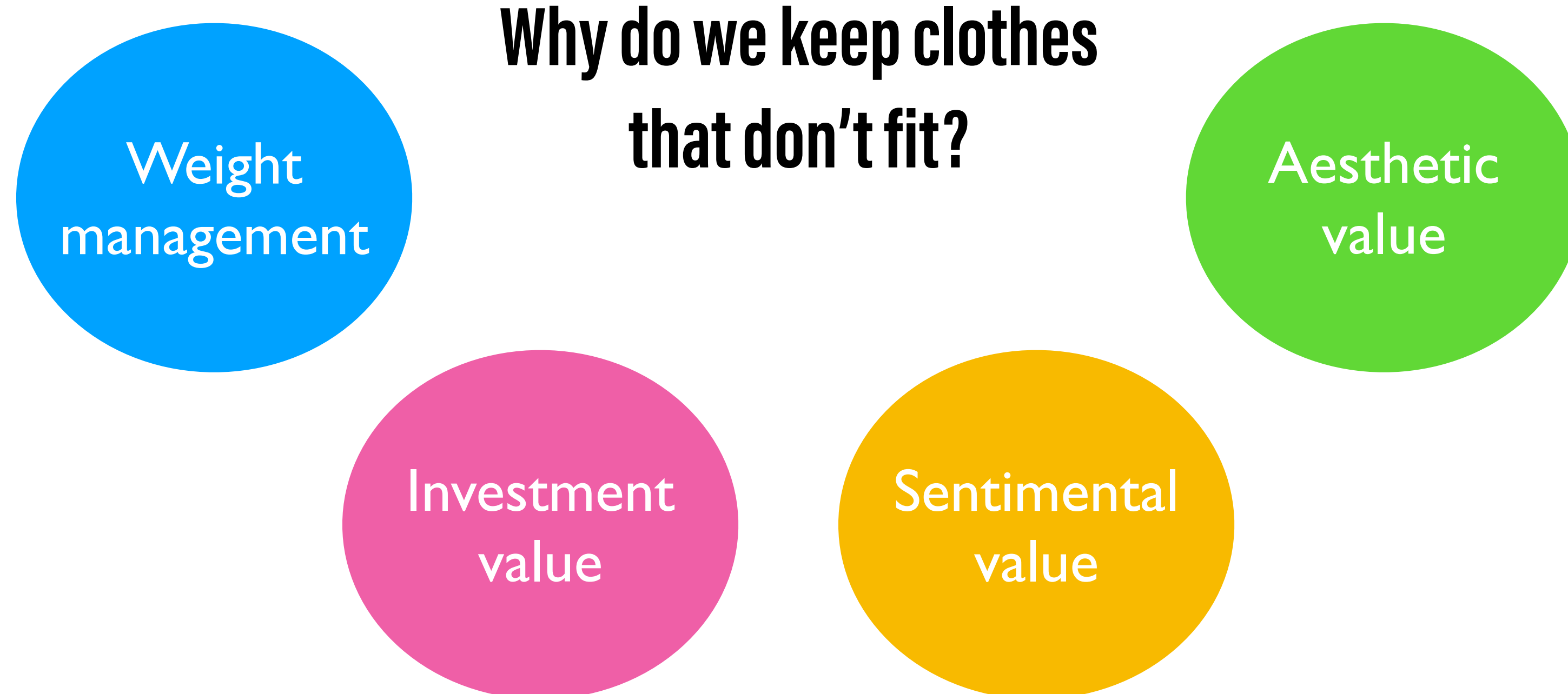
**To what extent and how can technology liquidise our fashion consumption?**

# POSSESSING: WHY WE KEEP CLOTHES THAT DON'T FIT?

Bye & McKinney, 2015:

“Wardrobe is a materialisation of the identities of a woman.”

“Garments hold value well beyond their ability to be worn.”






# FASHION DISPOSAL

# DISPOSAL BEHAVIOR

- Disposal has defined through two-step process:
  - First step: consumer stop using the garment that still maintains its ability to function (Hanson 1980; Paden & Stell, 2005)
  - The second step: consumer discard the garment through a disposal method (Jacoby et al. 1977)
- Product-disposal has implication for consumers, businesses, society and the environment (Cruz-Cárdenas & Arévalo-Chávez, 2018).
- Disposal activities are closely associated with purchasing new products (ibid.)
- Consumers' disposal methods determine whether the product continues to circulate among other consumers or becomes relegated to garbage / landfills (Bianchi & Britwistle, 2010; Gregson & Beale, 2004)



Particularly **fashion disposal** have been topical lately in the news:  
Fashion industry as a whole is the second largest polluter in the world.

Fast fashion is one of the biggest challenge

Short selling cycle (seasonality/fashionability) + low price + lower quality... = “disposable fashion”

Fashion companies have taken action and been vocal about collecting used garments lately

**Challenge 1:** how to motivate consumers to bring back used clothes?

**Challenge 2:** what companies do with the collected garments?


**How about overstock garments or fashion artefacts that are never sold?**

# HOW DOES FASHION DISPOSAL RELATE TO FASHION CONSUMPTION?

The Consumption Problem

- Disposal is the last phase of consumption cycle
- Consumers' disposal behaviour determines whether the lifecycle is extended, if the product is recycled to other material or whether fashion apparel & accessories end up to landfill
- Disposal behaviour may lead to new purchases

OVER 1/3 OF WOMEN WEAR AN ITEM  $\leq 5$  times before getting rid of it 

 43% of all purchases are "impulse buys"

One method to dispose is to **sell**

- New market & market dynamics, second cycle
- New role of consumer: *disposer* > *seller*

70% of the average woman's closet goes unworn 

ThredUp Resale Report 2018

# SECOND CYCLE OF FASHION CONSUMPTION





# SECOND-HAND, PRE-USED, PRE-LOVED, PRE-OWNED...

- Resale apparel is expected to grow rapidly (ThredUp, 2020)
- Second-hand has become socially acceptable and even 'fashionable' (Brooks, 2019; Beard, 2008)

## Why?

### Digitalisation

— empowered & engaged consumers > easy to buy & sell

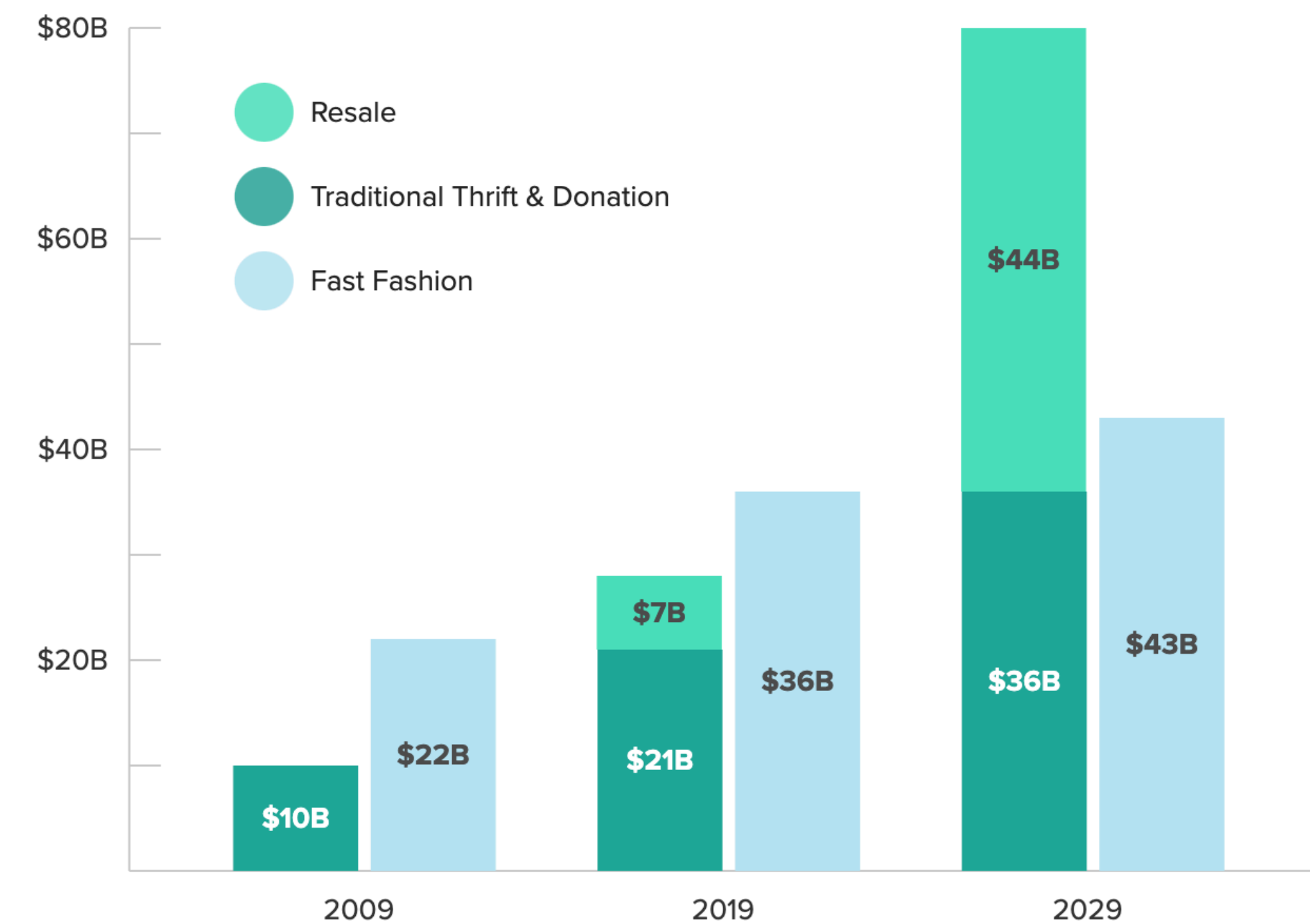
### Sustainability

— extending lifecycle > good, BUT

1) second-hand does not erase the root-cause (unsustainable production/low quality)

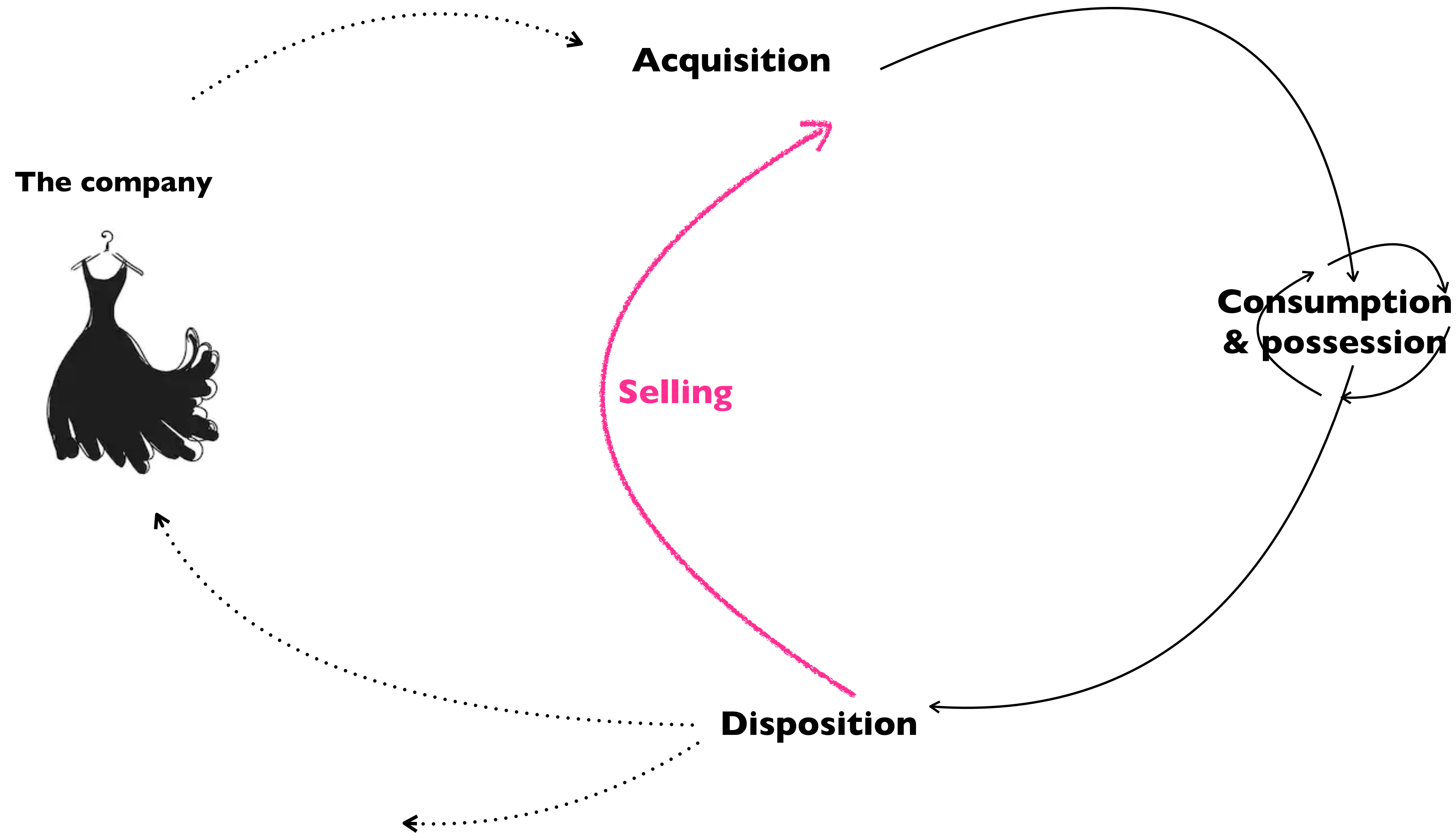
2) easiness to sell > increasing purchases (ThredUp, 2018)

3) environmental aspects are often post-rationalisations (Turunen et al. 2020)



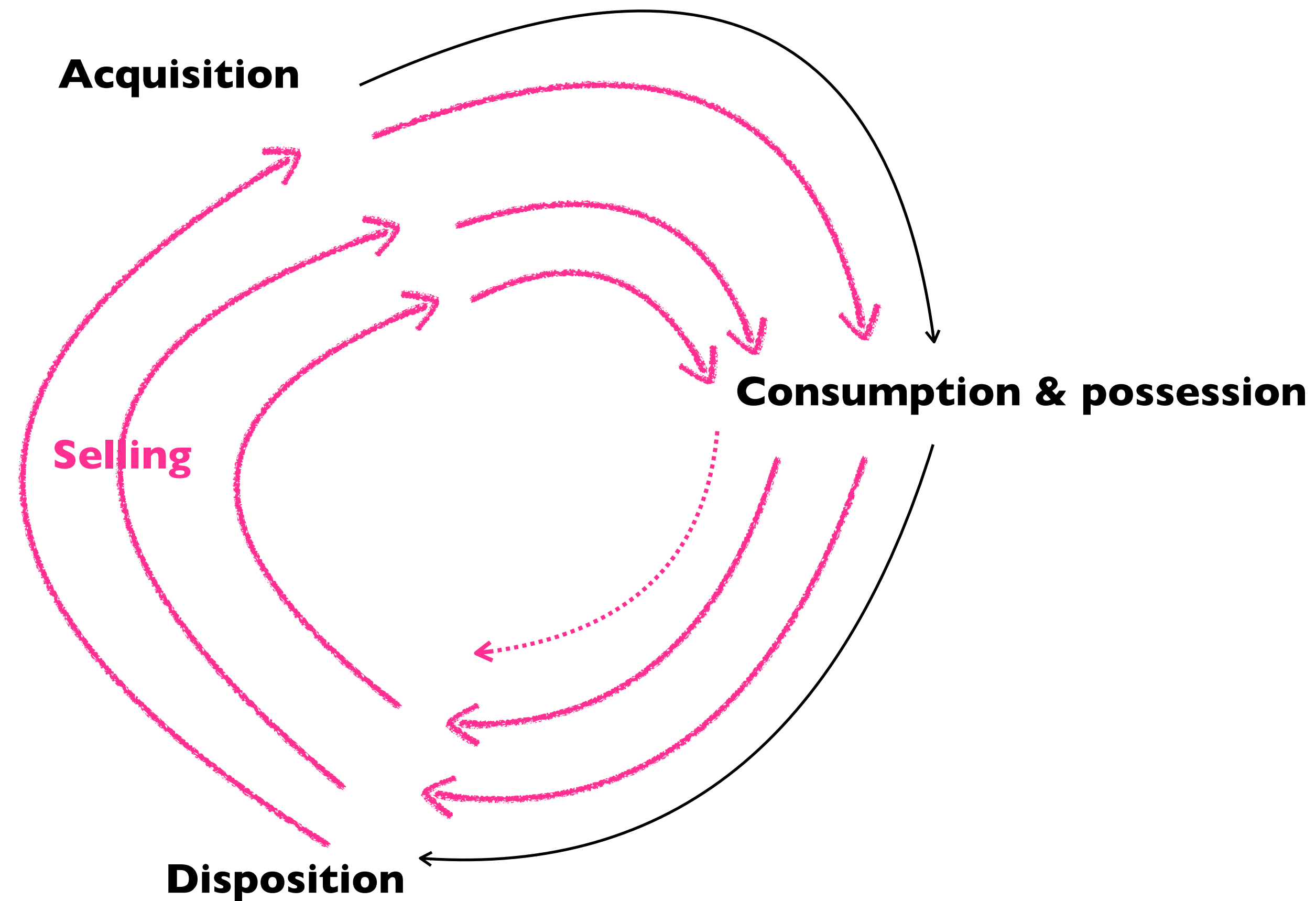
## Life cycle

The term '*life cycle*' refers to the journey of a product from the extraction of the raw fibre to the product end-of-life (/end-of-use).  
(Gwilt, 2020)



Adapted: Arnould & Thompson, 2005;  
Turunen, Leipämaa-Leskinen & Sihvonen, 2018  
Gwilt, 2020

# SECOND-HAND = FIRST OWNER/USER OF THE PRODUCT IS NOT THE LAST



Adapted: Arnould & Thompson, 2005  
Turunen, Leipämaa-Leskinen & Sihvonen, 2018  
Turunen, Cervellon & Carey, 2020

The second-hand market is dependent on both; the consumers who dispose and sell, and those who buy.



**ALEXANDER MCQUEEN**  
Mink clutch bag  
NOW ! 553,64 € ~~775,09 €~~



**CÉLINE**  
Leather handbag  
NOW ! 344,49 € ~~444,50 €~~



**TIBI**  
Leather mid-length skirt  
Size: 4 US  
NOW ! 185,92 € ~~219,24 €~~



**YEEZY**  
Coat  
Size: M International  
NOW ! 263,23 € ~~438,71 €~~



**LOEFFLER RANDALL**  
Exotic leathers heels  
Size: 8.5 US  
NOW ! 61,39 € ~~171,01 €~~



**GUCCI**  
Wool jumper  
Size: L International  
NOW ! 1472,42 € ~~2000,27 €~~



**MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA**  
Mini dress  
Size: 40 IT  
NOW ! 200 € ~~650 €~~  
[ VINTAGE ]



**AQUAZZURA**  
Leather flats  
Size: 39 EU  
NOW ! 188,91 € ~~233,36 €~~



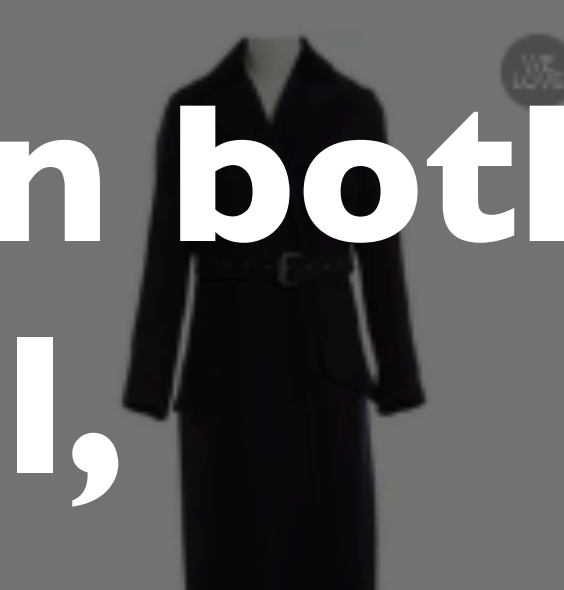
**EURY**  
Maxi skirt  
Size: 36 FR  
NOW ! 229 € ~~300 €~~



**EMILIO PUCCI**  
Patent leather ballet flats  
Size: 36 EU  
NOW ! 203 € ~~250 €~~



**SELF PORTRAIT**  
Red polyester jacket  
Size: 14 UK  
NOW ! 211,49 € ~~254,67 €~~



**CÉLINE**  
Wool coat  
Size: 38 FR  
NOW ! 1350,18 € ~~1666,80 €~~



**MIU MIU**  
Cloth boots  
Size: 41 EU  
NOW ! 270,01 € ~~393,77 €~~



**RYKIEL**  
Jumper  
Size: M International  
NOW ! 270 € ~~400 €~~



**VALENTINO**  
Glam lock leather handbag  
NOW ! 990 € ~~1250 €~~



**CÉLINE**  
Silk skirt  
Size: 38 FR  
NOW ! 210 € ~~400 €~~



**PRADA**  
Coat  
Size: M International  
NOW ! 807,20 € ~~996,55 €~~



**MIU MIU**  
Jacket  
Size: 46 IT  
NOW ! 408,58 € ~~503,81 €~~

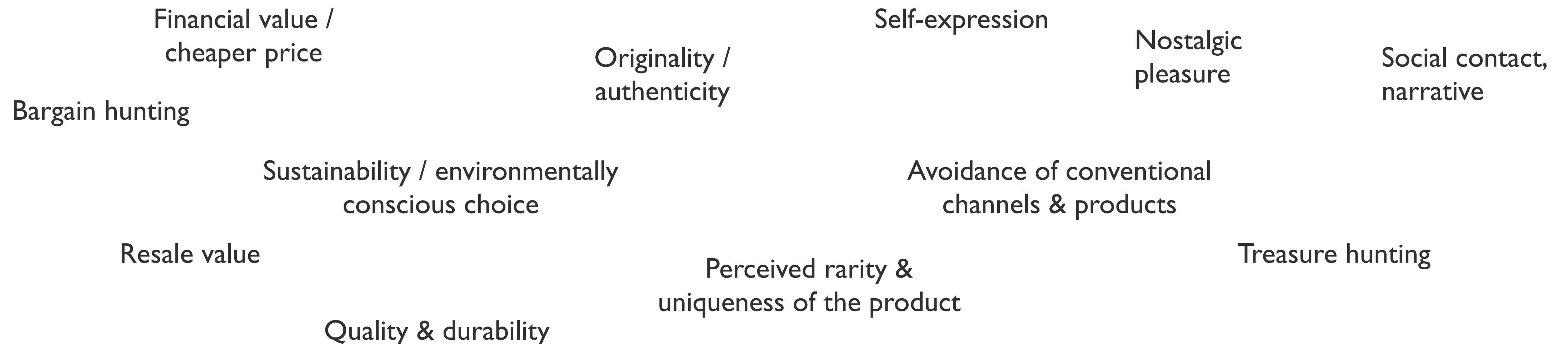
# DRIVERS TO (DISPOSE &) SELL

Turunen et al. 2020; Bianchi & Britwistle, 2010; Young Lee et al. 2013; Lee et al. 2015

	<b>Fashion items</b>	<b>Luxury fashion items</b>
<b>Dispose</b>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of psychological fit / physical fit</li><li>• downsize the wardrobe</li><li>• habit (fall/spring cleaning)</li></ul> <p><b>PRODUCT:</b> Condition of the item</p> <p><b>SITUATIONAL:</b> new trend / unfashionable e.g. Young Lee et al. 2013</p>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL:</b> lack of psychological fit / physical fit</p> <p><b>PRODUCT:</b> meanings of the product</p> <p><b>SITUATIONAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• transition in life / detachment from the past</li><li>• lack of storage</li></ul> <p>e.g. Lee et al. 2015</p>
<b>Sell</b>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL:</b> financial need / economic interest</p> <p><b>PRODUCT:</b> extending the lifecycle, environmental choice</p> <p><b>SITUATIONAL:</b> external stimuli (others are doing so) e.g. Bianchi &amp; Britwistle, 2010</p>	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• financial empowerment</li><li>• perceived higher social status</li></ul> <p><b>PRODUCT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• resale value: “Playing against system”</li><li>• extending the lifecycle, environmental choice</li></ul> <p><b>SITUATIONAL:</b> becoming too “mass” e.g. Turunen et al. 2020</p>

# WHAT FASCINATES SECOND-HAND BUYERS?

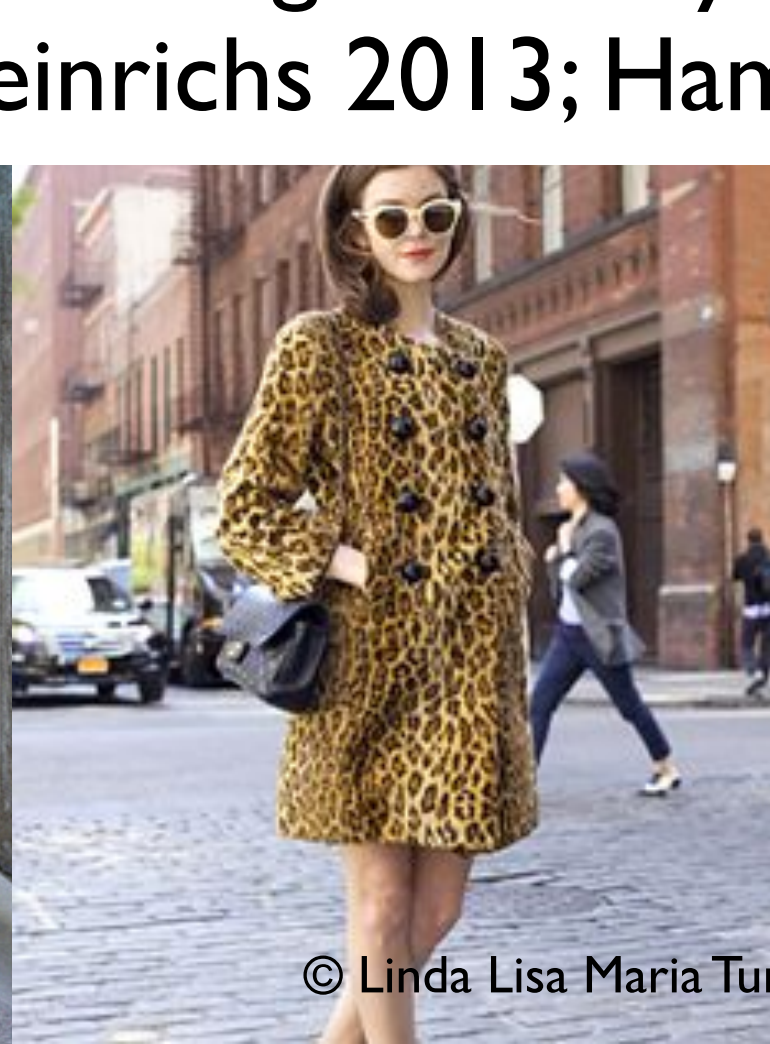
**Ferraro et al. (2016) suggest that motivations to buy pre-used are intertwined:**  
critical (moral & ethical) // fashionability // economic // recreational (hedonic)



# FASHIONABLE SECOND-HAND?



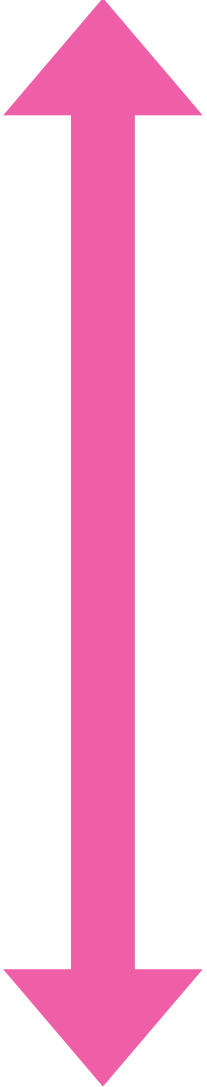
New and old blends of fashion are intertwined with new forms of sense- and identity-making in which phenomena such as second-hand, recycling and the 'sharing economy' are making more and more inroads all over Europe (Heinrichs 2013; Hamari et al. 2016).



# ONE'S TRASH, ANOTHER'S TREASURE?

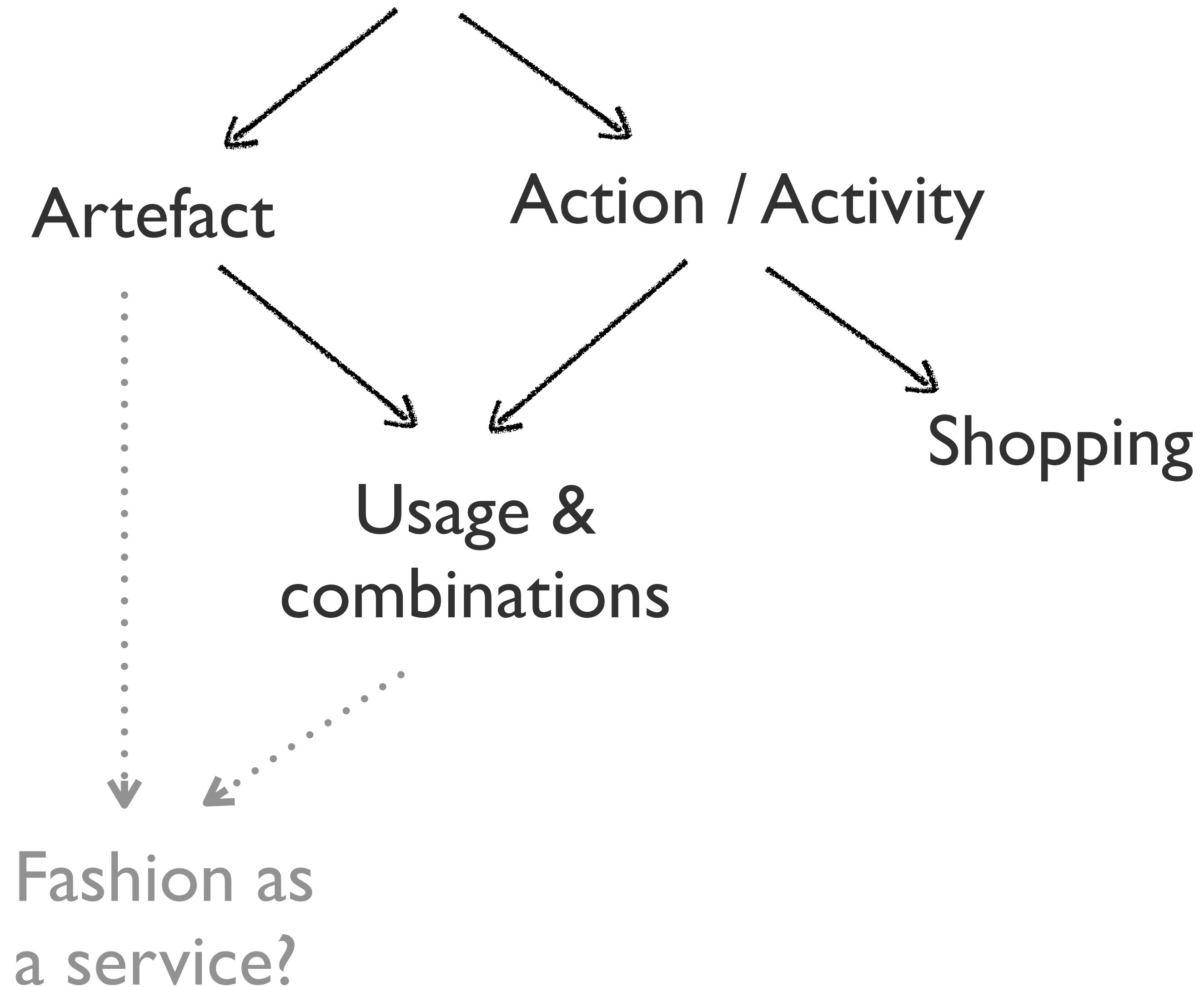
Second-hand market contains variety of products you cannot find from the market — something unique and different (see e.g. Belk 2019; McCracken 2009).

Requires more effort and devoted attitude.

- 
- One of the kind — treasure in terms of size, quality, condition.
  - Authentic (& quality) pieces from 90's - vs. re-produced fast fashion
  - Creation of personal style > creative and unpopular choices, avoidance of similarity (Cervellon et al. 2012).
  - Archiving is trendy.



# FASHIONABLE SECOND-HAND



**Thank you.**

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