

## The True Cost Reflection

I watched the documentary with my roommate, and our three words would be: eye-opening, heartbreaking, and depressing. Obviously we know that someone had to make our clothes, but actually seeing them suffer as a result of cheap fashion was very emotional. We are both in college and living off of pretty low wages as well, so to buy the most ethical clothing possible would require a big shift in our finances, which could be feasible on paper. It would mean that we could only buy one piece of clothing every once in a while, and we would really have to plan out what we buy rather than walking into a store and buying 2 new outfits on a whim.

This change can be done by many people, especially those of us with more money in our society. While this personal shift might have to be slow as we phase out old, cheap clothes that were produced unethically, and replace these garments with ethical and environmentally-friendly ones. A well-made, ethical shirt will last way longer than a cheaply-made and blood-soaked shirt.

I am a very visual person, so actually seeing all sides of the fashion industry- who makes it, who sells it, who buys it, who profits- was essential in my understanding of what needs to change. Actually wrapping my head around the fact that multiple people are involved in the production of my clothing, and that someone actually touched and handled my clothes, most likely across an ocean, way before it wound up in my closet was helpful. The lack of transparency in many industries, but especially fashion, one of the largest in the world, is appalling. Hiding as much of the abuse and exploitation as possible helps people like me forget how our clothing is actually produced.

In the future, I will try to support ethical businesses as much as I can, and I will be letting my friends and family know about the realities of their clothing. My sisters and my mother all buy this cheap clothing, for themselves and as gifts, so I hope to inspire them and others like them to stop doing this and buying higher quality products that provide a higher quality of life for the person who made it.