

HUMANISTIC EPISTEME IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

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Sustainability is based on the requirement to make all economic systems less dependent on resource use and to make products last longer, thus requiring a slowdown of serialization, production and consumption and an increase in the added value and customization of products. This can be done by building a cultural paradigm with different rates of application and development, and transfer the entire arsenal of tools, processes and creative productions to the creative and cultural industries. In this context it becomes important to formulate the humanistic episteme of sustainability of creative industries, as it is the fundament of any concept in fashion, design, advertising, media, etc. This step is an obvious one because creative industries are not manufacturing or construction industries, but conceptual industries that are defined by the prior existence of a practice and history of knowledge and creation. The paper aims to outline a sketch of humanistic episteme in the sustainable development of the creative industries, with the example of the fashion industry, this theory proving to be a milestone in effectively structuring the culture of an office of style or design, because style offices are nothing but small industrial research centers, without which independent production companies cannot operate.

Keywords: humanities, episteme, sustainability, creative industries, fashion industry

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability of anthropogenic products and processes is analyzed today from the points of view of many sciences involved in their preparation and development: environmental engineering, sociology, economics and humanities. From the humanistic perspective, the product of creative industries is not amorphous, in terms of cultural identity, but an active product, which means creativity, innovation and belonging to a style and theme of ideas, and therefore cultural identity. In the fashion industry this creative process occurs according to man's natural rhythms and is found in what slow fashion means, the opposite of fast fashion, where all processes, from product design to sales are very fast, operating in the rhythms imposed by the computer. Slow fashion means “a design, production, consumption and better life by combining ideas of regeneration cycles and nature evolution with those related to values and traditions” (Fletcher, 2008). In the past decade, through the development of creative industries and slow fashion, it received a new name, *ethical fashion*, which is the opposite of fast fashion, but with an emphasis on quality, it is a different approach, as designers, distributors and consumers are much more aware of the impact of the product on workers, communities and ecosystems. It can be said that the essence of the idea of slow fashion is the balance between the different production and use rates, achieving more expensive clothing items, that reflect the materials, labor and values, as well as the respect for values, people, and the environment, being organized and identified through the following defining aspects: organic, vegan, craftsmanship, customization, ethical standards of production and marketing, recycling, vintage.

Integrating these concepts in product design and constantly oriented towards creativity, the European fashion industry has used cultural paradigm in researching product and brand trends, demonstrating its innovative quality since the 1970s, but has also adapted it to the requirements of sustainability in the last twenty years. The participation of art, psychology, history or anthropology, i.e., the humanities, became

immanent, increasingly focusing on the societal interests of fashion as a major social phenomenon, both in the creation of the fashion product and in the development of creative industries of the twenty-first century. In a possible taxonomy of textile arts (Figure 1) it can be observed where fashion, costume art, and fashion design stand in the panoply of contemporary fine and decorative arts. It can be seen that the majority of textile arts contribute to the cultural development of fashion: costume art (in all its forms of manifestation, from restoration to costume performing), artistic fabrics, prints, embroidery, patchwork, collage, mixed 2D, textile design. This contribution is direct, practical, applicative, through artistic creation. But in turn, the field of any artistic production is increasingly rich if we use the humanistic foundation of the artistic discourse through: elements of art history, anthropology, psychology, semiotics, philosophy, sociology, etc. In particular, the evolution of fashion is determined by studies, research or innovative concepts of a school of thought at a given moment, a humanistic current also noted in socio-economic studies. Hence there is a history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology of fashion as theoretical points and in the creative and artistic practice of the fashion product (design or decorative arts), there are the art sciences contributing to its development, such as: applied aesthetics, visual semiotics and archetypology. Certainly, any fashion product, either clothing or object, such as clothing or environmental accessories, or the full range of life-style items, including houses, cars, and urban environment come to be sustainable cultural products only in the extent to which proper sustainable development-oriented research studies, both technical and humanistic, are developed in terms of education and research in every industrial field.

In the creative industries of fashion a boundary must be set between the utilitarian and the fashion product in order to correctly target both research and product design. Functionally and emotionally, fashion and clothing are two different concepts: fashion connects us with the cultural period and space of the society in which we live, representing our emotional needs (psychological), social status (sociology, anthropology), cultural needs (art, visual and musical culture, history of places), communication needs (communication sciences, visual language) helping us to express ourselves as individuals, while clothing and shoes meet our physical or functional needs, protecting us. “The function of usual clothing is a material one - to cover us and keep us warm, while the function of fashionable clothes is to indicate who we are, expressing our own cultural values and communicating a message to others - these emotional needs are complex, subtle and inexhaustible” (Fletcher, 2008). Based on this social function and different economic needs, in the last twenty years the fashion industry, which is a creative industry, started to distinguish itself from the clothing industry, which is an utilitarian industry. For a sustainable development of creative industries its specialists are required to understand the importance of humanistic culture in this area and apply it to the concept, product strategy, marketing and advertising of the humanistic mix brand that creates sustainable added value.

It is the role of designers, researchers in fashion and textile arts, of those specialists who integrate numerous humanistic and socio-economic studies in their work to create a product tailored to the needs of an informed consumer in matters of sustainability and increasingly educated; it is then the role of these people in the fashion area to develop creative industries in a sustainable manner, both materially and culturally.

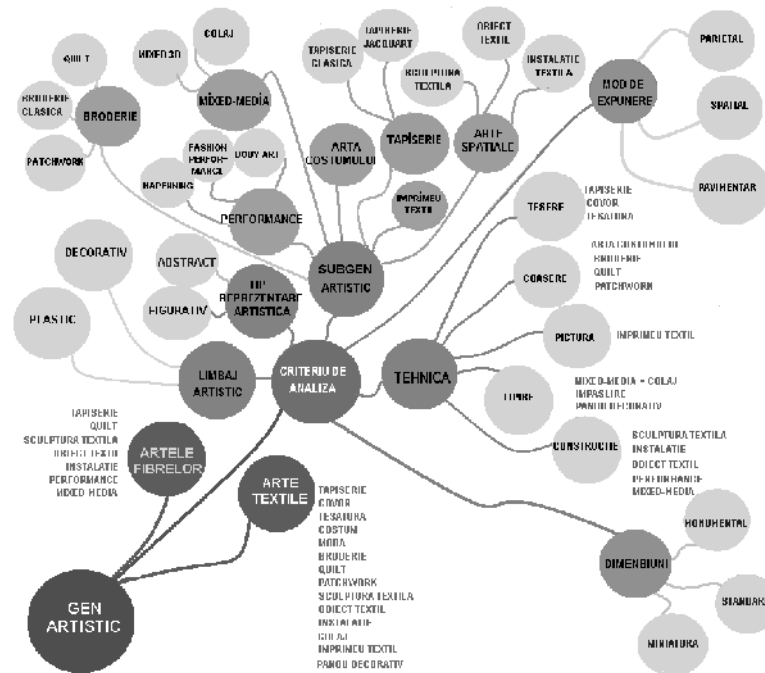


Figure 1. Taxonomy of textile arts

At this point, the role of humanistic episteme can be defined in the sustainable development of creative industries, both in product concept, and in the general plan of strategies and creative, brand or company management, to the knowledge of the one who provides the concept of sustainable product addressed to an informed consumer.

If from the large field of textile arts we extract only the fashion area and attempt a visualization of its structure, again through a taxonomic scheme, we can also view the humanities area directly affecting or pertaining to this creative field.

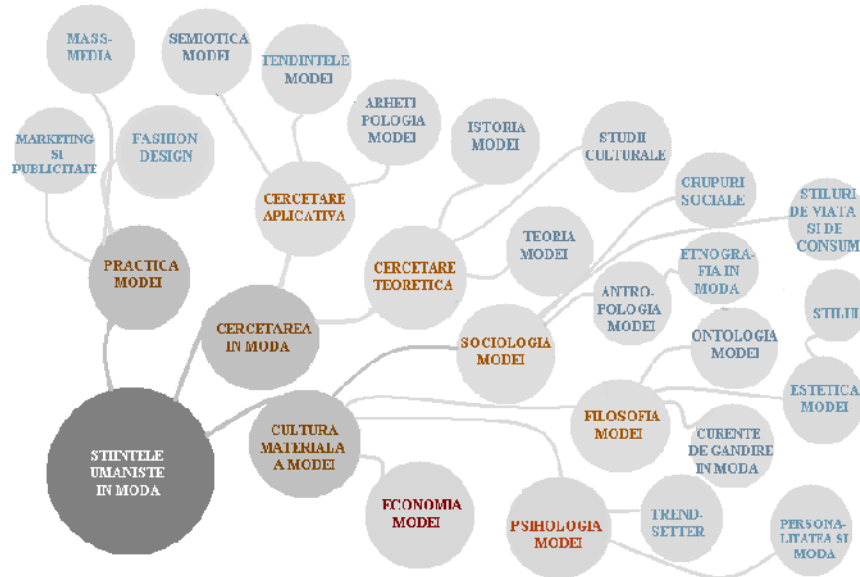


Figure 2. Taxonomy of fashion from the perspective of humanities

The simple reading of the categorised areas illustrates the truth of the statement that the particular humanities, from the history of fashion to the philosophy and psychology of fashion have left their mark on this socio-cultural phenomenon, ever since its inception, and that fashion is basically a field of “art on the human” (Nanu, 2000).

Specific methods and tools of humanities applied in fashion are related primarily to constructing and reading the image: applied aesthetics, visual semiotics and semantics, psychological chromatology to harmonize the sign-symbol of the fashion theme with the color that has value in the buyer's conception of the clothing, the aesthetic style which must be compatible with the lifestyle, etc. Socio-psychological methods used in fashion are integrated in applications for marketing and advertising of brands that aim to sell products with the story and to gain clients using images and subtle psychological arguments. Behind the stories and the image sold and selling the product there is an army of people who conduct interdisciplinary humanities and socio-economic studies, ranging from lifestyle to purchase and post-consumption behavior studies.

The fashion issue thus intersects with that of sustainability and we discover that humanistic elements play not only the role of binding concepts, but primarily serve to promote humanistic values of sustainability relating to: promoting traditions, product customization, ethical fashion and recycling through the vintage product, which is an old product with cultural value.

CONCLUSIONS

Sustainability implies a slowdown of serialization, production and consumption and an increase in the value and customization of products, therefore, a greater emphasis on cultural trends and values. The great style offices around the world demonstrate their

concern for cultural sustainability and ecodesign assertion, providing product designers around the world enough themes of inspiration for sustainable fashion. A slow fashion involves better design, production, consumption and life, using natural values along with the traditional cultural ones. However, metropolitan life and urban dominance of the 21st century means adapting sustainability to other rhythms. Therefore slow fashion is not the antithesis of speed, but a different approach, focusing on quality, where people are more aware of the impact of the product on workers, communities and ecosystems. Only in this context, eco-design, as practice of sustainability of fashion, reduces the environmental impact of clothing throughout the product's life cycle, and given that the concept of the product is always improved, the design becomes sustainable.

Thus, *sustainable fashion* means better aesthetics, philosophy of beauty, design, production, consumption and life by combining ideas of regeneration cycles and the evolution of nature with those related to societal values and traditions. The growing demand for sustainable products will increasingly put companies in a position to seek creative professionals with the expertise to integrate sustainability in the entire business of fashion brand, so that humanistic expertise in sustainable fashion would become a new profession.

Transforming the fashion industry into a sustainable industry is an ongoing process, which is carried out through actions based on the humanities:

- a new anti-consumerism philosophy, promoting natural and organic values, as socioeconomic studies have proven the harmfulness of consumerist philosophy and practice to the human species;

- promoting an experiential philosophy as a cultural obligation to experience everything and to buy products according to this experience in order to be part of a continuous process of individual and hence group and community identity formation;

- a new psychology of lifestyle, because changing the diet and adhering to a anti-consumerism philosophy involves adopting other values that can only be cultural, from reading books to group psychology practice;

- appreciating eclecticism, both in its cultural variant, of steering the use of products specific to different styles or cultures, and in its multifunctional variant by appreciating clothing with several features, or by combining existing fashion pieces with organic or vintage ones;

- using traditional elements on several levels: both in the cultural one, of aesthetic appreciation of traditional symbolic signs, as well as by integrating original traditional pieces in current clothing or by adapting urban products to the needs of a traditional life, as well as using vintage pieces as a creative cultural component;

- the hardest way to integrate humanistic values in sustainable fashion is to adhere to an ethical fashion, because this means fairness, ethical production processes and sale of products, payment of labour and creation of civilized jobs. If in the fashion industry or offices of style, design, promotion, advertising and PR agencies, economic mechanisms are easy to check, in the garment industry, the one that materializes product concepts, these things are hidden, knowing that over 30% of this industry is a “black” or “gray” industry, and therefore having great socio-economic ethics issues.

In order for sustainable fashion industry, which is a creative industry, and therefore an industry oriented towards the use of individual creative potential, to be a profitable industry in the context of working with the garment industry and the textile industry, which are commercial industries, organized just for economic profit, specialized clusters must be set up. In this respect, using the principle of cooperation for communication

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and creativity, people working in these areas can create centres of interest both in the business, culture and art design of the fashion textile and leather field, through those systems of innovative services that are creative clusters. Potentiation of young professionals' access to cultural, scientific, financial and technological resources, promotion of regional and national traditional culture through cultural, sustainable, smart and ethical products, as well as creating the framework for initiation of a market for cultural products, both innovative and traditional, in this area, restored to modern standards, are ways through which a creative cluster in the fashion industry can be profitable, can create jobs and can be sustainable for a long time.

This is the only way that the humanistic episteme in sustainable development of creative industries may find its integrated, functional applicability, generating new values to develop the epistemological background of this field.

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