

Hello and welcome to Point of View, where we give students a place to listen, learn and lean in. We're your hosts, Ethan Bricia and Ashrita. And today we're going to be talking about consumerism. Now, not in like, the buying and selling of goods, but rather like how consumer culture in the United States has kind of gotten out of control. And like, we're going to be discussing some recent examples of what we think of that. For example, the Starbucks bear cup. Another example is Stanley's handbags. Buying a new car every year. Subscriptions in general, high end beauty products. Cyber Monday, buying luxury goods just for social status, purchasing new gadgets just because. Shopping sprees. Shoes in app purchases of video games Dubai chocolate candy at the checkout. AI and how consumerism only feeds rich people. Okay, so let's go over, the recent Starbucks bear cup that just went viral on the internet. Like. So it was like thirty dollars for, like, a glass of that was in the bear cup shape. And you can just, like, buy it for like less than five dollars, right? But I remember like, seeing I don't understand where like the, you know, the like hype came from. But it was like out of nowhere because I remember looking at it online and it was like two days before and like there was nothing on it. But then like literally the night before the drop, everyone was like raving about the cup because it's like a bear cup. It's literally a bear cup. Like, why would they spend so much money on a cup? Yeah, people were fighting for the cup. Like I saw videos of people fighting over it. Yeah, I remember there was another video that I saw where it was, a queue outside of the store. And then after everyone rushed inside and like, people knocked over a shelf and like, all the bear cups, like, shattered. And like, I remember all the employees were, like, super mad, and they're like, shouting the entire time. But like, what do you guys think of that? Like, it's like way overused, like. And it's like, really, it's not even expensive for Starbucks to make the cups. They're just selling it for a bunch of money. Yeah. And like in a few weeks they're going to be at like goodwill the thrift store because no one is going to want them anymore. Going to want them anymore. Yeah. Me personally, like I obviously don't understand like the hype behind the Cup or whatever. It's just a cup. It's a piece of glass that looks like a bear. But I do understand the resale value of the cup, because I remember I saw one being sold for like two hundred and fifty dollars on the resale market. So I can kind of understand, like people buying it in a sense of reselling it later, but that's kind of like the consumerism that we're talking about, because I feel like everything nowadays is bought as like an asset. Yeah. When they. When it's not popular. Exactly. Okay. What about Stanley's? one Stanley's fine, but, like, I guess they're still overpriced for fifty dollars a bottle. But there's, like, people who have, like, fifty. Stanley's, like, it's actually crazy. Like, is not a plastic water bottle? Like, you can reuse it. You don't need more than one. Yeah. Honestly, like, some of the colors are really pretty. I'm not gonna lie, I have debated on buying a Stanley just because there was like this, like black one that, like, shifted into, like, blue and purple. That was really cool. But I would not buy more than one because it's a reusable water bottle. So I don't understand having more than one. But again, it all boils down to hype and resale value, because most of the Stanley's that are like on the internet or people are fighting each other for are always like the Starbucks, target, Stanley, or the the limited edition ones. Exactly. It's just a bottle you drink from. There's so many other better bottles you can get instead of just a Stanley as well. So. Okay. Moving away from objects that you like consume with what's your opinion on handbags? I feel like you don't need that many handbags. Like, you could just get, like, one or two that match, like, every outfit, you know, like black or white or like beige or something like that, but you don't need, like,

one of every different color of the rainbow. Yeah, but there are some people who, like, use it to carry their, grocery stuff. And I feel like that's better than using the the bags that they give out. Okay. I'm gonna, you know, be the differing party and, like maybe a little performative with this, but like, I lowkey love handbags. Like there's so many different like shapes, sizes and like functions for each one. Like you can have like a carryall and you can dump all your stuff in there. You can have a tote that you can bring your groceries with. And like each handbag is like kind of different. So like each one tells its own story. So you have like the damier pattern on the Louis Vuitton or you have like just like pebbled leather on like another bag and like each one has its own feel and its own purpose. So I can kind of understand buying multiple handbags, but it also depends on how expensive those handbags are. Like like you're right on like that. But like when people buy like a luxury handbag for every single purpose, that's when it becomes a big problem, I guess, because in reality, the price of the leather and like the price or the workmanship isn't usually equitable to like the price that they're asking for, you know, because I remember. I saw a breakdown video of where a leatherworker was breaking down the, handbag, and he was, like, laying out all the pieces of leather and then calculated the price of the bag for the square inch of leather that he was, that was used in the bag. And obviously it wasn't equal to the price that they were asking for. But, I mean, people have to make money, so. Okay, um, now we're going to move on to buying a new car every year. And some people do do that. Do it. Yeah. I feel like having a car is fine. Like it doesn't even matter. I guess you could get, like, a car you like, just for the looks of it. But why would you buy a new car every year if you bought that car with your own interest? You know. Yeah, I honestly, people who have, like, a new car every year just baffle me because it's like you didn't even put, like, one hundred miles on the last one, and you already have a new one in the driveway. And I guess like I drive. So to me, like, my car is kind of like my car, you know, it's like it's my vehicle. So it's like I kind of have a bond with that vehicle. And people who just like, keep cycling cars, like, I just don't get it because it's like, I love my car, so I wouldn't want to keep trading it up every other year. Yeah. Like you don't need a new one. Like you can have your perfectly good one. It doesn't break down every year. Like if it does, I don't know what you're doing. Like. Yeah. next we can move on to subscriptions in like, general, because why don't you just get one subscription to watch movies for like, all movies instead of like five different ones for different movies. So I, me and my family do have like, multiple subscriptions, but we use like every single one. There's some people who like have, I don't know, like Disney Plus Plus and they don't use it like I don't. That's not good. Yeah. my subscriptions are included with my cellular data plan, so it's not it's kind of like a benefit for me, but like I have Disney Plus, Hulu, I think Paramount Plus that was provided by my internet. But like, I don't really subscribe to any of these. They're all kind of included with my plan, so I'm not really gonna speak on this one. Okay, now we're going to talk about high end beauty products. Yeah. Like there's so many like cheaper ones. Like I understand the hype for like high end expensive ones, but there are like a bunch of dupes, I guess you could say, for those high end beauty products where you don't have to spend that much money on. Again, I'm going to advocate for big business over here. Like, especially with, like, what you're putting on your face. I think, like, you know, you should be a little bit more picky about what brands you're working with. But like, also I've seen on YouTube, but like a lot of people buy the products just for the hype. Like, even if it's not a good product, they still buy it, just like, you know, to have it, I suppose. But like, you know,

something just like hits about like, you know, getting a box that says like Valentino on it or getting a box that says Dior on it. And like, I don't know, it's just like a it's a good feeling, you know? And you're like, wow. You know, also some people just buy it for the name of the brand. They don't buy it because of the what's inside. The benefit Yeah the benefit. True. next we will talk about Cyber Monday, which is today. Yeah. So I think that like Black Friday especially and well, today, Cyber Monday, Day. I feel like there's like, no good sales running anymore. Like, I went Black Friday shopping and I was just walking around. Half the stuff wasn't even on sale, and everything else that was was not even worth it. I remember I was looking at like a Lego set at target for like it was one hundred dollars Lego set, but I checked to see what the Black Friday deal was on it and they had like, deal all over the thing and it was like eighty five dollars and it's gonna be a deal. Let it be a deal. Not like ten dollars, twenty dollars less. I think it kind of depends where you go and buy, because I went to the mall and there were like some sections that were like forty to like sixty percent off. Yeah. I also feel like the reason for Black Friday deals not being as great is like, really, people only go to Black Friday to buy like electronics, games and toys. So I feel like we're at a point where we already buy those things on such a regular basis that Black Friday isn't like a day that we wait to go purchase those big items, if that makes any sense. So like we already have enough TVs, like, I don't know how many TVs we really need, but and then toys is kind of the same price all year round. So we already stocked up on that. So when Black Friday rolls around, you're not really selling much. So there's no sales. And Cyber Monday is like a black sheep. I don't even know why it's there. Like all the online sales already run during Black Friday. So there's no like point of Cyber Monday at this point. Yeah. Okay. Next up we have well we're kind of already discussed this, but buying luxury goods just for social status or like to flaunt them. Yeah. If you're gonna buy luxury goods and you use them that's great because like, they, they help you in some sort of way. But if you're buying it just for the name, there's no point, like genuinely, there's no point. Hey, sometimes you just got to show other people that, like, you're just infinitely better and just have, like, more good products that like are good and they're luxury, but they also work for you instead of just like buying it because you have it. Yeah. But also you can buy like I don't know how to say it. Is it silent brands like that's how you say in Spanish but like translate it. It is like brands that only like rich, rich people buy like it's not like Dior or like, some other brand. It's like only like the rich people know that. It's like, good. Gotcha. But sometimes you just gotta like, you know, show other people that you just got that on, you know, just have to have the logo just, like plastered over your chest at all times. I'm just kidding. I don't I think it's kind of stupid having spending an exorbitant amount of money for just a logo because, I mean, you know, but at the end of the day, hey, what you want to put on, it's it's your prerogative. Okay. Now we're going to talk about purchasing. Purchasing new gadgets. Just because I feel like if you already have like a perfectly good phone or a perfectly good TV, then you can buy like a new thing. But like if you just get phones on phones because the new phones coming out next year, I don't see the point because my phone, like my iPhone twelve, was like breaking down because it ran out of storage and everything. And that's the only reason why I got the seventeen Pro, but like okay flex. Yeah. But like let's say you had the sixteen and it's perfectly fine. Not cracked or anything. And you get the seventeen the next year. It doesn't make sense. Yeah. And also like you bought it because of the storage. Yeah. You can just buy the storage five GB. You can just buy the storage. No. But like it wasn't working, it was glitching like it wasn't working in general.

Mhm. Okay. I'm being so honest. Yeah. again, I'm a big advocate for, you know, using something until either it's kind of like, deteriorating or it's just, like, completely done. So, like, I don't remember the last time I got a new phone. I'm not interested in getting a new phone. Mine works perfectly fine. I got enough storage space to last me until, like, the next couple of phones come out. But, I mean, I don't get. I think it's just like, again, going back to, like, the novelty of having the new item or like being able to show off that you have the new item. For some people, yeah. Like right now I have the iPhone eleven and it works perfectly fine. But I don't have storage word because I couldn't even, like, enter my phone like it wasn't working. I couldn't even get in my phone. What were you doing to your phone? iPhone twelve. And it broke down. I have the iPhone eleven. Oh, well. No going back now. Okay, next up we have people who just go out and just, like, go on shopping sprees like every other day. I see people on YouTube that say, oh, I went for a little shopping and then they have like fifteen bags of really, like, it's not even about like how expensive it is. It's just like fifteen bags of clothes, like fifteen t shirts in one go. Like, you don't really need all that. Yeah. Yeah. so what's so funny? Anywho. I mean, I kind of, like, stop shopping sprees, you know, like, I like, because I don't just buy stuff, like, on a whim. Sometimes I do, but, like, not like I'll just go, like, oh, one shirt, oh one pants. It's like people who go on shopping sprees, like, really often. Oh, okay. Yeah. I honestly can't comprehend that. Like in the movies Yeah. Like, I can get, like, going on like one shopping spree, like every month and just picking up all of, like, the next month's essentials on that. Like, I love doing that. It's super fun. And like, you know, it feels nice to be able to hold all the bags and stuff, but going on one like every other week, I can't. I don't even know how you do it. Okay, now we're going to talk about shoes. Okay. So now I have a mixed opinion about this because I love shoes. Like I love collecting shoes. Like I love shoes. Oh, you like collecting shoes? I also like collecting shoes, specifically Jordan ones. But yeah. yeah, I'm a sucker for shoes. I don't I don't even know what it is. It's just something about it. It's just so nice. You know, that new shoe smell that you get when it comes out of the box? You know, putting it on for the first time, walk around and just like, oh, you notice anything different? And just like, you know, hitting the little, showing the shoes, I don't know, I love I love buying shoes. Me too I really like yeah, yeah. So, yeah. I think that's a good sector of consumerism that we can just, like, leave alone. Yeah, totally not an issue with the resellers and, people, using bots and checkouts to, secure more pairs to resell later. But, yeah, I love shoes, I love shoes, I love buying shoes. Yeah, I just love shoes in general. Yeah. Then we can move on to in-app purchases of video games. so, like, I have a mixed opinion about this too, because I feel like you can put, like, a certain amount of money in video games to, like, get new skins or new upgrades or stuff like that. But people who put all of their money on like V-Bucks or stuff like that, then it becomes a problem. Yeah, I play Destiny two. So, um, I think that's all you need to know. Um, there's like a new DLC that drops every, like eight months, and it's like, yeah, you know, I just gotta play, you know? Or else it locks me out of the content so. Well, I don't have any video games, so. Yeah. Well, what do you do in your free time? Read. No. You read a lot. I don't. Hey. Whoa, whoa. Reading's not a bad thing, guys. Not a bad thing. It doesn't work out. Like reading just doesn't work out. Like in my free time, I watch TV. Yeah. Me too. Um, yeah. Next, we can move on to the Dubai chocolate. Okay, so, like, specifically Dubai chocolate or. Like what? Dubai chocolate. So specifically Dubai chocolate. Yeah. Okay. Like, what about it? How hyped it was. Yeah. Like I had it, and it's good, but then it's not like good where you have

to buy it. I thought it was disgusting. It was okay. Like, I had like a small piece because it, like, came in a bag. And did you get the bag from Costco? Yeah. Like one is fine to try it out, but people are like making them. They like. It's probably more expensive making them than actually buying it at this point. But like there, it's sold and eaten way too much than it shouldn't be, you know? Yeah, I think that's like a perfect example of how like, hype drives consumerism. Like, as we've been saying previously, because that thing was disgusting. Like, I already tried it for the first time and like, it made me sick. Like I could not handle that, but I know everyone else was like, oh my gosh, it's the best thing ever. It's the best thing I've ever tasted. It's so sweet. And like, oh, God you know what this reminded me of what? You know like the ice cream in, like, fruit shapes. Have y'all seen that? Oh, yeah. Yes. Expensive. Like yeah, some of them are good, but then some of them aren't good at all, and they're just hella expensive. Like, they look nice to see, but then they're not that good of a quality for it to be that expensive and for people to keep buying it and keep eating it and keep trying it. Well, I haven't tried it. Yeah. Me neither. I watch mukbang and like, okay, all of like, the YouTubers have at least one, at least like one time they've tried, you know? True. I mean, I've never tried it, but I feel like this is a great place to ask. Like how we think like YouTubers and influencers, like, you know, drive demand. Because I know we've all been saying like, oh, we've seen this online. Oh, this YouTuber, every single YouTuber that I've watched has does this. So like, how does that, like, you know, affect us as a populace? I feel like the way they eat it and like the way they do it convinces the audience to try it because like when I watch mukbang, I want to eat it, but then obviously I'm not gonna go out my way and buy it and eat it, you know? Right. But like, because every other influencer is eating it, it's like, oh, that means I have to eat it too. maybe I have to eat it to see. Exactly. Influencers, guys. Okay. Um, candy at the checkout. I love candy. So obviously they have the candy at the checkout. So the kids can see it. Like, you walk into the store and you don't want candy, and then you check out, and suddenly you want candy. I feel like that's like a good, like, um, like, strategy to get money. That's why they do it. Yeah. Yeah. That's why they put the milk at the end, too. So you have to walk all the way through the store. Mhm. Yeah. It's kind of like how stores and businesses use like psychology in order to um, like influence purchasing decisions because like the milk thing, um, you have to walk by all these options and like big signs that say sale and whatever. And obviously you're going to make an impulse buy because, well, you think it's a good deal and you're already on the way to the milk, so you might as well pick it up. But it's also like the candy at the checkout because you're like, you walk by and you're like, oh, you know, maybe I could have another one dollar fifty for gum. And it's like those small little purchases to not like any big ticket items. Exactly. Y'all remember those little Lego sets at the target checkout, though? Oh, yeah. I like those tiny ones. Yeah, I remember those. I used to built Lego I was a sucker for those. Um, next we can talk about AI and how people purchase AI. Like, my family's a victim of that because my dad bought victim. Yeah, because, like, my dad bought, um, ChatGPT plus because they wanted unlimited pics, like, to send an unlimited pictures in ChatGPT instead. You could have. There's so many alternatives to that. Instead of buying another version of ChatGPT or an AI. I honestly never got the appeal. I mean, if I just need an answer or something, I'll just hop between like, oh, ChatGPT is not being nice to me. Boom. I know Gemini's got my back. Oh. Gemini says that they can't recognize the image, even though there's a clear picture in the chat. Oh, I know I could go to copilot for that. And then, like,

honestly, I don't get the point of subscribing to an AI when you can just literally just bounce between tools. Yeah, but also like. People asking like, I'm feeling sad to ChatGPT like, that's consumerism. You don't need that. Like when you ask ChatGPT. There's people to talk to it wastes one water bottle or something like that. Like you're wasting water. Like it's hurting the environment. Like it's hurting the environment to use ChatGPT. Yes. Do you not know this? No, I don't know this. Do you know it? No, no I don't. All right, let's see. ASMR. Uh, okay. All right, all right. So, yeah, um, it just says that ChatGPT is considered bad for the environment due to its high energy and water consumption, which contribute to carbon emissions and strain local water supplies. Which is provided to you by chat GPT. So. Um, so, yeah, you don't need to ask GPT. Like. Like I'm feeling sad or anything like that. Okay. So like how does that contribute to consumerism? Because you don't need it. Consumerism is like based off like you don't need it because it's like just another item that we need to purchase, you know? And lastly, let's talk about how consumerism only feeds rich people. Okay, so only rich people are like they own the brands. You buy a lot of things from the brands you feed into them. All right. You're just giving them free money. Okay. But like, that's kind of what business is, you know, like, no need to defend big business here. But like, Elon Musk is about to be like a billionaire trillionaire. Elon Musk, like he does not need all that money. Like he could like end hunger. Victim of that too. I have two we have two Teslas. Oh wow. Just had to had to bring that out, right? My parents are a victim of that. Yeah. I'm a victim. I have two cars in my garage. That's normal. Oh. Two Teslas. Excuse me, excuse me. Yeah. Um, you know, I can kind of understand that because, like, you know who doesn't dream of owning a business that makes you a trillionaire, right? It's all kind of subjective because it's like, again, no need to defend big business and immoral business practices. But like, if you're making your money morally, like what's, you know, like it's your money, right? I feel like to get to the top, like to top, top. You're not doing anything, um, moral. Yeah. Got you. But, yeah. Consumerism. Feeding the rich. This concludes the episode of consumerism. Thank you so much for listening. For a transcript of this episode, head to the Point of View tab on our website. NHS.org and follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook at Point of View for updates and new episodes. I'm your host, Ashrita, Bricia, and Ethan and this has been point of view.