

**THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN THE FORMATION OF AN ETHICAL  
FASHION SYSTEM**

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**MAY 2013**



THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN THE FORMATION OF AN ETHICAL  
FASHION SYSTEM

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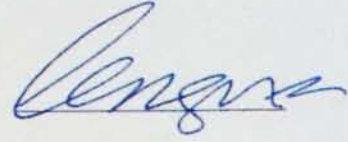
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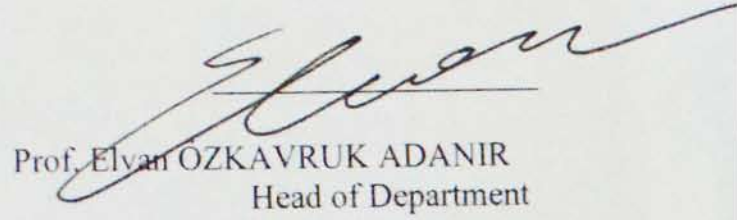
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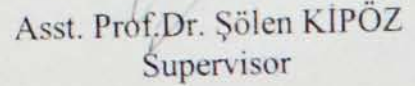
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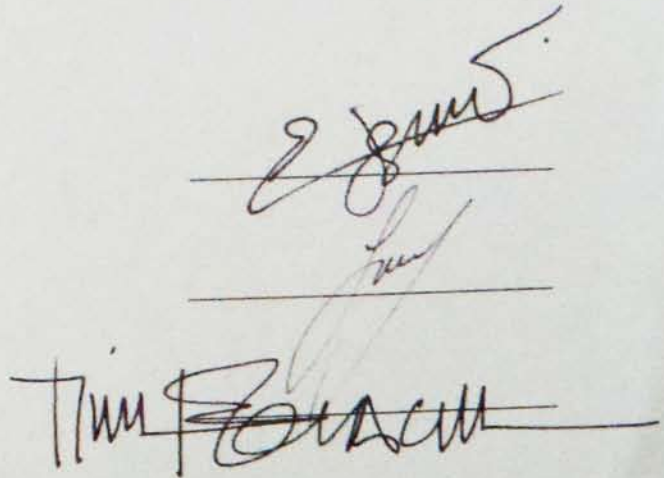
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## ABSTRACT

# THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN THE FORMATION OF AN ETHICAL FASHION SYSTEM

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M.Des. in Design Studies

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Adoption of mass production methods by the post-industrial society led the way for democratization in terms of commodity accessibility; however the chain of mass production and wasteful consumption generated detrimental impacts upon environment, humanity and culture. Production and consumption patterns that were embraced by the conventional fashion system brought forward insolvable issues such as; exploitation of workers' and employees' rights, threatening of consumers' health, environmental pollution, and passivization of consumers' productivity. The notion of fast fashion which emerged during the 1990s increased the adverse effects of mass production. During the 1960s, sustainability movement broke through as an extension of environmental flows and due to the impact of conferences and seminars that were held in this field, culture of sustainability was formed. In the light of sustainability culture, ethical fashion emerged as a counter movement towards the irresponsible set up of the fashion industry and it became influential in defining a new direction to design. This study explores the role of design in becoming a potential agent for transforming production and consumption strategies of the conventional fashion system towards a more responsible and ethical direction. Thus, it is aimed to make a contribution to the pursuit of design in defining a new identity and way of becoming for itself.

Keywords: Fast Fashion, Fashion consumption, Ethical Fashion, Sustainability, Design

## ÖZET

### ETİK BİR MODA SİSTEMİNİN OLUŞUMUNDA TASARIMIN ROLÜ

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Sanayi sonrası toplumun seri üretim yöntemlerini benimsemesi ile ürün ulaşılabilirliği demokratik bir hale geldiyse de, yirminci yüzyılda üretim ve tüketim zincirinden doğan sonuçlar çevre, insan ve kültür üzerinde bir takım yıkıcı etkilere sebep olmuştur. Geleneksel moda sistemi tarafından da benimsenmiş olan üretim ve tüketim yöntemleri; çalışan ve işçi haklarının sömürüsü, tüketici sağlığının tehdit edilmesi, çevre kirliliği, farklı ekosistemlerin varlığının tehlikeye girmesi ve tüketicinin üretken kimliğinden soyutlanarak pasifleştirilmesi gibi sorunları gündeme getirmiştir. 1990larda ortaya çıkan hızlı moda kavramı ise bu süreçlerin yıkıcı etkisinin artmasına sebep olmuştur. 1970lerde çevreci hareketlerin oluşumuna önayak olduğu sürdürülebilirlik hareketi doğmuş ve bu alanda düzenlenen konferans ve seminerlerle sürdürülebilirlik kültürü oluşmaya başlamıştır. Bu kültürel oluşumun etkisiyle, moda endüstrisinin sorumsuz yapılanması karşı hareket olarak etik moda kavramı ortaya çıkmış ve tasarıma yeni bir yöntem belirlemede etkili olmuştur. Bu çalışmada tasarımın geleneksel moda sistemindeki tüketim ve üretim stratejilerinin daha sorumlu ve etik hale gelecek şekilde değişiminde potansiyel aracı olarak oynayacağı rol araştırılmaktadır. Tasarımın kendine yeni bir kimlik ve varoluş şekli oluşturmasına katkıda bulunmak hedeflenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hızlı Moda, Moda Tüketimi, Etik Moda, Sürdürülebilirlik, Tasarım

To my family

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

Within the global economy of fashion system and consumer culture homogeneity has been dominating the design industry and designers. The primary objective of consumer culture is to increase consumption due to the prevailing economic model's production strategies. In that economic model design has been positioned in such a manner that its initial objective became escalation of consumerism. Substantially, design's major role is to function as a problem solving agent however, in this system design has become the major part of the problem. Moreover, designers' ability to envision and designate the system in which their design objects perform and function has been bereaved.

While fashion industry fuelled consumption with changing regulations in the field of economics and with new marketing strategies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a silent revolution started growing (Brown, 2010). The first reactions started with the impact of social and political changes that 1968 generation and Hippie culture created as a reaction to fashion understanding of 1960's and 1970's. Emergence of environmental concerns and sustainable consumption caused questioning of the top-down mechanism of global fashion system, and as reaction first examples of do it yourself and recycling practices emerged. The prescience of population increase, deterioration of



environment and depletion of natural resources due to inconsiderately devising of industry triggered the formation of ‘sustainability culture’ which was formed by the impact of Rio Earth Summit during the 1990s (Margolin, 1998: 85).

By the beginning of 2000’s the wave of sustainability has broadened in design world and as well as in the fashion system and the term *ethical* opted into fashion terminology. Fundamentally, sustainability is about adopting an approach to design and development that focuses on environmental, social, and financial consequences of human action. Similarly ethical fashion refers to “philosophically guided actions and behaviours as determined by their impact on others. Thus it refers to the positive impact of a designer, a consumer, or a method of production as experienced by workers, consumers, animals, society and the environment” (Thomas, 2008: 583). Hereby, ethical fashion indicated a new way of *being* for design and designers which is not limited only with economic concerns. In the light of these formations, this study problematizes the response and becoming of ethical fashion culture from the perspective of design and designers and discusses how design can develop an environmentally friendly, holistic and socio-culturally responsible approach to fashion.

## 1.2. AIM OF THE STUDY

This study’s main objective is to draw attention to the fact that design is in the necessity of redefining its purposes and its identity. The structure of conventional

fashion system conceives a linear operation model which starts with designing, continues with production and ends with consumption. In this model consumption is the ultimate phase and its increase is the main objective. Moreover this model, by defining the role of designers, workers, and consumers sharply, cast specific roles to them and generates a hierarchy among these actors. If this linear structure can be transformed to a cyclic one, the totality of products and trends that are produced and consumed can undergo design process again; this leads to the evaluation of resources. Furthermore, the domination of designers on consumers and workers can be eliminated and casted roles can become interchangeable. Thereby, design can solve the problems that are generated within the system that it belongs to because this cyclic model develops a democratic, responsible and protective approach to design. Design does not only create objects conversely, it has intense potential in planning and designating the system it functions in.

Within the scope of these concerns this study tries to answer these questions; how can design position itself in order to create a positive balance between production and consumption and turn the face of fashion towards a more responsible, transparent and ethical future? To what extend is the role of designer important on consumption and production practices? How should design function in order to solve problems that are generated by the conventional fashion system?

With this study it is intended to claim that design can be used as tool for creating an ethical fashion system that is based on democratic, eco-conscious, socially responsive practices when its ideology is sustained and reinforced with a system that

comprises responsible individuals, an independent media system, educational institutions, ethical events and fashion spheres. Thus, this study aims to create awareness on the negative impacts of conventional fashion system on humanity and environment while showing the possibility of solving the problems when an ethical approach is developed towards design.

### 1.3. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

As it is stated in the problem definition part, the main problematic of the study comes up from the environmentally and socio-culturally desultory structure of conventional fashion system. With this concern, the study tries to define a new identity and way of becoming for design and designers within the scope of ethical fashion departing from sustainability movement. Briefly the study asks; what kind of a path should design and designers follow in order to change the vicious circle that conventional fashion system's production and consumption methods generate?

To answer this question the study is structured in two main parts. First of all a better understanding of the operational structure of conventional fashion system was needed to reveal the reasons of problems that the system creates. Therefore in the second chapter entitled; "Dominating Fashion System and Fashion Consumption" it is aimed to examine the actors, institutions, fashion centres, of fashion system from social, cultural and economic perspectives with the objective of illustrating the

structure of consumer culture which shapes and limits the identity of contemporary design culture.

In the part called as “Evolution of Consumer Society in Fashion” significance of fashion consumption and changes in the consumption patterns were discussed from a sociological perspective with the theoretical framework that Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen, Antony Giddens, Alan Warde and Jean Baudrillard provided. In “Production and Diffusion of Fashion”, it is aimed to set forth the actors, institutions and systems that engender the production of fashion within the scope of consumer culture. Hence, the notions of fashion media, fashion centres, star designers and roles of the components that make up the culture of fashion were discussed from the perspectives of philosophers Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Lipovetsky sociologists David McCracken, Yuniya Kawamura and fashion historian Christopher Breward.

In “Fashion System in Global Economy” contemporary situation of fashion system was analysed. By centring on the idea of Karl Marx and Guy Debord about the fact that production mediates consumption it is intended to reveal how production is systemized in order to increase consumption within the global economy of fashion. Furthermore, in “Fast Fashion System” actions and changing roles of countries and cultures on design and production within the globalized fashion system was discussed. It was crucial to discuss fast fashion and globalization for this thesis because the point of departure for ethical fashion was based on the problems that globalization of the fashion industry and fast fashion system caused. Finally, the chapter capped off with “Problems that Arise from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Production and

Consumption Strategies” part in which the negative impact of conventional fashion system on consumers, employees and environment are summarized.

The third chapter is structured according to the concepts and problems that are presented in the previous chapter. That is to say, the second chapter provided a basis for the third chapter. The solutions that are offered are discussed as a response to the problems of the second chapter. During the research and within the theoretical framework that Bourdieu, Lipovetsky, McCracken, Kawamura and Breward provided, it is understood that the notion of fashion was produced and diffused as an ideology. Clothing and products are just the embodiment of the ideology which is sustained by invisible actors and institutions who may be different than designers. For this reason the method that ethical fashion will develop should not be limited with solutions which stuck at the commodity level. Because of that in this chapter the theoretical framework mainly based upon the ideas, analysis and observations of design historians and theorists Victor Margolin, Victor Papanek and sustainable fashion design theorists Kate Fletcher, Sandy Black and Hazel Clark’s all of whom implicitly or explicitly emphasizing the necessity of reinventing a design culture which creates and feeds upon its own ideology by centralizing on human and environmental wellbeing.

Basing on the idea that design can create a positive balance between production and consumption if it goes beyond the limits that are defined by the consumer culture, the first part of the chapter started with the evolution of sustainability culture by referring to the problems of the conventional system. In the part where slow fashion

system is introduced, the intention was to exemplify how slow design ideology challenges the dictations and hierarchies of globalized fashion practices. The part entitled “Design Solutions for the Creation of an Ethical Fashion System” intended to criticise consumer culture’s approach to designers as shapers of commodities and exemplified the possibilities of ethical design practices which challenges top-down mechanism of conventional fashion system. Moreover, it emphasized the necessity of searching new roles for designers in which they can act as educators, activists and entrepreneurs. Since materials dominate the direction of fashion design and production, the next part drew attention to the positive impact of environmentally friendly and healthy material selection. Lastly in “Establishing the Culture of Ethical Fashion” part significance of approaching ethical fashion design as a system was emphasized. It is noted that ethical fashion needs its own channels of communication, networks, individuals and institutions to develop a unique design language even if it benefits from the structure of conventional fashion systems organization. Since this study is done in Turkey “Ethical Design in Turkey” was written as an additional part to document and report the deficiency of ethical fashion in Turkey and to create awareness on the issue.

#### 1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to create awareness on the consequences of wasteful consumption and production of the conventional fashion system and

introduce the notion of ethical fashion departing from the movement of sustainability. This study is the first thesis that discusses the notion of ethical fashion design in Turkey. Until now there have been two dissertations published in Turkey on the relationship between fashion and sustainability but none of them has fully focused on the problematic of design and designers' role in the establishment of an ethical fashion design approach. Internationally this study is the first one that emphasized the necessity of originating an ethical design culture to support design practices in the field of fashion. Besides including ethical design practices, by analysing and exemplifying independent media, educational institutions, workshops and events this research is among the first ones that draws attention to the emergence of ethical fashion design culture both from theoretical and practical perspectives. The output of this study is a source material that enables other researchers working in the field of fashion benefit from and use in their further studies.

## **2. DOMINATING FASHION SYSTEM AND FASHION CONSUMPTION**

Since the Industrial Revolution, societies have been experiencing democratization in the acquisition of fashion products. Due to the opportunities that industrial capitalism provided such as; machinery innovation, mass production, mass consumption, low costs, accessibility, ease in communication, different levels of the society had the chance to reach similar kind of products. However, the progression and democratization in the field of fashion industry cannot be described as a wholly positive rise.

Just as the Counter-Enlightenment philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau had seen the contradiction in the democratization promise of capitalism three centuries ago, we observe a similar contradiction in the progression of fashion industry. In his book entitled as “Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men” Rousseau indicates that progression, Enlightenment and capitalism would work mainly for the benefit of the upper classes while the third estate<sup>1</sup> would be exploited (2001). He claims that progression of humanity has not been a linear and favourable progression when the situation of different levels of the society is considered and it is quite apparent that upper levels of the society benefit from the progression excessively while lower status groups fail to do so. Thus inequality among people takes place because one group of the society directs other groups politically. For

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<sup>1</sup> The French ancien régime was formally divided into three legal orders or "estates." The clergy and the nobility comprised the First and Second Estates, while the Third Estate served as a broad category encompassing much of the rest of the population.



Rousseau any kind of progression or development of civilization is also a step that causes inequality, because development contains dilemmas within itself (2001).

Similarly, when the development of fashion industry is analysed, it is observed that within the last century, along with the impact of globalization, there has been an inequality among nations and countries that adopted the mission of design and innovation and countries that are manufacturing.

Contemporary fashion system, which leans on mass and fast production and consumption mechanisms, provide much more economical input to developed countries that deal with the design phase than the third world countries which play a part in manufacturing phase and accordingly become exploited in terms of health, living conditions and polluted environmentally. The problems listed above are among the few factors that explain why we need to find an ethical path to change the dominating fashion system.

The field of fashion design has come to a point where the line that sustains natural balance has been passed because consumer culture shaped the identity of design by moving it away from its initial purpose of problem solving and positioned it as the consumption triggering tool of the industry. This is why a more responsible and ethical approach to design is needed immediately.

Hazel Clark and David Brodly defined ethics as; “Ethics deals with how our actions affect others, with an emphasis on right action” (2009: 164). Within this chapter it is aimed to examine dominating fashion system from social, cultural and economic

perspectives in order to find out what moves the fashion industry away from doing the “right action”. Thereby the second chapter provides a basis for the third chapter to better discuss what the “right action” is or could be.

Within this frame, the first part of this chapter starts with the analysis of significance of fashion consumption for individuals and society by presenting a chronologic approach and continues with the examination of fashion production and its diffusion. The second part approaches fashion consumption and production from an economic perspective and analyses the notion of fast fashion which became one of the most harmful production systems for environment. In the third part it is aimed to probe and reveal adverse effects of the fashion system on humans and environment in the new millennium.

## 2.1. EVOLUTION OF CONSUMER SOCIETY IN FASHION

In the following parts significance of fashion consumption and production and diffusion phases of fashion will be discussed to illustrate the evolution of consumer culture. Due to the fact that contemporary fashion system is directing the consumers towards wasteful consumption, the first part will mainly look for the reasons of consumption of fashion commodities and ways of consumption. The second part will concentrate on how certain styles become fashionable along with the role that designers play.

### 2.1.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF FASHION CONSUMPTION

Consumption of fashion commodities and signification of fashion has had a transformation throughout history, yet; in every period objects perform material and cultural function (Dunn, 2008). Negative consequences of fashion system that societies are facing today are directly linked to consumption patterns, and thus, to the mechanism that makes fashion consumption significant for individuals. In this part individual and social meanings that are generated by the system will be discussed to reveal how and why fashion commodities are consumed. Considering the major changes in consumption patterns, this part will focus on the social and cultural function of fashion in three eras; pre-industrial, industrial and postindustrial.

For pre-industrial era it can be claimed that fashion consumption was a privilege that is peculiar to aristocracy and courtly society. Emergence of fashionable behaviour in the 1400's and its diffusion and evolution took place among the courtly circles of European countries such as Italy, Spain and France (Lynch and Strauss, 2007). Due to scarcity of resources, lower levels of society were not able to reach the materials that courtly circle achieves. Fashion consumption as a *hedonistic* behaviour, as it is expressed by sociologist Daniel Bell to define modern consumption, hadn't taken place yet for the majority of society (Gronow, 1997: 2). As Kawamura puts forth, "the consumer class was restricted to the courtly circle" (Kawamura, 2006: 90). Moreover, 16th century aristocracy's consumer tastes were homogenous due to the fact that "the king" was the only taste maker (ibid.). The king was imitated by the

courtiers and in this way courtiers were differentiating themselves from the lower status groups. That is to say, first fashionable consumption was relying both on “imitation” and “differentiation” (Simmel, 1957).

On the other hand, consumption of fashion had another importance for the kings and courtly circle which became even more significant than the pleasure it provides. ”Fashionable dress was used in this early period to differentiate class and “access to power” (Lynch and Strauss, 2007: 2). As it is expressed by Lynch, Strauss and Kawamura; consumption of fashion was significant to express the political power of certain kingdoms. Louis XIV of France; known as the consumer king, had made France the centre of aesthetic culture to strengthen his political power. Consumption of luxurious items, balls and other elegant practices served France to become an admirable country in terms of culture. In this way it is imitated by European aristocracy and thus France provided cultural dominance over other societies and consumption of fashion.

The great impact of Industrial Revolution affected consumption patterns and significance of fashion indispensably. Access of materials has democratized. Technological innovations and new production techniques underpinned post-industrial society. In a very short period of time materials which were once peculiar to only higher status groups became available to lower status groups. Therefore higher status groups differentiated themselves from the others with stylistic novelty. In addition to this social transformation industrial revolution led to the emergence of a new value system which produces new cultural meanings.

According to McCracken western societies can be defined as, in Claude Levi Strauss's words; "hot societies" which means "they are willingly accepted, indeed encourage, the radical changes that result from deliberate human affect... (Braudel, 1973, cited in McCracken, 1986:76). Thus the basis of western economy depended on changes that sustain production and consumption practices. At that point "consumption of fashion", by being based on novelty, became an instrument of triggering change by creating new cultural meanings and both becoming the object of cultural productions.

Moreover, industrial revolution and mass production separated production/producer and consumption/consumer from each other decisively. After the Industrial revolution we no longer talk about an ordinary dress which was once sewn by the wearer to provide function of physical protection, but instead a fashionable dress, a product, which is bought and thus moved from "realm of function" to "realm of signification" and became "carrier of social meaning" (Baudrillard, 2004). This definition that has been done by Baudrillard emphasizes fashion consumption's function as being a communicative tool in modern or industrial era.

The significance and function of fashion can be explained more clearly with the theories of 19<sup>th</sup> century sociologist Georg Simmel and sociologist and economist Thorstein Veblen. For Simmel, there are two opposite poles that make up the basis of fashion: these are; imitation and distinction. For him consumption of fashion is an agent of individualization but at the same time it is an agent that prevents the individual from standing alone within the social strata that he/she belongs to. Every

individual has the motivation of differentiating himself/herself in order to express his-her individuality. On the other hand the same individual has a tendency to imitate the others due to the fear of isolation from the crowd (Simmel, 1957). The duality of fashion's role in his theory is taking place actually for communication of individuals or groups within a society. According to Simmel, if the ones who are imitated need to differentiate themselves from the ones who are imitating, they need to appeal to "novelty". The speed and will to reach novelty in fashion has become the indicator of one's social status because only the upper strata can have the chance of experiencing novelty fashionwise. As soon as the lower classes start adopting the uppers', uppers need to look for un-experienced styles. This situation strengthens the function of fashion consumption as an indicator of social status.

For Veblen, consumption of fashion and dressing can function as the expression of pecuniary culture. No other method of consumption is as expressive as the consumption of fashion to reflect the wearer's economic power and wealth (Veblen, 1998). The notion of "conspicuous consumption" refers to the activities of people who try to express his/her wealth through consumption and provides dominance over lower classes. In the book entitled as "Theory of Leisure Class" Veblen states that the women of 19<sup>th</sup> century have become the display of their husbands' wealth and status by spending high amounts of money on fashion items, showing up in leisure time activities (1998). This method of consumption is called as "vicarious consumption" by Veblen (ibid). In other words fashioned body of women became "mobile property" of wealthy men (Vinken, 2005: 5). Another notion which was

introduced by Veblen is “conspicuous waste”. For him, not only the possessed items or products, but also waste of them is as important as having them. Temporality of fashion necessitates creating waste out of old fashions. “Conspicuous waste” emphasizes that one can demonstrate his/her wealth by expressing that he/she can consume wastefully and throw away his/her possessions.

The theories that Simmel and Veblen put forth, approaches fashion consumption as signifier of class, social status, and gender. Consequently, fashion becomes a display of the roles that are already defined within a society and it functions as a sign that communicates the roles within different levels of society. The end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century, that Simmel and Veblen were observing and writing about, start to promise the beginning of a new era in which, in terms of fashion consumption, we move from the “economy of needs” to economy of desire and pleasure” (Baudrillard, 2004).

Significance and function of fashion consumption became highly complex in mass consumption society (Bauman quoted in Gronow, 1997: 70) of post-industrial era. “Earlier epoch’s one’s outward appearance was taken to be indicative of one’s social role or status, now a projection of one’s inner self” (Negrin, 2008:9). Since unified and single idea of essence and individuality of Enlightenment has become fragmented and decentred in the twentieth century, notion of identity and its display via fashion consumables have become ambiguous. That is to say, earlier theories that evaluate fashion’s function as an indicator of social status or gender are not adequate to explain what today’s fashion consumption signifies. Similar to identity “fashion

itself is fragmenting”, as Sandy Black claims; “the rules to be broken and barriers between high fashion elites and ordinary folk, designer and every day wear began to disappear” (Black, 2008: 8).

There are two major views that try to explain what fashion consumables signify to individuals. According to sociologist Antony Giddens, who is one of the representatives of one view, circumstances of high modernity has made body a self-reflecting project (cited in Negrin, 2008:9). This means while traditions and status reflective purpose was directing the consumption of fashion in previous stages, in high modernity expressing individual identity has been done via consuming fashion commodities. According to Giddens fashion plays its role as a masquerade. “The self is defined through the masquerade, there is no self apart from the masquerade” (cited in Negrin, 2008:10). This means fashion provides various masks and creates a depersonalized self again and again.

Sociologist Alan Warde points out a similar approach to fashion and identity. He claims that individuals transmit messages about their individual identity through the products that they consume and display. To sustain a self-identity they manipulate different appearances. In a world of infinite choice of commodities identity becomes a matter of self-image and individuals are forced to choose their identities through consumption (Warde, 1994). Manipulation of different identities through mass consumption accelerated with the eclecticism of 1990’s. For Black, after the conspicuous consumption of 1980’s in which luxury designer brands were “symbols of aspirational status”, there has been a second wave of democratization in fashion in



the 1990's which involved designer brands (2008: 10). Availability of designer brands' products to a wider audience played a significant role in the progression of consumer culture. Since then consumption increased and luxury brand image of many brands have vitiated.

On the other hand Baudrillard expresses the inability of reading fashioned bodies as signs of character in postmodernity (quoted in Negrin, 2008:11). Although Baudrillard analysis is based on an analogy between system of objects and system of signs, for him in the last decades fashion consumables have become free floating signifiers as they signify nothing beyond themselves. In this way, the reason for consuming fashion commodities becomes pleasure seeking and hedonism. Correspondingly, reaching novelty became the only way of getting pleasure and this process is followed by a planned obsolescence that shortens the lifespan of fashion commodities faster than it used to be in the past. For Lipovetsky the notions of novelty and planned obsolescence have become the major characteristic of mass production and consumption (2002).

### 2.1.2. PRODUCTION AND DIFFUSION OF FASHION

Fashion is a notion of humanly production and has material and immaterial, social and cultural functions within a society. Alongside understanding its creators and

“artistic and emotional motivations of fashion auteurs”, a better understanding of fashion as a system, including “the effects of manufacturing and its technologies, distribution, retailing, marketing, and consumer demand” (ibid) is necessary to capture how fashion is produced and how it diffuses. Especially for the investigation of ethical fashion practices, a better understanding of clothing production as a result of the fashion system is needed because each actor that make up the system has different roles that can affect consequences of fashion either negatively or positively.

As for fashion sociologist Yuniya Kawamura, fashion comprises a system that involves many different organizations, institutions, individuals such as designers, marketers, workers, photographers, editors, journalists, media...etc. Clothing is the tangible material form that embodies fabric, physical articles and shape, whereas fashion is intangible and related to an “ideology” (2006).

When I say that fashion is an ideology, I don't mean in a Marxist aesthetics sense, locating the works of the designers in the social and political environment. An ideology is a myth and it may be defined as beliefs, attitudes and opinions all of which can be tightly or loosely related. Ideology constitutes any set of beliefs, and whether they are true or false isn't relevant for it exists (ibid: 43).

Then, fashion production is related to the presence of a belief in a particular style.

What makes a specific style defined as fashionable is the collective acceptance of it and that makes it desirable by the individuals of a society, at a certain time.

### 2.1.2.1. THE CULTURE OF FASHION

Anthropologist Grant McCracken explains the correlation between clothing and fashion with “cultural meaning” that is linked to certain styles or consumer goods. It is asserted that what makes a dress fashionable is the cultural meaning that it carries and communicates (Douglas and Isherwood 1978: Sahlins 1976, cited in McCracken, 1986:71). By this way dress goes beyond its utilitarian character and signifies different meanings. According to McCracken culture functions in two ways. Firstly it provides a “lens” for an individual which means it stands as a tool for making sense of the world. Secondly culture shapes and constitutes the phenomenal world “a specific culture makes privileged set of terms, within which nothing appears alien or intangible to the individual member of the culture and outside of which there is no order, no system and no ready comprehension” (McCracken, 1986:72). That is to say culture legitimizes and normalizes its own creations and vision.

State of being fashionable is contingent upon “cultural meaning” which is generated and transferred. “Cultural meaning is located in three places: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, and moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual” (McCracken, 1986:71). In other words, there is a path which starts in the culturally constituted world where “cultural meaning” is drawn from, and then meaning is transferred to fashion object, finally it moves to individual. McCracken’s analysis aims to provide a portrayal of modern consumer society. In this model fashion as a

system becomes an instrument of meaning transfer from culturally constituted world to good. Thus the system has the power to legitimize what a fashionable good is by transferring cultural meaning into consumer goods.

The process of legitimization and acceptance of a certain style as fashionable over others has always been essential in every period for production and diffusion of fashion to take place. However, opinion leaders, creators and the speed of fashion information change. First “fashionable clothing behaviour” emerged in the 1400’s in Italy and according to fashion historian Valerie Steel, revealing body parts both for men and women of the courtly society was the signal of first fashion trends (quoted in Lynch and Strauss, 2007, p:2). In the 15th century Spain and in the 17th century France became the fashion capitals due to their economic, social and more importantly cultural power and dominance. Fashion production was taking place among courtly circle and aristocracy. Kings and members of royalty were the originators and opinion leaders of new styles, thus producers of fashion culture. Diffusion of fashion was taking place through personal contact within this small circle. As Steele emphasizes that French kings, queens and aristocracy was initiating fashion trends and these trends were trickling down to the lower status groups and Paris had become the centre of latest fashions (1988).

#### 2.1.2.2. BIRTH OF THE NOTION OF DESIGNER AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF FASHION SYSTEM

King Louis XIV, who was known as the consumer king is one of the most influential characters, in producing fashion culture, which history recorded. Louis XIV was not only the trendsetter and originator of new fashions, but also an originator of a fashion system. He by taking the cultural leadership, professed French fashion as the most dominated one in the world by making fashion propaganda to empower dynasty. “State sponsorship of the textiles and decorative arts industries, and the consolidation of the court at the Versailles as a carefully managed symbol of absolutism” (Breward, 2003: 24), provided self-promotion and a control mechanism to French fashion. For Breward, king was so powerful and decisive in constituting a fashion culture that he even restricted the courtiers in their styles and they were “kept in check by a system of sartorial rules and foreign competitors were awed into submission by the centralization and spectacular staging of ostentatious examples of fashionable activity” (2003: 24). Restrictions of the King and court over Parisians continued until the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The transmission from fashionable clothing behaviour or this courtly way of being fashionable to fashion system took place by virtue of institutionalization of fashion and birth of the “designer”. In this context, institutionalization refers to two different meanings. In first place it refers to a structure that constitutes the practice and behavioural pattern of life in a given society and a collective agreement of the individuals of that society. Secondly it refers to an established organization. The first meaning is similar to McCracken’s culturally constituted world and instruments of transfer of cultural meaning. In that sense fashion and its production is constituted as

a collective activity. The ones who take part in the apparel manufacturing part play a collective role with the ones who “help to construct an idea of fashion” (Kawamura, 2006: 50). This idea emphasizes presence of fashion system as a belief, an idea which is sustained by opinion leaders. The second meaning which is “institutionalization of fashion as an established organization” took place in France in 1868 with French Fashion Trade Organization and Charles Frederic Worth got through the anonymity of fashion and clothing production, thus fashion production, by having been exposed as “the first designer” in Paris. “He was no longer a servant catering to rich women. He was so popular that all women wanted to be dressed by Worth” (Kawamura, 2006: 65). Thus, “star designer” Charles Frederick Worth became the personification of creativity of French culture (ibid). Thereby a hierarchy among cultures, cities, apparel producers and designers had been formed.

Like fashion, stars are artificial constructions, and if fashion is the aestheticization of clothing, the star system is the aestheticization of actor... the star system is based on the same values as fashion, on the sacralisation of individuality and appearances (Lipovetsky, 2002: 182).

Hereby French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky draws attention to the fact that fashion system and star designers are cultural constructions and they depend on each other to sustain the production of fashion. Star system is still affective today and cities such as Paris, Milan, and London became the source of fashion production by bringing out star designers. Existence of such cities that are producing and directing fashion culture could be explained by Bourdieu’s “cultural capital” (1984). These cities have

been the centres where the elite consume fashionable goods and thus differentiate themselves from the non-elite by defining the taste and aesthetics. Designers who are serving to the elite first gains “symbolic capital” by providing something which is only for the elite class (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus the elite can identify themselves with the means that designer provides which at the end become both cultural and economic capital for the designer himself. These centres and designers, and accordingly fashion is followed and communicated via the media today and the media, as other social institutions, contribute to cultural process.

### 2.1.3. THE ROLE OF MEDIA ON PRODUCTION OF FASHION

Linda Welters remarks that the influence of media on diffusion of fashion can be divided into two aspects (Welters and Lillethun 2007). The first aspect indicates that there are certain media which are used by the fashion business to promote fashion to consumers. These media are fashion magazines, internet websites and TV style shows. The second aspect shows that there are certain gatekeepers or social leaders whose specific styles are influential on the society and then “appropriated by the fashion business and repackaged for consumers” (ibid: 275).

Among the media used by the fashion system, fashion magazines receive the largest share. The most influential fashion magazines of today are published by large corporations. These corporations control the direction of publication and thereby the

direction of fashion. Fashion magazines are directed by fashion editors and each magazine belongs to a corporation, has its own editorial team. Editor in chief is highly effective in specifying the direction of fashion and together with designers and fashion brands. As Kawamura puts forth; “they play a major role in producing fashion as an image and maintaining and continuing the belief in fashion” (2006, p.82). According to Kawamura editors have two powerful weapons; writing space and silence (2006). That is to say, an editor may either chose to remain silent on a particular issue or designer, or she can promote and praise it. In this way editors can control or change how fashion diffuses. For McCracken besides editors, journalists are very important in influencing the tastes of audiences because “they make their influence felt even before an innovation passes to its early adopter” (Baumgarten 1975; Meyersohn and Katz; Polegato and Wall 1980, quoted in McCracken 1986: 77).

Apart from fashion magazines there are other kinds of media which influence fashion. Television, the music industry, video clips, newspapers, magazines and internet can present fashion leaders to consumers. For Welters and Lillethun, these fashion leaders who have the potential to affect the direction of fashion, can be politicians, royalty dynasty, actresses/actors, singers, celebrities (2007). These individuals must be in the public eye and must be photographed. However, it is not only their fashionable styles that impress the majority of society, the social impact that they create with their behaviours, personalities and attitudes combined with their stylistic approach to fashion let them be followed by the audiences. Soon after these leaders



cause a sensation in other kinds of media, we can observe an immediate reflection in fashion media.

To sum up, there are many different actors and institutions which constitute the complex structure of the fashion system and fashion production. These actors and institutions are effective on the formation of mass consumption and throw away culture as much as they are effective on the fashion system. Built in obsolescence and consumers orientation to consume and dispose clothing, in the direction of following novelty, has been supported by conventional fashion media along with fashion leaders.

The belief that makes people recognize certain clothes as fashionable is also make the same people recognize the same clothing as out of fashion. The crux of the problem with this situation is about time lag. Fashion has always been affected and produced by the media, opinion leaders, designers and tailors, however by the establishment of trend system the time that is needed to consider certain clothing as in or out of fashion has been shortened. Due to the shortened time lags interest in durable and long-life products decreased whereas interest in novelty increased excessively. As a result fashion became synonymous with throwing away.

## 2.2. FASHION SYSTEM IN GLOBAL ECONOMY

Fashion has always been under the dominance of economically and technologically developed countries such as France, England, Italy and Spain as these countries are the producers of fashion markets. However, especially in the last decades the dominance of the developed countries has transformed with the impact of globalization. Globalization is a process whereby the economies of the nation states become integrated (Burns and Bryant, 2007: 31). However this integration caused emergence of problems at a global scale due to unequal environment that it caused. This part is analysing the reasons and unethical consequences of wasteful consumption which is mediated by global production strategies of fashion industry. In this direction, the aim of the part 'Fashion Consumption in Relation with Capitalist Production System' is to define commodity form and reveal its functions in a capitalist production system. "Places of Consumption" is zooming in the spaces and places where commodities are marketed and consumerism is propagated. "Fashion Production within the Framework of Globalization" is presenting the contemporary policy of production in the global fashion market. And lastly, in the part 'Fast Fashion System' it is intended to focus on fast fashion which is a system that is associated with disposable, low quality fashion products which appears as a result of endless search for novelty in the last few decades.

## 2.2.1. FASHION CONSUMPTION IN RELATION WITH CAPITALIST PRODUCTION SYSTEM

The hectic increase in consumption of fashionable products cannot be explained solely with changing consumer behaviours or habits. Undoubtedly, production strategies partake in the increase of consumption. This part will focus on the mediation of consumption via capitalist production strategies and it will provide a deeper insight to the notion of commodity to illustrate unethical consequences of fashion consumption. According to Douglas and Isherwood, contemporary world of objects is not different from that of pre-modern societies (quoted in Dunn, 2008: 21). Objects still have material and cultural functions but “modern society has created a vast and dynamic system of objects whose main purpose is economic” (ibid). According to Dunn, Marx and Lukas express that what distinguishes contemporary objects from the ones in the past is the *commodity form* that shapes and structures contemporary everyday life by “imposing a general form on social and cultural relations (2008: 21).

Commoditization lies at the heart of capitalism. Commodity is something that goes beyond providing a utilitarian property. That is to say, commodities of contemporary society are different from the objects of pre-modern’s which were need oriented thus provided use value. According to Marx commodity is a form that responds to the consumer’s desires, rather than to his needs and two different poles; consumption and production constitute the basis of capitalist economy (2011). Dunn states that

although these two poles, production and consumption, are mediating each other; Marx puts an emphasis on production phase “since production produces not only the object but the manner and motive of consumption” (quoted in Dunn, 2008: 25). Besides use value, which refers to the objects produced for immediate consumption, and exchange value, which refers to the quantity of goods when a commodity is exchanged, that a commodity contains, there is a mystifying force that is named by Karl Marx as commodity fetishism.

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood ... So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labour ... The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, as soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than table-turning ever was (Marx, 2011: 46).

As it is understood from these words; labour that goes in the production process is hidden and value is attributed to the commodity. The commodity obtains its power and communicates with other commodity forms. Humans get into the communication form that commodities provide, thus their conscious is reduced to a relationship

which relies on production and consumption of commodities. Perhaps fashion system and operation fashion products are the best examples to render the ideas of Marx.

In conventional fashion system garments take the commodity form when they are produced as a “collection” and presented with a “designer’s label” is on them. After the labelling is done, these garments are exhibited in fashion shows “flamboyantly” with the contribution of fashion media. The fashion media, by taking pictures of the artefacts which come out due to the “genius” of the designer transforms them to images and distributes to the public. As soon as the images are distributed, collection hits the stores. When a person encounters a garment on the shop window and admires it, she/he is actually admiring and embracing the “complement of activities” that plays a role in the production of that garment. These “complement of activities” can be defined as “spectacle” with the word of Guy Debord as he stated in his book entitled as “The Society of the Spectacle”. These components; designer’s name, genius, garments, catwalk, fashion media, fashion store play a part in the formation of a “spectacle” that deludes people by “mediating” their social relations (2010: 36).

A collection created by the designer X is marketed only under the name of X. Consumer is believed by the spectacle to anticipate acquiring designer’s genius when he/she purchases the designer’s product. In actual fact, there is a production army behind the designer X which is composed of farmers, yarn and fabric producers, pattern makers, print makers, tailors...etc. however they are never put in an appearance. They neither put in appearance in fashion shows nor in photographs/images that circulate in the media. In the editorial and catwalk images

and in the shop window consumer encounters only the “dream world” which is envisioned by the designer. Garments, fashion shows, images come into existence as if the magic wand of designer touched them.

Moreover, the designer creates a “collection” of garments, not single pieces which are different from each other and provide functional use. This isn’t by coincidence; it is the trick or path of capitalist production system to strengthening the desire of consumerism. When a catwalk is traced it is seen that within a collection every single piece is designed to be combined with one another. Every outfit refers or signalizes the outfit which preceded and will come soon after. They all pair up with each other. Thus every commodity builds its own relationship with other commodities within the collection. And to that relationship of commodities, consumer can get involved in only when he/she plays his/her role as the purchaser. Creative or active intervention of consumer is never in question.

Within the global fashion system, garments move much beyond building a relationship within a collection, they pair up with other commodities and garments that are sold at the global fashion market. As part of “fashion trends” that are determined by few genius designers and companies, garments within a collection match up with other commodities of different designers during determined time periods. The reason for match-ups and creating fashion trends is to create a consumption path in which all commodities can be in compliance. All consumer needs to do is to follow the path in which products are in a relationship with each other harmoniously. This brings us back to the Marx’s definition of capitalist

production systems' operational way as; "production mediates consumption because production produces not only the object but the manner and motive of consumption" (quoted in Dunn, 2008: 25).

### 2.2.2. PLACES OF CONSUMPTION

Places of consumption such as shops, department stores, shopping malls consolidate capitalist production strategies with the spectacle that they create. According to philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard, in shopping centres men, alienated from the humanly environment, come across with another "new-found nature" (2004: 26) that consists of profusion of commodities and in which the commodities acquire their own ontological status by relying on a coherent vision that is established via various communicative, marketing and productive tools whose aim is to appeal and charm the consumers (ibid).

Similar to Marx's view, Baudrillard claims that the vision is created by giving the consumers a path to be followed that is established by the collaboration of "shop-window, the advertisement, the manufacturer and the brand name" (2004: 27) that all aim to signify one thing that is; stimulating consumption. Moreover, he states that "display" becomes highly crucial in the stimulation process. Since today's commodities aren't created to provide a solely utilitarian solution, none of the commodities is displayed single, but instead they are displayed in "sets". We can

observe this situation in fashion shop window displays clearly. None of the pieces stand alone in the shop window. They are always presented as combinations and as pieces of total look that can be acquired by purchasing and gathering different pieces together. This “pathway” (ibid) will create its own logic that is meaningful for the consumer, so that he/she is going to continue purchasing by moving from one object to another.

This path has been systemized with the emergence of capitalism. A revolution had taken place by the emergence of department stores in the 18<sup>th</sup> century which has been highly effective since mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Christopher Breward, a shopping experience in luxurious environments started in the 1850’s, promising the emergence of department store that would shape the nineteenth century shopping and marketing characteristics (2003).

But, many of the characteristics that are recognized as indicators of modern systems of selling were well established by the mid-eighteenth century. These are eye catching window displays, the atmospheric styling of retail interiors with cascading draperies and exotic props, seasonal promotions, the arrangement of goods into discrete departments, an explicit encouragement of browsing, clearly marketed prices and the promotion of cash over account sales” (Breward, 2003: 143).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Victorian department store became a symbol of modernity.

Besides providing different commodities and shopping experience that encourages



consumption, department stores became a public space for the middle class women (Wilson, 2003) to come together and socialize.

In a very real way the department store assisted the freeing of middle-class women from the shackles of the home. It became a place where women could meet their women friends in safety and comfort, un-chaperoned, and to which they could repair for refreshment and rest (Wilson, 2003: 150).

While these women were attracted by the aesthetic desires of high art of European departments stores, the ones who were in the United States seduced by a more commercial but theatrical and enchanting commodity environments which disguised and transformed commodities into what they were not in the fact (Leach cited in Entwistle, 2006: 234). Also Caroline Evans underlines that both in Europe and in the US consumers were seduced by the fantastic displays and spectacle that hides the commercial reality behind with Rosalind Williams' words as; "the real commercial nature of the transaction was veiled in seductive 'dream worlds' in which the shopper lost him - or herself in fantasy and reverie" (in Evans, 2008: 20)

The reason for these kind of fantastic displays was the realization of the "attraction of the attention of passers-by and in stimulating desire for consumption" (Entwistle, 2006: 234). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the shopping culture that leans on enchanting displays and spectacle presented by the department store strengthened itself with the shopping malls. There is a trick in the shopping mall that misleads the consumer by imposing a so called utilitarian path by providing different types of shops laid together. Here

consumer moves from one store to another by being seduced by the path which consists of mutually complementary products. “it doesn’t juxtapose categories of merchandise, but lumps signs together indiscriminately, lumps together all categories of commodities, which are regarded as partial fields of a sign consuming totality”(Baudrillard, 2004: 27).

As Foucault emphasized in his work on prisons, “space is never inert or simply there but active in the constitution of social relations. The layout of a building, and the spatial arrangement of the streets impact upon the movements of bodies, directing the individual and organizing the flow of the crowd to particular sorts of activities, relations and patterns” (cited in Entwistle, 2006: 229). Emphasized by both Baudrillard and Foucault spectacle and social relations are brought together in the space that shopping mall provides with the aim of increasing consumerism.

### 2.2.3. FASHION PRODUCTION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF GLOBALIZATION

At the end of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and by the beginning of the new millennium because of the impact of globalization, sourcing, manufacturing and marketing of apparel has started to be done worldwide and “reflections of the industries 100 years earlier were seen. The same inhumane conditions of the early textile factory towns in England and the United States were found again in factories around the world” (Burns and Bryent, 2007: 32).

In the 1990's, consumer culture and consumerism lifted its effectiveness by new regulations that were done in the field of economics. The world was led in a movement towards global liberalized economy by the United States and European Union. "In 1993 Canada, Mexico and the United States signed NAFTA; North America Free Trade Agreement. In 1995, World Trade Organization was created to promote further trade agreements" (Blanco cited in Welters and Lillethun, 2007: 69). In the 2000's, the quota system that MFA (the Multifibre Arrangement) instituted in the 1970's that limits the export of manufactured fashion products from third world countries to western countries was removed in 2005 (Gill, 2008: 165). Thereby, "the extension of free-market capitalism in recent years has meant a continuing search for greater profit by textile and clothing manufacturers, which depends on finding and exploiting the cheapest labour in developing nations, as well as the indigenous immigrant populations at home"(Entwistle2006: 208). Developed countries such as Italy, England, United States and France primarily focus on design and marketing while developing countries started doing only manufacturing of the developed countries' design (Burns and Bryant, 2007: 31). By this way developed countries strengthen their role and hegemony on giving the direction to design and exploited the manufacturers from the third world.

For Leopold one of the main reasons of this situation is the inability of the fashion industry in fully embracing the factory production methods (cited in Ash and Wilson 1993: 101). In other design disciplines such as industrial design, global companies' embraced factory made and automated production methods however fashion industry

remained mostly as a labour intensive industry due to the rapid changes in fashion trends and variety of product range. And the fact that manufacturing can be done even in small ateliers let it become the subject of exploitation due to the lack of protection of workers' rights.

### 2.2.2. FAST FASHION SYSTEM

As it is discussed within the part called “Significance of Fashion Consumption” in post-industrialized era fashion commodities move away from being solely status indicators but the pleasure and hedonism provided by the excess in consumption became more important. The transition from the economy of needs to the economy of desires, and endless search for novelty brought along a new system which is called as “fast fashion”. This new system generated unethical consequences and caused irresponsibility became synonymous with fashion industry. Companies that take part in fast fashion promote and introduce low quality, disposable fashion products to generate higher sales regardless of considering its adverse effects. This is why an eco-textiles consultant and author Kate Fletcher defined it as; “Fast fashion isn't really about speed, but greed: selling more, making more money” (Ecologist, 2007). Because of the reasons above fast fashion has become the biggest obstacle that movement of ethical fashion has been trying to solve since the beginning of new millennium.

Fast fashion system takes its roots from the evolution of ready to wear system. Ready to wear industry was born in order to cater to middle class market for which couturiers' extremely expensive items were unaffordable. Even the father of Haute Couture; Charles Frederick Worth contributed to the evolution of ready to wear by duplicating his models and distributing these designs to be copied at reduced prices especially to his customers from United States of America with his name (Troy quoted in English, 2007: 29). Despite this, his designs were "copied and imitations were flooding" the American market and department stores (ibid). In USA fashion magazines, such as Vogue first published in 1892, were promoting new styles to stimulate a desire for fashion (Burns, Mullet and Bryent, 2007) by including European designers' illustrations. Together with the impact of magazines, new communication channels were imposing a new shopping mood that made a great contribution to ready to wear industry's development. As it is discussed in the part; "Production and Diffusion of Fashion", Elizabeth Wilson asserts that since 19<sup>th</sup> century fashion magazines have moved from being just a reflector of fashion and social change as it is. When the styles that are presented by the magazines and the ones that are adopted by the public are compared it is observed that fashion magazines have embraced a promotional language that doesn't reflect what is being worn but introduces what should be acquired. Hence, Wilson finds their languages became analogous with that of advertisements (quoted in Breward, 1995).

In the 1910's Paul Poiret followed a similar path to Worth's. He designed a line to attract American consumers and identified these as 'authorized reproductions' however, similar to Worth, Poiret's designs "were being undermined by an extensive

system of fashion piracy that he couldn't control" (English, 2007: 29). Since French authorities couldn't prevent illegal copying of couturiers' designs, "in 1929, three of the key fashion houses –Lelong, Patou and Chanel-introduced their first pret-a-porter lines. This event officially heralded the demise of haute couture and the rise of designer ready to wear clothing" (English, 2007: 34).

While European fashion houses were affected calamitously from World War 1 and many of them had to close, by the 1920's mass produced ready to wear apparel was available to majority of American society. The need to produce big amounts of uniforms for US army during World War 1 was among the factors that helped mass manufacturing systems to progress (Burns, Mullet and Bryent, 2007). The impact of modernism, machinery innovation and new prevailing approach after WW1 that embraced "functional theory" affected almost every design discipline (English, 2009). "Form follows function- and edict of the extremely influential Bauhaus School of Design became the modernist slogan" (English, 2009: 35) of 1920's and 1930's. The interaction of fashion design with functionalist theory resulted in the production of simple forms that lacks superfluous decoration and featured functionality that is compatible with machine production.

Chanel was among the successful European designers and a successful business entrepreneur whose simple style became a universal standard. According to Neret little black dress that Chanel designed became almost 'a sort of uniform' that every woman would like to wear; "it epitomizes the uniformity of machine age aesthetics" (cited in English, 2009: 35) and that opened the way to standardization. Chanel

strictly defined the line between art and fashion. By approaching fashion design as a business rather than art, she observed the changes that modernism had brought to society and responded to changing market demands and accordingly gained financial success. Hence, “this capitalistic feat achieved by Chanel helped to propel fashion to the fifth largest industry in France in the 1920’s” (English, 2009: 42).

At the same time in America a new era had begun with the rise of ready to wear industry. Burns, Mullet and Bryant state it as; “The era of inexpensive fashion had begun. New styles and variety become more valued than costly one-of-a-kind apparel by the majority of consumers. Retail stores increased their inventory ratio of moderately priced clothing in proportion to more expensive goods” (2007: 22). “Valuing novelty and variety more than costly one of a kind apparel” paved the way for fast fashion system. So called democratization in the acquisition of fashion apparel continued and strengthened by the consumer culture that new shopping malls created. Innovation of synthetic fibers during the 1960’s and 70’s, emergence of quick response method in the 1980’s which “shortens the whole business cycle throughout the chain from raw materials to the consumer” (Burns, Mullet and Bryant, 2007:22) to respond to increasing consumer demand ended up with arrival of fast fashion system in the 1990’s.

According to Jennifer Craik modern structure of fashion industry encapsulates four subsystems that comprise a supply chain; firstly a “manufacturing system” that produces raw and textile materials, secondly a “creative system” that designs, produces and promotes products, a “managerial system” that arranges the processes

of sourcing, manufacturing and distribution, and finally a “communication system” that promotes new styles and products to consumers by producing information (2009: 206). Fast fashion is about providing a constant communication among these subsystems that constitutes a supply chain. However fast fashion goes far more beyond providing a constant communication among these subsystems and responding to consumer demand as it is introduced. How Kate Feltcher defined fast fashion is also putting forth its very character clearly;

Fast fashion has become a defining characteristic of today’s textile and clothing industry. It is a combination of high speed production – tracking sales with electronic tills, and just-in-time manufacturing that now makes it possible to turn a sample or design sketch into a finished product in as little as three weeks – and high speed, high volume consumption (2008: 161).

To provide faster production and accordingly consumption, world’s leading fast fashion brands such as Zara, H&M emulate luxury brands but with a cheaper quality and wider variety; “once there were two fashion seasons ‘summer and winter’ now there are not only seasonal collections but fast fashion companies, which produces up to twenty collections annually (Craik, 2009: 207). Consumer, lost in the immense variety of commodities, is encouraged to buying and throwing away. So does the designer suffers from being responsible from creating a novelty obsessed throw away culture. Best explanation that questions the role of designer in a wholly artificial environment comes from Papanek:



With new processes and an endless list of new materials at his disposal, the artist, craftsman, and designer now suffers from the tyranny of absolute choice. When everything becomes possible, when all the limitations are gone, design and art can easily become a never-ending search for novelty, until newness-for-the- sake-of-newness becomes the only measure. It is at this point that many different versions of novelty begin to create many different esoteric consumer cliques, and the designer with his wares may become more and more alienated from his society and from the functional complex. (1971: 18)

Fashion cycle changes so fast that, most of the time consumers throw apparel away before it is worn out physically. For economist Paul M. Gregory, operation of capitalist production strategies are based on culminating in “purposeful obsolescence” that results in the search for novelty. Fast fashion system is one of the best examples among other industries that consolidate Gregory’s ‘theory of obsolescence’. For Gregory, purposeful obsolescence works on two levels;

Purposeful obsolescence exists (a) whenever manufacturers produce goods with a shorter physical life than the industry is capable of producing under existing technological and cost conditions; or (b) whenever manufacturers or sellers induce the public to replace goods which still retain substantial physical usefulness (1947: 24).

For the most part, due to ephemeral nature of fashion, the notion of fashionable obsolescence fits in the second category. That is; fashion consumer is made to believe that a certain style is out of date as soon as a new product starts to be

marketed. In other words, fashion industry creates a ‘psychological’ impact on consumers to stimulate consumption. The first category is mainly about ‘physical’ obsolescence that is generated by the industry purposefully. Among the examples that Gregory states in his article, one of them that depicts how sinister the method of the fashion industry could be is about imitation silk. According to the article, silk is woven with few threads than it supposed to be woven and “weighted in a metal bath which hastens deterioration” (Gregory, 1947: 25). As a result, consumer throws it away in a short time. Hence, disposal increases and apparel that is thrown away goes to landfill and pollutes the environment.

Fast fashion system is based on generating these two kinds of purposeful obsolescence. Although fast fashion brands promises to introduce fashionable products at a reasonable price to lower status groups by emulating luxury products, “they may be less able to match deeper elements of value, such as high ethical standards in sourcing, efficient use of material, low-impact manufacturing, assembly, and distribution; and the availability of repair and upgrade services” (Joy, Sherry, Venkatesh, Wang and Chan, 2012: 291). Thus this system fails to provide a democratic system for all levels of fashion system; from manufacturers to consumers, from consumers to environment and it results in unethical implementations.

## 2.3. PROBLEMS THAT ARISE FROM 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION STRATEGIES

### 2.3.1. EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES

Starting with the era of industrial revolution in England during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, fashion production was associated with poor working conditions and exploitation of the ones, especially women, who take part in the production of apparel for higher status women. Elizabeth Wilson draws attention to the situation of inequality and contradiction of evolution of fashion industry with Engels' words as; "It is a curious fact that the production of precisely those articles which serve the personal adornment of the ladies of the bourgeoisie involves the saddest consequences for the health of the workers" (2003: 67).

Until the evolution of ready to wear industry in England and in the USA, fashion production and weaving had been done by the cottage industry. England was the first country that industrialized with developments in cotton production, unfortunately by damaging the indigenous cotton industries of its colony; India (Wilson, 2003). At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, transfer of dressmaking from homes to shops with the emergence of shop-keeping tailors against traveler tailors resulted in the development of craftsman tailors becoming early form of capitalist elite (ibid). As a result, craftsman tailors who were mainly man, hired workers; mostly young women and children, and forced them to work in sweatshop conditions with the

average of 15-18 hours per day. These conditions were expected to change with the emergence of factories by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, sweatshop conditions that mostly women had to bear didn't get any better due to the expansion of clothing factories. In 1909, the 'Progressive Era' which was born as a reaction to exploitation of women, made a peak with numerous strikes. More than 20,000 women were involved and with the impact of another strike in 1910 " a new system for workers to submit grievances was established, yet many factory owners continued to disregard the rights of their workers" (Dickson, Locker and Eckman, 2009: 9). Although there have been regulations and unions to protect workers' rights within time, the problem of workers exploitation as a problem kept up to date.

Increase in the production and consumption of apparel is the reason that keeps these problems up to date. Although machinery is highly used in the production of fibres and textiles, fashion industry remained as a labour intensive industry due to the complexity of garment production and fast changes of fashion styles. Many western countries' "apparel manufacturers which were competing with retailers, found it to be disadvantageous to own factories" (Dickson, Locker and Eckman, 2009: 15) and shifted production to overseas where labour costs is lower and "focused on the core competencies design and marketing their brand names" (ibid). Especially in the 1990's and 2000's the production of apparel started to be done in every corner of the world because the quota system that MFA (the Multifibre Arrangement) instituted in

the 1970's that limits the export of manufactured fashion products from third world countries to western countries was removed in 2005 (Gill, 2008: 165).

Today apparel production of fast fashion brands is being done by countries such as China, Mexico, India, Bagladesh... etc. where workers are paid less and work more than 84 hour per week as result a vicious circle is being generated. Vicious circle is a term used in development economics and organizational science to illustrate the interaction and outcomes made by businesses, governments, organizations and it occurs when the consequences result in a negative way (Dickson, Loker and Eckman, 2009: 82). For Dickson, Loker and Eckman this circle starts with the decision of consumers (2009). In the global economy where there is a fierce competition, firms intend to lower apparel prices to attract more consumers. In order to reduce the prices of fashion commodities, developed countries have the production of apparel and textiles made in developing countries, due to their reduced prices in order to increase employment rates and maintain businesses by the governments. "Poverty, temporary employment contracts and unpaid overtime" are among the results of the facts that workers' employers are squeezed on price and order times by large retailers and global brands"(Feltcher and Grose, 2012: 126) However countries of which economies heavily rely on the exportation of textiles do not consider social responsibility and change the circumstances of workers to preserve the continuity of export rates and this situation causes the vicious circle to take place (Dickson, Loker and Eckman, 2009).

Consequences of unethical way of production that is sustained by mostly fast fashion industry are not limited with the pressure that is on the workers. Since fast fashion brands such as Zara, H&M created a system that is based primarily on “cheapness, mass availability and volume purchasing”, small producers are excluded from business because most of them cannot compete with these global brands (Fletcher and Grose, 2012: 126). On the other side, from the starting step to the top, everyone that partakes in the production is affected from the negative consequences of fast fashion system. Fletcher points out the totality of this negative contagion as;

Its products reinforce inequities, exploit workers, fuel resource use, increase environmental impact and generate waste. Not only that, but the sector places escalating emotional, physical and psychological pressures on everyone involved, from designers and producers to consumers. Pressures such as the drive to consume faster and cheaper, the ever-present demand for newness and the constant reformulation of identity, damage us as individuals and collectively as a society. We are alienated, dissatisfied, depressed, anorexic and more cynical than ever before (cited in Chapman and Gant, 2007: 118).

As it is mentioned by Fletcher, search for novelty and fierce competition that dominates the industry impairs not only the workers but also designers, design itself and consequently the ones who consume these designed objects.

### 2.3.2. PHYSICAL EXPLOITATION AND POLITICALLY PASSIVATION OF CONSUMERS

The impacts of consumer culture and fast fashion system on consumers are effective on two different levels. First of all manufactured synthetic fibres which made a mark on the 20<sup>th</sup> century ready to wear industry were found to be health deteriorating by chemists such as David Braungart (2009). Especially fibres such as polyester and nylon which have petroleum as their source of raw material, apart from their toxic impact on the eco-system they have, are not biodegradable and non-tolerable with the skin of the wearer. Due to their unhealthy and cheap quality formation, use of synthetic fibers has been minimized by high priced designers since the 1960's (Baugh, 2011) however mass market demanded them excessively because amount of natural fibers do not supply with fast fashion brands' increasing output. Besides use of synthetic fibers fast fashion industry leans on use of synthetic dyes which are used for coloration and printing that are found to be hormone disruptors and cancerous substances.

“Toxic Threads: The Big Fashion Stitch-Up” report which was published by Greenpeace International in 2012 reveals how fashion items threaten human health saliently. Within the scope of the investigation 20 global fashion brands including Armani, Levi's, H&M and Zara were selected and a total of 141 items of clothing purchased from 29 countries and regions worldwide. These were manufactured in at least 18 different countries, mainly in the developing countries. As it is showed in

Figure 1, the commission delved into the presence of hazardous chemicals such as phthalates, nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs) and azo dyes which can cause cancer amines and function as hormone disruptors (Greenpeace International, 2012).

executive summary

**Table 1.** The number of samples in which NPEs, phthalates and cancer-causing amines released by certain azo dyes were identified. Results are shown by product brand, with the percentage of positive results for each brand.

	No. of samples	No. tested positive NPEs	Percentage of samples tested positive per brand - NPEs	No. tested positive for phthalates, above 0.5% by weight	No. tested positive for cancer-causing amines released by certain azo dyes
GIORGIO ARMANI	9	5	56%	1	
	9	3	33%		
	4	2	50%		
	6	5	83%		
Calvin Klein	8	7	88%		
	9	3	33%		
ESPRIT	9	6	67%		
	9	7	78%		
	6	2	33%		
JACK & JONES®	5	3	60%		
	11	7	64%		
MANGO	10	6	60%		
	6	4	67%		
Metersbonwe	4	3	75%		
ONLY.	4	4	100%		
	9	6	67%	2	
VANCL 凡客诚品	4	4	100%		
VERO MODA®	5	4	80%		
VICTORIA'S SECRET	4	2	50%	1	
ZARA	10	6	60%		2

**Figure 1: “Toxic Threads: The Big Fashion Stitch-Up Report” published by Greenpeace International in 2012, shows level of cancer causing substances and hormone disruptors in the tested apparels**



The garments, designed for men, women, and children, included jeans, trousers, t-shirts, dresses, and underwear, and were made from both artificial and natural fibres; 31 of the samples bore a plastisol print which may contain NPEs. According to the results of the tests, in four of the garments high level of toxic phthalates found, in two garments cancer causing amines from the use of certain azo dyes are found and in 89 of them NPEs were found. Besides these, the presence of many other different types of potentially hazardous industrial chemicals was discovered across a number of the products tested.



**Figure 2 Chemical substances such as NP and NPEs generate a chain of hazardous reactions which can even affect the food chain**

NPEs, Phthalates and azo dyes are chemical substances that do not occur in nature and they are highly toxic when they used in great amounts. By functioning as hormone disruptors they destroy human metabolism. Moreover when they dissolve in water they destroy aquatic life. The problems that they generate are effective at a global scale because although they are mostly produced in developing countries they are sold in every part of the world. When they encounter the process of laundry, the

chemical substances release in water, soil and accordingly agricultural products. As a result they generate a chain of actions which is harmful for human life.

Negative impact of fashion industry on human is not limited with health conditions, it also generates psychological and social problems on consumers. As it is discussed by Baudrillard within the structure of consumer culture people are not consuming according to their needs, the act of consuming itself has become a necessity (2004).

Together with the impact of the media and shopping centers, global fashion brands while reinforcing consumer culture they annihilate small scaled businesses and accordingly they dispel diversity. Mono cultural design strategies of global firms impair localness and disrupt the relationship between producer and consumer.

Production of apparel is done in a hermetic and non-transparent system which lacks direct information flow. In this system the creative potential of user is spirited away and he/she is forced to play the role of consumer. As a result of this passivation politics of the dominating fashion system production/producer and consumption/consumer are separated from each other decisively and user became dependent on consumer culture's dictations.

### 2.3.2. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

In William McDonough's article; Design, Ecology, Ethics and the Making of Things, Michael Braungart, an ecological chemist, defines how ethically designed products

should be as; “All ‘consumable’ goods should be capable of returning to the soil from whence they came”(1993: 6). By ‘consumable’ he means any kind of designed object including food, carpets, furniture, apparel. However, products that are designed within fast fashion production system are far from doing so. Environmental impact of apparel doesn’t simply occur with the disposal of clothes. Negative effects start with fibre production, continues with processing, shipping, laundering and ends with disposal.

Fibre production is the initial step of fashion production. Fibres are either natural or man-made and both of them affect the environment differently. Although natural fibres are biodegradable and more human-friendly than synthetics their cultivation process may be problematic. Cotton for example, “requires heavy usage of insecticides to control boll weevils and other pests”(Orzada and Moore, 2008: 303) and needs excessive use of water because of that it contains toxic substances and become harmful for soil and water. Polyester on the other hand, needs much less water than cotton however its manufacturing “is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releasing emissions including volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, and acid gases such as hydrogen chloride, all of which can cause or aggravate respiratory disease” (Claudio, 2007: A451) and it is acquired from a raw material which neither renewable nor biodegradable.

Once the fibres are produced, washing and bleaching processes are followed both of which may cause use of “toxic, corrosive or biologically modifying reagents” (Orzada and Moore, 2008: 304). Nevertheless the most harmful and polluting

processes occur during finishing and dyeing (Slather, 2005). It is mainly because these processes require large quantities of water and many chemical substances are used. Until 1856 only natural dyes were being used but after the invention of synthetic dyes the use of biodegradable, antiallergenic natural dyes has decreased. Broader range of colour choices and low cost of synthetic dyes made them preferable (Slather, 2005) especially for the mass market. Use of thickeners during printing is another problem that causes water and environmental pollution. The thickeners are used to increase the viscosity of colouring agents and they cause water pollution when discarded after printing process (ibid).

Another environmentally harmful process and significant ecological footprint takes place when fabrics and textiles are used to create apparel. An average of 15 per cent is wasted during the design and manufacturing process for adult outerwear. “In the United Kingdom 1 million tonnes of clothing is consumed annually. With the wastage estimates, it is safe to say at least 100.000 tonnes of fabric is wasted to make the clothes consumed in the United Kingdom each year” (Rissanen, 2008: 187). Global figure is surely much higher when the capacity of fashion production is considered.

In the conventional system the ultimate step of the fashion is disposal stage. Starting from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, economic growth came to depend on continued marketing of new products and disposal of old ones that are thrown away simply because stylistic norms promote their obsolescence. When it comes to clothing, the rate of purchase and disposal has dramatically increased, so the path

that a T-shirt travels from the sales floor to the landfill has become shorter. Especially in the regions where recycling systems aren't embraced, textile and apparel remnants are annihilated only in landfills.

Almost 80 per cent of the textiles that go to landfill are petroleum based synthetic fibres, while 20 per cent come from natural fibre sources. While the natural fibres will theoretically decompose over time, landfill processes bury the textiles leaving little opportunity for even the natural fibres to decompose (Hawley, 2011: 144, 145).

Even if natural fibres decompose, synthetic dyes that are used in colouring and printing still continue to be polluting.

### **3. BECOMING OF ETHICAL FASHION DESIGN SYSTEM**

As it is explicitly stated in the previous chapter that production strategies of the conventional fashion system relies heavily on consumer society. While production is mediating consumption with already defined patterns, design has been used as a tool that increases consumption by the institutions and actors of the fashion industry. In order to sustain consumption, conventional fashion system is in the need of individuals who are incapable of responding their own needs. Consumers become dependent on an industry which passivates them by dictating certain styles and consumption patterns which are promoted by a network of professional individuals and institutions composed of star designers, media and fashion capitals. This system exploits workers due to low salaries and sweatshop conditions, puts psychological and physical burden on employees, ordinary designers and producers. Fast fashion system, by creating low quality products and using toxic chemicals it threatens health of consumers and workers during the production process and use. It causes environmental and cultural degradation due to irresponsible strategies

Within this part of the thesis it is aimed to emphasize that design can be influential in generating a positive balance between production and consumption if a new design understanding which goes beyond providing solely economic profit and considers the ecological, social and physical consequences of design and production processes

could be formed. And throughout the thesis this new design understating is referred as “ethical fashion design”. After illustrating the evolution of sustainable fashion design, this part will mainly epitomize the practices that contribute to the formation of an ethical fashion design culture.

### 3.1. EVOLUTION OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION DESIGN

Notion of sustainability emanated in a milieu in which expansion strategy was acknowledged as the only economic model and global market economy has already put a heavy burden on designers, environment and humanity. The prescience of population increase, deterioration of environment and depletion of natural resources due to inconsiderately devising of industry triggered the formation of ‘sustainability culture’ which was formed by the impact of Rio Earth Summit (Margolin, 1998: 85). Fundamentally, sustainability is about adopting an approach to design and development that focuses on environmental, social, and financial factors.

“Sustainable solutions strive to improve the many systems that support our lives including efficiently using capital and markets, effectively using natural resources, and reducing waste and toxins in the environment while not harming people in societies across the Earth” (Shedroff, 2009: xvii).

For Victor Margolin design culture must reinvent itself and the notion of design must go beyond being associated with solely shaping objects (1998) in order to provide solutions which do not remain as isolated initiatives but make a change in the entire

system. Furthermore, design profession must position itself to a certain degree that sustainable approach embraces practices which do not simply aim to reduce the negative impact of design upon environment and humanity but eliminate them firmly.

Even though contemporary fashion is associated with wastefulness due to its ephemeral and ever-changing nature it can provide solutions by departing from the idea of 'change' that is embedded in its very constituent. In other words, fashion design while causing damage to earth due its novelty and change based structure; it has also the potential of providing solutions by changing the existing situations. Especially in the new millennium the role of fashion design became highly significant in terms of associating design with sustainability and transforming the aim of design into application of sustainable practices. Janet Hethorn and Connie Ulasewicz emphasize the interconnectedness of fashion design with sustainability with these words; "Fashion provides an opportunity of awareness for sustainability. It is embedded in a system of communication, and it is everywhere. Fashion, when created within a broad understanding of sustainability, can sustain people, as well as the environment" (2008: XVIII). From this point forth, in this part it is aimed to examine the evolution of sustainable fashion by introducing key events and developments which became influential in terms of creation of sustainable design understanding.



### 3.1.1. ANNIHILATION OF SUSTAINABLE USE AND PRODUCTION OF FASHION ITEMS

In the pre-industrial era economical use of resources and sustainability was a way of life (Welters, 2008: 8). Despite of the fact that the first civilizations which adopted fashionable behaviour are unaware of the notion of sustainability their way of producing and consuming fashion was effortlessly ethical and ecological. One reason is that environment and human damaging man-made fibres hadn't been invented yet. All fabrics and trimmings were natural and they were the products of labour-intensive manufacturing. Since it used to take a lot of time to produce clothing and due to the absence of throw-away culture and scarcity of resources, there was a tendency to protect and conserve what was already possessed. Lower class was the producer of his/her own apparel, and repairing was highly applicable because each individual had very few number of outfits that they didn't even have closets in Europe and North America by the beginning of 1800's (ibid). They had to prolong wear by repairing and patching. Even in the era when fashion consumption was a privilege for the upper classes, it is observed that fabrics used to be saved and unwanted items used to be sold at the second-hand markets by the wealthy (Welters, 2008).

To reflect the changes in fashion women were altering and remodelling their old dresses (ibid), thus; to be fashionable they did not need to purchase new dresses. Reclaiming old materials to produce new things is one of the constituents of today's

ethical fashion understanding whose foundation was laid in the scarcity of preindustrial era. However, it was a result of necessity at that time, while it became a choice of today's designers. The impact of Industrialization annihilated the evaluation of old and unused materials, as it increased the pace of production and made the styles available by everyone. The desire of elites to differentiate themselves from the lowers resulted in the handover of clothing production from dress-makers to designers, because designers were responding to the novelty demand of the elites by proposing high quality designed dresses. The emergence of clothing factories and fashion's institutionalization with the impact of designers accelerated fashion cycle. As it is discussed in the previous chapter, in the process of industrialization, occurrences such as emergence of ready to wear industry and department stores, emanation of new fashion centres besides Paris, such as London and Milan, invention of man manufactured fibres which are obtained from renewable and as well as non-renewable resources such as petroleum, coal and gas and production strategies that fuel consumerism culminated in many problems such as climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, inequity, workers' exploitation, safety, poverty. Moreover these changes affected health of the consumers adversely.

All through a century, industrialization positioned design in a way that aimed to response increasing demands of masses. More precisely, design was used as a tool to stimulate demand. For Braungart and McDonough early industrialists aim was to make products "that were desirable, affordable, and operable by anyone, just about anywhere; that lasted a certain amount of time, until it was time to buy a new one;

and that could be produced cheaply and quickly” (2009: 24). Similar to other engineering and design disciplines, fashion designers were far from seeing “their designs as part of a larger system, outside of an economic one” (ibid). Production mentality of industrialization led design play its role as stimulator of consumption and its impact on nature and humanity was ignored.

### 3.1.2. RISE OF AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABILITY

As it is discussed in the previous chapter, in the post-industrial era, fashion consumption became a way of expressing individual identity through pleasure seeking and hedonistic behaviours and this paved the way for escalation in consumerism. Consumption escalating strategies of new developing industries after the World War II, during the 1950's faced with a rebellious generation who was reacting to the social conformity of the post war era and concerned about the environmental impact of nuclear bomb and new manufacturing methods of industry.

Subcultures such as Teddy Boys from Britain, the Beat Generation of United States and the subcultural heroes of the silver screen such as Marlon Brando and James Dean became youth phenomenon by 1959 and foreshadowed the youth revolution of the 1960's (Welters, 2008). By wearing t-shirts, blue jeans, army jackets and second hand clothes they were rejecting contemporary fashion of those decades (ibid).

These were the first signals of an anti-fashion movement that would take place during the 1960's. As Welters put forth; “this was a pivotal moment for the rejection

of the old ways of producing and consuming fashion, ushering in an era of exploration for a more sustainable future” (2008: 19). The impact of Rachel Carson’s book which is called as ‘Silent Spring’, published in 1962 raised concern over environment by illustrating the situation of increased use of chemicals and toxic substances during agriculture and manufacturing processes (Welters, 2008). This book provided a scientific basis for concern for the first time and it saved environmentalism from being associated with protesting the current damage that is given to nature (Braungart and McDonough, 2009: 47)

Emergence of environmental concerns and social and political changes caused questioning of the top-down mechanism of global fashion system as well. As a reaction first examples of “do it yourself” and recycling practices emerged with the Hippie culture’s anti-fashion movement during 1960’s and 1970’s. The supporters of the movement were reacting against mainstream commercial activities (Black, 2008) by praising homemade, handcrafted, hand dyed, second hand apparels which were made from natural materials over mass produced ones.

1960’s and 1970’s were the decades in which environmental concerns made a peak with “the birth of the Green Movement and the rise of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, which focused on driving change via government policy and regulation” (Bahmra and Lofthouse, 2007: 1). “As universal concern about the healthy and sustainable use of the planet and its resources continued to grow, the UN, in 1972, convened the United Nations

Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm” (United Nations, 2013). This conference was a milestone in the history of environmental movements, the principles that the final declaration represented an environmental manifesto which “laid the groundwork for the new environmental agenda of the United Nations system” (Ibid).

In these decades, design discipline started to be questioned due to its devastating effects on nature and ecology. UNESCO International Design Expert and Dean of the School of Design at the California Institute of the Arts, Viktor Papanek was spearheading the flow of environmentalism by criticizing the position of design in creating wasteful products and customer dissatisfaction. In his book, entitled “Design for The Real World”, he was blaming design and designers for becoming one of the most dangerous breed by ignoring the real necessities of people and creating permanent garbage that clutter up the environment and pollute it (1972). He was one of the very few theorists who put an emphasis on the necessity of a new design understanding which goes beyond providing economic profit and considers the ecological and physical consequences of design and production processes. After him “there has been a growing feeling in many environmental circles that design and manufacture is responsible for many of the man-made stresses imposed on the planet” (Bahmra and Lofthouse, 2007: 1).

### 3.1.3. FROM GREEN CONSUMERISM TO ENVIRONMENTALISM

During the 1980s consumerism and conspicuous consumption increased (Black, 2008). However at the same time there was an increasing trend towards green consumerism. Green consumerism took the attention of the media and first example of that genre was launched in Manchester in 1989 which is called as “Ethical Consumer Magazine”. The magazine by providing guides to ethical consumers became the precursor of this niche market and saved many small brands that have to compete with global giants. By introducing ethically producing brands to UK citizens, the magazine became successful in terms of creating an information network and made UK market composed of the most eco-conscious consumers (Ethical Consumer, 2013).

Ethical consumerism and ethical production of fashion became popular issues in fashion as well. British designer Katharine Hamnett whose t-shirt designs are famous for using fashion as a medium to communicate her ethical and activist approach regarding social and political problems by printing huge slogans such as “Choose Life” and “Bring Back God” on them, has become one of the protagonists of ethical fashion by devoting herself to ethical and eco-friendly way of production during the 1980s. One of the most famous occurrences was when she wore a t-shirt declaring “58% Don’t Want Perishing” to meet prime minister Margaret Thatcher to stand against the anti-humanist policies of British government. After a research that she did about the environmental impact of textile and fashion production in 1989 she found out that the industry was causing deaths because of pesticides and water

contamination and workers were suffering because of poor working conditions. Since then she pulled herself out of fashion for a while and dealt with manufacturing because she didn't want to work for in an industry that make people suffer who are at the bottom of the supply chain. In this way she created a line which is almost one hundred per cent organic and ethically produced which epitomized ethically and eco-friendly way of fashion production (Black, 2009).



**Figure 3 Katharine Hammett, protesting Margaret Thatcher, 1984**

The increasing awareness on environmental and social issues during the 1980s was a result of the Brundtland Report which was known as Our Common Future that was published by The World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. The report linked together social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and

global solutions” (Bahmra and Lofthouse, 2007). The aim of the commission was to draw attention to human activity that causes life threatening hazards on the planet and great poverty that was deepening in the developing world. It was based on finding solutions to environmental and social problems and enable economic growth to build a more prosperous, just and secure future. The term sustainable development was first used in this report as; “to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 15).

“In the 1990s the consumer’s consciousness was raised again, this time under the banner of environmentalism” (Welters, 2008: 24). The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which took place in 1992 in Brazil became influential on lifting the effectiveness of environmentalist movements. Government officials from 178 countries, thousands of individuals from different governments, non-profit governmental organizations and media participated to this conference. Problems such as poverty, war and gap between industrialized and developing countries’ economies was discussed. “In the centre was also the question of how to relieve the global environmental system through the introduction to the paradigm of sustainable development. It emphasises that economic and social progress depends critically on the preservation of the natural resource base with effective measures to prevent environmental degradation” (World Summit, 2003). Protection of the environment, climate change, protection of the bio-diversity and



forests were the main focus, and Agenda 21 which was a global action plan for sustainable development was prepared.

Business Council for Sustainable Development, which was composed of a group of forty eight industrial sponsors, was asked to bring a business perspective to Earth Summit and a major strategy which is defined as “eco-efficiency” was brought forward by them. Braungart and McDonough explain the term eco-efficiency basically as “doing more with less” (2009: 51). The strategy that is based on eco-efficiency was about focusing on new ecological awareness that businesses can gain rather than focusing on what the situation of environment would be if current patterns of the industry continues. One of the council’s founders Stephan Schmidheiny remarked that within ten years businesses’ aim will be adding more value to their products and services while using fewer resources and releasing less pollution in order to be competitive by being eco-efficient at the same time (ibid). Briefly eco-efficiency was based on the initiation of a system that aims to acquire profit by minimizing the negative impact of the industry on environment and human life.

The wind of change that took place during the 1990s set off a revolutionary commercial reaction in the field of fashion. The US fashion company Esprit has become the pioneer of commercialization of eco-fashion with its eco conscious line; “Ecollection” (Black, 2008). Ecollection line which was produced and launched in 1992, under the leadership of CEO Peter Buckley comprised a set of plans and criteria which were in tune with contemporary eco-criteria, such as;

- Maximizing product life through classic design and durable construction
- Eliminating or minimizing the use of man-made fibers
- Minimizing load on landfills
- Using recycled and biodegradable materials
- Encouraging sustainable agriculture and farming
- Working with businesses that have similar ethical and environmental goals
- Influencing the fashion industry

(Black, 2008: 22-23)

The collection which is composed of naturally colored, unbleached, organic cotton, linen and recycled wool achieved great commercial success at the beginning, however; in 1995 it was closed because of changing fashion trends and lack of demand in natural looking, undyed, unbleached garments even if they were minimizing the environmental impact of textiles. As designer Lynda Grose who worked in Espirit during those years pointed out fashion couldn't survive on beige alone" (cited in Black, 2008:23). Even if Ecollection is abandoned, it spearheaded the arrival of new brands in the same field.



**Figure 4 Autumn 1992 Ecollection, natural coloured un-dyed clothing and post-consumer tweed jacket**



**Figure 5 Ecollection, outfit made of post-industrial recycled wool**

After Esprit's Ecollection, many different designers across Europe and USA started to launch organic lines and brands. Finally, in the UK a fashion trade magazine published a special report "Going Green" in June 1994 (Black, 2008. p: 21). The content of the article included eco-lines of specific brands such as H&M, Next. In 1999 Independent newspaper published an article and asked if it is possible to be both fashionable and eco-friendly (ibid). In other words the media has begun questioning how eco-fashion can develop a fashionable approach which is different from hippie inspired styles.

#### 3.1.4. THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN THE EXPANSION OF SUSTAINABLE FASHION MARKET

The increasing awareness that has been rising upon environmental problems, social disintegration and inequity was emphasizing the importance of sustainability. Thus it changed its scope which was limited with "green design" that is restricted with the use of recycled materials, and reduction of ecological footprint of production during the 1990s. According to author and collaborative design strategist Ann Thorpe, 2000s were different from the 1990s in terms of approaching design as a tool that has the potential of changing the consumption focused lifestyles of masses rather than simply greening the products that are sold (2010).

Throughout the 1990s, for the most part neither policy makers nor designers were typically asking for substantial change in lifestyle, rather they were seeking less resource intensive production and consumption methods to

facilitate existing lifestyles... The early 2000s have seen design work that explores lifestyle change explicitly in terms of sustainable consumption. For example, instead of consuming inefficiently (buy two shirts instead of six) one design proposal recognizes laundering as one of clothing's biggest eco-impacts and suggests a "no wash" shirt. (Thorpe, 2010: 4)

It is understood that, the role of design became more important and extensive in changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Parallel to Ann Thorpe's remarks Victor Margolin points out that there has been a shift from green design to sustainable design by the end of 1990s (1998). For him this change was necessary in the way of broadening the scope of design from being an instrument for shaping objects. As it was noted by Margolin (1998) and Papanek (1972) the notion of design must be projected with a holistic convergence and the potential of design in planning and devising must be emphasized in order to position design as a problem solving agent within sustainability. Hence sustainable design can go beyond being detractive of the negative consequences that industry generated but it can eliminate them utterly. As Margolin addressed, the future of design can be sustainable providing that designers that belong to design culture can go "outside of mainstream consumer culture" (1998: 86) and adopt a more socially responsive role.

### 3.2. SLOW FASHION MOVEMENT

Slow Fashion is an ethical approach which aims to challenge the existing dynamics of the fast fashion system which has been expanded its effectiveness since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The point of departure for Slow Fashion is the Slow Food movement which was initiated by Carlo Petrini in Italy, in 1986. Slow food movement was born as a reaction to low-cost, homogenous and ‘quantity’ eating that fast food firms such as McDonald’s are promoting. It “seeks to preserve cultural and regional culinary traditions and agricultural diversity, by opposing the standardization of varieties and taste, and championing the need for consumer information” (Fletcher and Grose, 2011: 128). Slow Fashion movement is also sharing the same orientation with Slow Food movement in terms of supporting diversity, localness and transparency.

As part of the Slow + Design Seminar which took place in 2006 in Milan, Slow Fashion Manifesto was published. The manifesto comprised three lines of reflection which became the core of slow fashion approach. “1. The valorisation of local resources and the distributed economy” emphasizes the importance of localness and craft, “2. Transparency in production systems and de-intermediation” emphasizes the importance of producing and designing in an open and fair way, and “3. Product experience and sustainable sensoriality” emphasizes the impact of product experience in the abdication of empty images for rapid consumption (2006: 4-6).

The term slow is not a literal opposite of fast (Fletcher and Grose, 2011 and Clark, 2008). As Hazel Clark emphasizes, “the term is used to identify sustainable fashion

solutions, based on the repositioning of strategies of design, production, consumption, use and reuse” (2008: 428). Before moving on to deeper analysis of three lines of reflection, it is important for this thesis to put forth the design understanding and approach of Slow Fashion movement.

### 3.2.1. DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF SLOW FASHION

As it was mentioned widely in the second chapter of this thesis where Fast Fashion System is discussed, the dominant fashion system of today is based on fast speed and the products that are produced within this system are far from being sustainable because this system operates with the aim of producing homogenized, cheap and mass marketed clothing items. According to Fletcher and Grose fast way of operation is due to the economic system that aims to grow in scale continually and speeding the operations up is one way of achieving growth (2011). However, the results of increased speed are tolerable neither for the people nor for the environment because it causes a competitive environment in which each component of supply chain is affected negatively.

In the fast fashion system, design is positioned in a certain way that it has become an instrument that triggers a rise in consumption. In this respect, this economic system is targeting masses who are obsessed with novelty. Products that are designed within the system embody planned obsolescence and lack quality because the system places emphasis only on quantity. Until recently, the solutions that have been offered to

solve the problems of the industry were aiming at the reduction of the damage that is given to eco-system and people. This situation was defined in the Bruntland Report with the term “eco-efficiency”. According to Braungart and McDonough, the term eco-efficiency is based on the reduction of the harm that is given to nature, environment and human life; therefore it is far from providing distinct solutions to problems. It can only slow the negative effects down but cannot halt those completely (2009) whereas slow fashion, instead of working up eco-efficiency, aims at halting depletion.

Clothing items that are designed within the scope of slow fashion are qualified, crafted, sustainable and local. Production systems are transparent so that the buyers are aware of the processes that their products are imposed and aware of the social position of manufacturers. That is to say, the scope of slow fashion is not limited with solutions offered at the material level, but at the same time it is based on the design of the entire fashion system. In a fashion system there are many components that make up a supply chain and certainly enhancing only certain components doesn't provide a holistic solution. As Kate Fletcher (2008) puts forth slow is about producing, appreciating and cultivating “quality”. It aims to create balance between design, production and consumption and three lines of reflection stand for the nascence of a system that is ethical and sustainable and uses design as an instrument for the enhancement of the entire system. Fletcher and Grose summarize the frame of slow fashion as;

Slow is not a simple descriptor of speed. Rather it represents a different world view that names a coherent set of fashion activity to promote the pleasure of



variety, the multiplicity and the cultural significance of fashion within biophysical limits. Slow fashion requires a changed infrastructure and a reduced throughput of goods (2011: 128).

### 3.2.2. THE VALORISATION OF LOCAL RESOURCES AND THE DISTRIBUTED ECONOMY

As it is discussed in the second chapter, current situation of fashion system shows that there are certain styles that are recognised as fashionable world-wide, which are designed mostly in developed countries, showed in fashion capitals such as Paris, Milan, London, New York, Hong Kong, and manufactured in the third world due to low wages and retailed all around the world since the whole world turned to marketing playground. “The fashion subject follows global fashion-that is styles that are current internationally, by consuming clothes that are designed, manufactured, and retailed in more than one place or country” (Clark, 2008: 430). The situation that Hazel Clark summarized with this sentence culminates in the emergence of standardized, centralized products, the dominance of monoculture and loss of diversity in global fashion. The valorisation of local resources and the distributed economy puts an emphasis on the “local” approach to designing fashion items where the “global” is made up of a network of local systems. “This is a “global” that is not the adaptation of central systems to peripheral circumstances, but rather a globe-wide

web of alternative initiatives with common characteristics: a condition whereby it is the constituent units that make up the global identity” (‘Slow + Design’: 2006: 4).

According to Sass Brown, countries which are dominant in the design process of fashion was always taking inspiration from and working with communities from the third world for a long time. However this communities and cultures used to be excluded from actual design activities or were paid low wages. Within the scope of slow fashion, many designers are including these communities into these processes and partnering with them. By partnering international brands these communities are pulled through “low-cost labour and their craft skills and traditions are honoured” (Brown, 2010:13) instead of being exploited. Thus the globalized homogeneous fashion system which was under the hegemony of certain countries becomes a network of local systems (Clark, 2008:430). Appreciation of local craft and workforce leads to a more democratic system which isn’t centralized or standardized. Kate Fletcher and Lynda Grose highlight this line of reflection as being a challenger to fast fashion’s obsession of mass production and globalized style and harbinger slow fashion’s existence as becoming a guardian of diversity (2011: 128)



**Figure 6 Dresses by ModaFusion, produced by women from slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Embroidery technique applied on top of the dresses is a local one and called as “Fuxico”**

ModaFusion is a collective of graduates from Paris Institut Français de la Mode who embraced the principle of “the valorisation of local resources and the distributed economy”. In order to produce ethical collections they work with cooperatives and NGOs in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Besides the collections they conduct workshops, and investigate collective collaborations through artistic fusion, “focusing on, fashion, design, photography and music” (Brown, 2010:32). Each year they prepare three collections and one of these collections always focus on a social issue. In one of these collections they collaborate with cooperatives and work with the women of slums. In these collections women from slums apply various handcraft techniques such as crochet, embroidery, and special local techniques which are peculiar to Brazil. According to Brown “the collective aims to promote the idea that future creation lies in disfavoured communities. The slum’s genuine creativity constitutes a

strong identity for Brazilian fashion and a source of uncommon inspiration for fashion” (ibid).

### 3.2.3. TRANSPARENCY IN PRODUCTION SYSTEMS AND DE-INTERMEDIATION

This line of reflection refers to transparent and unreserved way of design and production of fashion items. In Marxist theory commodity fetishism is brought into existence by hiding the labour that goes in the production process. Henceforth value is directly attributed to commodity and consumers are believed that the commodity is perfect in itself (2001). With this line of reflection firstly, it is aimed to cast doubt on commodity fetishism. Secondly, since the process of design and manufacturing of mass produced fashion are done in countries which do not protect consumers and workers’ rights and shatter the eco-system, the ones who take part in these processes try to hide these adverse events. Transparency in production systems and de-intermediation “foster a heightened state of awareness of the design process and its impacts on resource flows, workers communities and ecosystems” (Feltcher and Grose, 2011: 128-129). In order to meet these conditions it is necessary to keep the scale of the businesses as small as possible because only on small and medium scale it is possible to have control over all of the stages of design and production.



**Figure 7 Alabama Chanin dress and coat: All hand-stitched and richly embroidered garments are produced from new, organic and recycled materials by women working for Alabama Chanin**

Alabama Chanin, based in Florence, Italy, epitomizes this line of reflection very well. Natalie Chanin developed a line which is transparent and fair for the workers and sustainable and organic for the benefit of the environment. All of Alabama workers are women artisans who apply hand sewing and construction and decorative techniques from the great depression era. All of the garments are produced either from new and organic materials or recycled (Brown, 2010). According to Clark “buying these clothes is an investment, which distinguishes them as a new form of couture—new, in attempting to bring an ethical consciousness, but traditional in being custom-made by hand, for individual clients” (2008: 436, 437). In this respect Alabama Chanin actually applies all of the three lines of reflections to her brand

#### 3.2.4. PRODUCT EXPERIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE SENSORIALITY

Due to consumption patterns that fast fashion system brings with it, contemporary relationship between people and products are merely made up of consumption experiences. Since the user doesn't engage in any creative or productive activity during the process of design and production, he/she cannot establish a strong emotional bond with products that she/he possesses. This situation explicitly reveals that if relationships between people and commodities rest solely on the experience of consumption, it becomes quite facile for the consumers to break away from their products. This is one of the most prepotent reasons that lead to high disposal.

The third line of reflection is predicated on establishing strong emotional bonds between users and commodities via the help of design; "It is not only necessary but also possible to design beyond the spectacularisation of today's dominant consumption, to design and promote an identity and generate significant experiences, without them being transformed into empty images for rapid consumption" ('Slow + Design': 2006: 6). Sustainable sensoriality stands for rendering the situation of knowing a product from its raw material to end product (Creppi cited in Clark, 2008: 431). By this way, unlike mass produced fast fashion, products cannot be transformed to solely images of consumption, but making and maintaining them and sharing their history becomes more meaningful. Accordingly users resist to wasteful consumption.

Hand-made, customized and bespoke designs epitomize this genre of design. As it is discussed in the previous chapter in ready to wear industry, products are produced in advance and consumers are encouraged to buy them. They are neither unique pieces, nor have a fitting which is 100 per cent suitable with the wearer. According to Black, before mass production people had fewer garments which were specifically sewn for them (2008). Because of this reason these garments were more valued and appreciated. They were maintained for a long period of time and repaired when needed.

### 3.3. DESIGN SOLUTIONS FOR THE CREATION OF AN ETHICAL FASHION SYSTEM

Since the early industrial revolution design played its role as a stimulator of consumption. McDonough and Braungart accuse contemporary industrial infrastructure of being linear and focusing on only designing practical, profitable, desirable products and services which can be produced fast and designed to last for a certain period of time (2009). “Many industrialists, designers, and engineers did not see their designs as part of a larger system, outside of an economic one” (McDonough and Braungart, 2009: 24). Since the economic concerns are the most important ones for the mainstream consumer culture, designers that belong to design culture have long been far from understanding the interconnectedness of design with ecological and social systems.

A similar kind of critique was done by Victor Margolin by asserting that world economics and trade policies which are based on expansion model of economic growth caused the designers be dependent on manufacturers and the frame of mainstream consumer culture, since success of businesses' is directly and solely related with economic gain and increase in the sales (1998). Because of this reason, a major part of designers' efforts in the name of wellbeing of the ecological system and sustainability remained as small victories (1998: 86) and green products. However, the principal need is far from designing and manufacturing green products. As Margolin put forth, sustainable and ethical design is about finding new way of design thinking with the aim of reinventing a different design culture that can create new forms of positive practice (ibid).

Designers' acquisition of awareness in social and environmental issues makes a great contribution to the formation and maintenance of sustainable design culture. In this culture designers' role goes beyond giving form to garments as it was mentioned by Margolin, but rather they adopt new social roles and act as "communicators, educators, facilitators, activists and entrepreneurs" (Fletcher and Grose, 2012: 156). In this way design can become a potent provider of balance between production and consumption. To this regard, following parts will encapsulate the practices in which "design disengages itself from consumer culture as the primary shaper of its identity" (Margolin, 1998: 89) and designers adopt new roles such as educator, entrepreneur, mediator, and facilitator in order to contribute the wellbeing of human and ecological systems.



### 3.3.1. UP-CYCLING, RECONDITIONING AND REUSING

Mass consumption and rapid changes in fashion trends are giving rise to disposal of huge amounts of apparel. Fifty years ago, social critic Vance Packard warned western and especially the US post-war modern society about upcoming depletive and detrimental impacts of escalation of consumption due to unrestricted growth, by coining the terms; ‘planned obsolescence’ and ‘throwaway society’ (cited in Hawley, 2011: 144). By the beginning of the new millennium his remarks have been justified with the outcrop of overabundance of consumer goods and depletion of natural resources as a consequence.

The design understanding that regards consumer culture as the primary shaper of its identity leans on a system of operation which is linear and this system includes four phases; design-production-consumption-disposing. Disposal is the ultimate phase that clothing can reach in consumer culture. Intrinsically, the principal problem is considering unfashionable clothing as “waste” (Fletcher, 2008). However as it is discussed by McDonough and Braungart waste does not really exist because we cannot annihilate any product 100 per cent, whatever is conducted to it, the traces will remain on the ecosystem (2009). An approach that can change the perception of “waste” and thinking it in a different context can eradicate its initial meaning and praxis. Up-cycling, reconditioning and reusing practices aim to transform this linear operation to a cyclical one by reconsidering the last phase as the first one. In this way waste becomes a source for creating and producing new clothing in an ethical way. Thus, “waste is elevated to a thing of use and beauty” (Fletcher, 2008:98).

**Up-cycling** is a term coined by William McDonough and Michael Braungart (2009) in order to refer to products whose “value is increased through altering or customizing” (Thomas, 2008: 534). McDonough and Braungart (2009) differentiate “up-cycling” from “down-cycling” which is a term that is used to explain most of the recycling process. According to them, down-cycling takes place when recycled product becomes less valuable than the initial one and more harmful for the ecosystem due to exposure of strong chemicals during the process. This usually takes place when industrial products are recycled but within fashion context, down-cycling occurs when “clothing is transformed into rags, blankets or fiber stuffing” which means that they “exit from the supply chain or fashion design production loop” (Thomas, 2008: 535). Therefore most recycling in fashion is up-cycling since material quality isn’t lost when used fabrics or accessories are redesigned,

Martin Margiela is one of the very few designers who challenge fashion’s obsession of novelty by adopting up-cycling method. In his Artisanal Line, he is experimenting different materials such as wigs, stones, rings, old shoes and garments in order to introduce new possibilities of signification and representation for fashion. The reason for giving form to discarded materials by design and reshaping them as fashionable clothing is to challenge the essence of conventional fashion design system which associates the situation of being fashionable with novelty. Artisanal Line and the practice of up-cycling prove that value is not the concomitant of novelty but it can be gained through workmanship. “Margiela’s ‘Artisanal collection’ unmask human

labour as the real source of the value that a certain garment holds” (Faliva, n. d.). He uses the old and used as it was and claims that old is something to be cherished as it is and if it is combined with human labour, then it is more valuable.



**Figure 8 Maison Martin Margiela Artisanal Collection A/W 2012, A coat cut from a windsurfing board’s sail is tailored to reproduce the volume of a 1910 man’s overcoat and is worn over lace trousers.  
Production time: 51 hours for the coat / PVC, reinforced plastic, nylon and metal**



**Figure 9** Maison Martin Margiela Artisanal Collection S/S 2013 Candy wrappers in metallic colours are embroidered onto a bustier dress. Production time: 62 hours / Pongee silk, metallic paper

From Somewhere is another brand that shows an activist attitude towards design understanding of consumer society. Flippo Ricci and Orsola de Castro who are the founders of the British Fashion Council Estethica at London Fashion Week and involved in many other sustainable projects, started with a vintage shop and transformed the business into a more creative initiation. In their collections they are using wide range of luxurious pre-consumer waste, including knitwear, cashmere, cotton shirtings, silks, jerseys, tweeds and woven. Each piece is individually cut from

reclaimed fabrics and garments; therefore each of them comprises uniqueness and craftsmanship.



**Figure 10 From Somewhere Autumn-Winter 2013, pullover created from cashmere remnants**

Their eclectic and creative approach aims to create a balance between consumption, design and disposal. “By up-cycling high end fashion textile waste into beautiful clothes, From Somewhere rethinks the fashion industry’s waste, rescuing textiles as a design solution to environmental problem” (Brown, 2010: 114). As Brown mentioned, Castro and Ricci are collecting fabrics from cutting room floors and fashion industry’s dustbins from Italy’s manufacturers. They state; “We used to have

to really convince the manufacturers to give us their leftovers, but now we are approached by companies wanting to achieve a creative waste management as part of their 'greenification' " (cited in Brown, 2010:114). This shows that besides playing their role as fashion designers, they have also adopted the role of being educators who teach and affect the industry positively. Their critical approach questions the notion of novelty that conventional fashion system puts forth and leads to a more responsible design thinking.

**Reconditioning;** is another way of diverting fashion items destined to landfill. As it is mentioned above 100 per cent synthetic fibres are recyclable chemically but if they are blended with natural fibres it becomes impossible to recycle them chemically; "there are really no successful technologies yet that can reclaim in full the base materials of a blended fibre, especially one that combines synthetic with natural polymers" (Scaturro, 2008: 482). For textile conservator Sarah Scaturro, since blending synthetic fibres with natural ones increase their performance in terms of combining their desirable qualities they are the most preferred by the industry.

For the textiles and clothing which are unrecyclable chemically, reconditioning is a method that is based on repairing, re-cutting, reshaping, re-sewing and redesigning in order to return unwanted clothing back to life. For Fletcher and Grose by creativity and craft or technology, reconditioning is "breathing a new life into discarded, torn or stained garments, and this can divert or delay waste from being sent to landfill" (2012, 67). TRAIID (Textile Recycling for Aid and International Development) Remade is a British retailer which epitomizes one of the most successful

entrepreneurships of this genre. Started in 2000, Traid collects and reconditions garments from UK citizens. Garments which are torn or stained are repaired and used as basis of new designs. According to Hazel Clark; “not only does this revalue discarded clothes, but it revives cultural traditions of sewing and mending” (2008: 440).



**Figure 11 TRAIIDremade, 2013, Tee Shirt Dress; made from soft jersey fabric in contrasting colours. The dress is made from reclaimed textiles**

**Reusing;** refers to using some sort of apparel which is already used as it is or by redesigning them. Although vintage and second-hand are two different notions, both of them can be regarded within the scope of re-using. Nicky Gregson and Louise

Crewe question the notion of rubbish in their book entitled as “Second-hand Cultures” and conclude that defining a product as rubbish or valuable may change according to culture, time, country and consumer because of this; value transformation should first be explored to understand how dynamics between rubbish and value shift in time and space (2003: 115).

According to their research and interviews that they conducted with consumers and producers, value transformation generally occurs when new technologies or different ways of production are embraced. For instance when mechanized production was introduced, hand knitted and home-made clothing experienced value decrement and conversely today the goods of mechanized industrial production are not found to be valuable. Since in an atmosphere where the temporalities of taste speeded up and planned obsolescence increased due to mass production and fast fashion, consumers are heading towards vintage products which embody hand-craft, originality, and “attention to detail” (Gregson and Crewe, 2003: 116)

Reusing may not seem as a design strategy at the first sight, however although the role of fashion designer as shaper of products or creator of garments is absent, the role of designer as entrepreneur is influential. Because this causes emergence and designation of a new system in which discarded garments are saved from being destined to landfills and contributing to carbon dioxide emissions. Therefore the boutiques which sell vintage or second-hand clothes are named as “eco-boutiques” by Hawley (2011: 147).



### 3.3.2. DO IT YOURSELF

Do it yourself practices are activities in which the user becomes the originator and creator of his/her own artifice. After the impact of industrialization, “make do and mend” era, during the World War II became highly effective in the formation of DIY culture. The scarcity of resources and regulations limited consumerism during the war time while practices of recycling and reusing gained acceleration. “Luxurious fabrics such as silk and nylon were commandeered for parachutes, golf balls became gas masks and mattresses became life jackets” (Woesley, 2000: 342). Only a limited number of fabrics were left for making clothes. In such an atmosphere, women were practicing DIY fashion by necessity. Fashion magazines, including Vogue were advising home stitching by providing creative samples such as; “sewing different coloured ribbons into pleats of skirts, embellishing black dresses with paisley pockets and turning maternity capes into reefer jackets” (ibid: 343).

In fact throughout history women have always been engaging in DIY activities. Only the motive of the practice has changed. For Jennifer Craik during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fashion magazines were inserting paper patterns to enable the readers to produce the desired fashionable mode (Craik, 2005). For Craik, during these eras the aim of the fashion magazines was to impose a domestic role to women. To emphasize their main role as “homemaker” the magazines were providing them the paper patterns both as a ”work manual” and a “purveyor of pleasure” (ibid: 49).

Thus DIY activities were functioning as a way of evaluating their spare time and helping them to be in tune with the contemporary fashion style.

In progress of time, these activities diminished because mass fashion and ready to wear industry was satisfying women's desire for accessing fashionable attires.

However other waves of DIY took place during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Subcultures such as hippies and punks epitomized the rebellious and activist way of approaching DIY. Although their motives were not exactly the same, their common reason for engaging DIY activities was the rejection of mainstream fashion norms.

Today, the same motive; rejection of the dominating fashion's dictations, is one of the main reasons that increased inclination to DIY activities. DIY practices enable users to customize goods according to their personal needs and interests and by this way they become less dependent on corporations which produce within the limitations of consumer culture. Besides these practical and political motivations, the practitioners get pleasure from developing their own idea and realizing it (Lupton, 2006). Parallel to the democratic approach of DIY culture, its prevalence is mainly occurring on the democratic and participatory medium that internet enables.

Designers such as Alabama Chanin, John Patrick Organic share do it yourself kits or tutorials either on their websites or on ethical websites such as Ecouterre. Besides websites editors or designers, ordinary people are sharing their experiences and practices of DIY on their personal blogs. In this way, DIY activities prevail not as dictations of a consumer culture driven industry but they trickle up and prevail as a creative resistance of the ordinary people.



Figure 12 Caftan dress out of scarves , DIY Tutorial published on Ecoutere

### 3.3.3. PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Participatory design aims to incorporate the consumer into design and production processes. As a reaction to the individualistic approach of conventional fashion

system, participatory design praises collectivity. When the notion of participatory design emerged in the 1970s the aim was to democratize the workplace design by making sure that trade unions play an active role in the “creation of systems that would affect their members”. (Erlhoff and Marshall, 2008: 210). In 1990’s this democratic approach was adopted by several design disciplines. Alvin Toffler, as a reaction to the idea that separates the producer/manufacture from the consumer, introduced the term “prosumer” which combines each of them together (cited in Fletcher, 2008). This democratic approach aims to create “value” from lived experience rather than through consumption. By this way it makes an inversion in terms of changing consumers’ passive position into active, by challenging the fashion system that is under designers’ hegemony. This design principle conduces to a more transparent way of production process therefore the consumer ‘act not only on a practical, physical level, cutting and sewing fibers and garments, but also politically, ecologically and even economically’ (Fletcher, 2008, p.194).

Junky Styling, which is a London based company, is one of the pioneers’ that uses participatory design actively. After being inspired by the prevalence of recycling in places such as Tokyo and San Fransisco, Annika Sanders and Kerry Seager founded Junky Styling in 1997. All garments are made out of the highest quality second hand clothing, which is deconstructed, re-cut and utterly transformed into a new piece which belies the identity of the raw material.



**Figure 13 Junky Styling Customer Participated Design Process**

They introduced a new design understanding that involves the customer into production and design processes. In their innovative line which is called as “Wardrobe Surgery”, while showing the customer how to reconstruct, they also let the customer participate to design process of his/her own garment. The participation of consumer causes emergence of emotional bounds to the garment and makes it hard for the customer to throw it away, thus it lessens consumption. Moreover they act as educators and open up the way of revealing consumers creative potential by pulling them out from the design thinking that consumer society forces



**Figure 14 Junky Styling Spring Summer 2010**

Matrushka Construction is another brand who supports participatory design and supports designers' role as educators and facilitators. The brand was founded by Laura Howe and Beth Ann Whittaker in 2003, in California. Later Laura Howe became the sole owner in 2007. The company place emphasis on social activism, and environmental awareness. Matrushka team creates hand-sewn, silk screened unique pieces and uses remnant bolts of fabrics to construct new clothes and evaluates waste.



**Figure 15 Matruska A/W 2013 Denim jacket and patchwork body suit made of textile remnants**

Matruska lets the consumer participate in design process by organizing T-construction nights several times a year. During these activism bearing nights, the customer comes together with artists, designers and seamstresses and selects a T-shirt design from a menu that includes wide range of color, shape and patches and creates a T-shirt with the designer (Fletcher, 2008: 197-198).

#### 3.3.4. DESIGN HACKTIVISM

Hacking is an approach that is based on questioning and altering the structure of power relationships of conventional fashion system. This practice has been analysed and developed by Otto von Busch who is an artist, activist, fashion theorist and designer, in his PhD thesis. The aim of this alternative design understanding is to reframe and redesign the system in which the designer acts regardless of the social changes of society and become solely a servant of mass market. In order to engender creative resistance, designer and consumer are engaged in activities which are in line with participatory design and Do it Yourself practices.

Hacking in fashion comprises do it yourself activities that enable the consumer do the fittings or modify a garment according to their personal needs. Hacking is a word which became popular after the introduction of computer technologies. Originally it is rooted in Do it Yourself (DIY) culture which made it possible for consumers to share technological activities or to modify consumer goods since 1920s (Busch, 2008). Although electronic hacking is mostly associated with destructive behaviour it is a productive activity because “ it needs the system that is being hacked to continue working in order for the hack to be a success” (Fletcher and Grose, 2012: 151). That is to say; the aim is not to destroy the system but it is to modify and construct something new within the system. For this reason hacker must know the system very well in which he/she will operate.



In hacking activities designer have the possibility of either participating physically or directing the consumer with the help of different mediums such as internet, printed media. In these activities designer does not dictate certain styles to consumers, but help and enable consumers to understand and develop a personal stance to fashion rather than encouraging them to be involved in consumerist activities.

The role of the designer will thus be transformed into one that expands action spaces, fights passivity and provides tools to engage our fellow human beings in fashion. In short, not to make process participants simply listeners or passive choosers of existing consumer goods but as engaged co-authors of fashion, whom will be capable of inventing ways of responding and reacting to fashion. In other words, to become *fashion-able* (Busch,2008 : 33).

As an activist designer, Otto Von Busch places an emphasis on the accessibility of knowledge and sharing. Besides publishing his PhD thesis, in his website “Self Passage”, Busch introduces a great deal of projects that inspires consumers and designers to grow their potential in design. He challenges the relations between designer, producer and consumer, and question how these positions should be structured within the fashion industry in order to change the top down hierarchy of the existing system.

In “Recyclopedia” section he releases pdf files which show techniques to construct new clothing from discarded ones to anyone who are interested in. With Busch’s words; “In your skilful hands, the sewing machine is a tool for liberation!” (*Self Passage, 2005*). He draws attention to the need of the demolition of the obsession

of novelty created by liberal societies and claims that the “cookbooks” that he prepared and shared “are a contribution to the critical discussion concerning the inter-passive system of contemporary consumerism and are step-by-step paths encouraging inspirational skill.”

With the design understanding of hacking users become empowered, control mechanism decentralizes, users access technology and knowledge about design process by this way production becomes transparent (Galloway, cited in Fletcher and Grose, 2012: 152) and as a result design and role of designers’ go over the limits of mass market and throwaway society.

## PUFF-JACKET

a method for remaking a suit jacket and matching pants into a new combo

a >SELF\_PASSAGE< method

© copyright by >HROSONO< Oct 2007



1. take an old suit jacket.



2. take a pair of matching pants, cut off legs just under the waist line.



3. unstitch side pockets and cut off arms just above the shoulder seam.



4. take out the shoulder padding.



5. put the legs as sleeves, start pinning at top and bottom seams of the armhole.



6. make seam straight at front, let a part of the pocket still be seen.



7. pull together excess fabric into pleats close on top of the shoulder, attach the new sleeves.



8. make the sleeves slimmer.



9. cut out a part of the front.



10. make channels in the back to create a slim fit. move front buttons to fine adjust.



11. your new silhouette - your new self.

Figure 16 Construction of "Puff Jacket" by Otto von Busch

## SHIRT SHRINK

a method for shrinking an XL shirt but still making sleeves longer.

«>SELF\_PASSAGE<» method

© copyright by >wronsov<, June 2005.



1. get an old shirt some sizes too large, now ready to fit your new slender self.



2. cut away some cm's from the sides.



3. stop before arm pit, measure how much you want to take away from shoulders, cut this distance from sleeve seam.



4. make the cuts meet around arm pit, repeat on other side.



5. cut off sleeve from side, put it beside your new arm hole, cut away surplus fabric from sleeve to make the hole.



6. attach the sleeve.



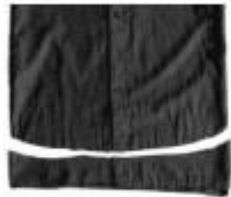
7. cut the sleeve apart and put in a piece of the side fabric.



8. attach with straight seam and make zig-zag seams on edges.



9. pin together along arm and side, join the pieces.



10. make the shirt shorter if needed, make a hem.



11. new fit - new image.

Figure 17 "Reform Shirt" by Otto von Busch

### 3.3.5. ZERO WASTE DESIGN STRATEGY

The goal of zero waste design strategy is to annihilate textile waste that takes its roots from unplanned design and manufacturing process. According to Holly McQuillan it is “standard for garment producers to expect to waste approximately 15 per cent of the cloth needed to produce and adult sized garment (Rissanen, 2005; Feyerabend, 2004; Abernathy, 1999; Cooklin, 1997), resulting in a loss of profits for the manufacturer and generating landfill waste (cited in McQuillan, 2011: 84).

According to Rissanen fashion creation consists of four main steps; 1-fashion design, 2-patternmaking, 3-construction, and 4-production (2008: 190, 191). “The separation and hierarchy of these processes has led to cut and sew fashion system that is extraordinarily wasteful” (McQuillan, 2011: 85). An approach that integrates design and production would minimize or eliminate the waste completely. Julian Roberts is a designer who integrated design, pattern making and cutting in order to eliminate waste 100 per cent. The method which is called as “subtraction cutting” is composed of rules that he established. The final dress reveals its form only when it is on human body and “determined by what is removed and how the body travels through the space created” (McQuillan, 2011: 85). Although the result of the design seems artistic and it creates a different kind of aesthetics, it might be useful to claim that implementation of this technique can be wasteful as well. It is mainly because the fabrics that are saved from being thrown away are added on to the dress lead to another kind of waste creation. Using materials and fabrics more than adequate is not the best way of dealing with waste creation.

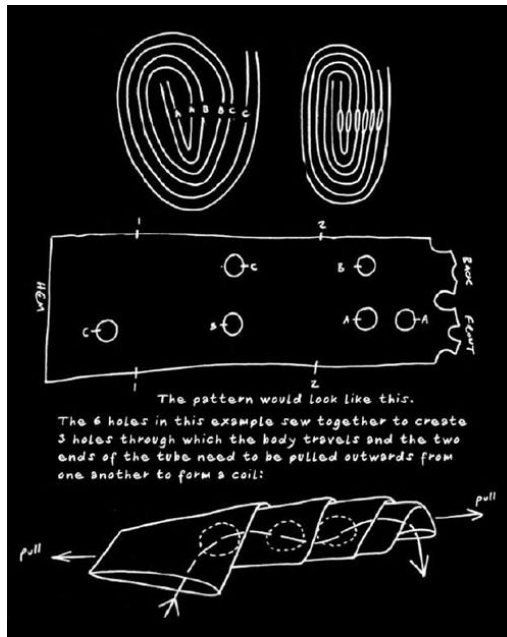
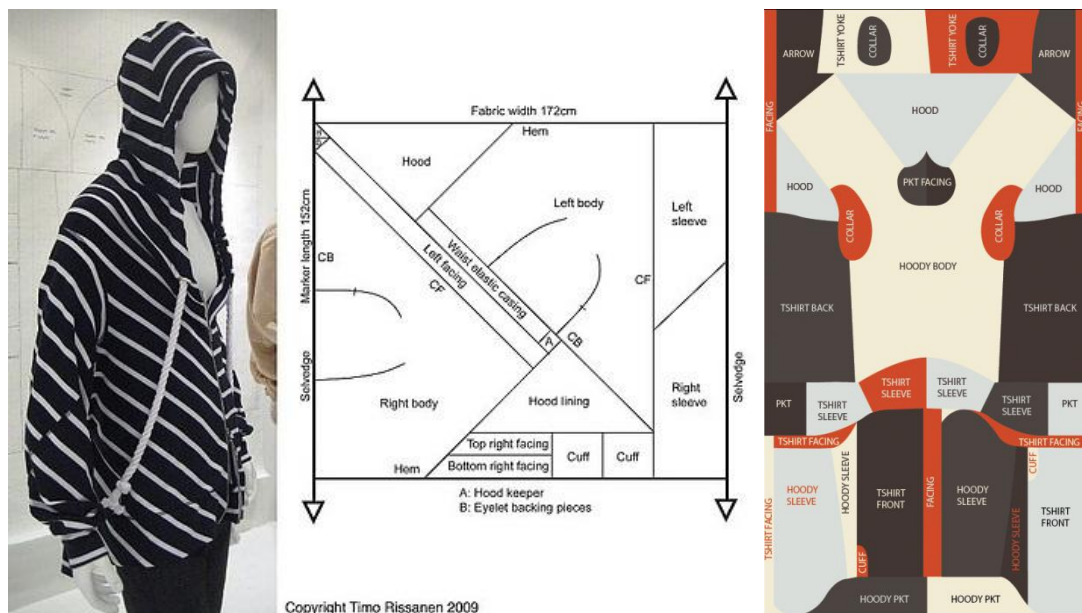


Figure 18 Julian Roberts Subtraction Cutting



Figure 19 Julian Roberts dresses displayed at London Fashion Week

Jigsaw puzzle design is a notion that Timo Rissanen introduced. After being inspired by Julian Roberts subtraction cutting method, Rissanen developed his own technique, which is different from conventional ways of designing. In this strategy fabric and pattern has some specific implications for design. (2008: 193). The core of this technique is based on interlocking all pieces with each other so that fabric is used 100 per cent and no waste is generated (McQuillan, 2011).



**Figure 20 Timo Rissanen, Hoodie Pattern Design**

Mark Liu is another designer who has found a creative solution to the problem of waste management. “His “Zero Waste” collection, launched in 2007, broke ground in eco-consciousness by engineering every item in the collection from single rectangles of fabric and incorporating highly complex and detailed pattern cutting to make each pattern piece fit together jigsaw puzzle” (Brown 2010: 158). The dress in Figure 18 is an example from this collection which is composed of fourteen pieces and a print

design that is designed by Lui. All of the pieces and the print are brought together in a certain way that no fabric is wasted and it creates its own unique kind of aesthetics. With this collection Liu is presented as one of Australia's upcoming designers at Sydney Design week and his collection toured China for the exhibition Climate Cool by Design (Brown 2010: 158). In this way he had the possibility of educating and affecting other designers and patternmakers.



**Figure 21 Mark Liu, Dress from “Zero Waste” Collection, 2007**

Zero waste design is a new emerging strategy nevertheless there are many young designers who are inspired by the very few designers that are presented in this study.



Yeoh Lee Teng, Yoshiki Hishinuma, Zandra Rhodes are among the designers that embraced by the idea of eliminating textile waste. As it is discussed by McDonough and Braungart reduction of waste or carbon dioxide emission “do not halt depletion and destruction – it can only slow them down” (2009: 54), what needed is the adaptation of a zero waste system which mimes natural systems. “Wood (Chapman and Grant, 2007: 111) writes that the use of resources in a holistic production-to-consumption system would need to become a zero waste system – as in nature” (cited in McQuillan, 2011: 85). In that system designer, patternmaker, manufacturer and consumer would collaborate in order to make ethical fashion happen.

### 3.3.6. MULTI-FUNCTIONAL AND ADAPTABLE DESIGN

Multi-functional and adaptable design strategy is introduced by the author of this thesis as a result of her personal experiences and observations. As it is remarked several times during the study, fashion is a wasteful and resource intensive design practice (Fletcher, 2008). Strictly speaking, if fashion industry and designers continue being insistent on using the resources extravagantly without regard to their exhaustibility, future generation designers will face compelling circumstances. Being based on the realization of annihilation of resources multi-functional and adaptable design strategy takes aim at an intelligent designation of the resources via use of design as a powerful tool.

Garments that go in the category of multi-functional and adaptable design are the ones which are transformable, provide variable form and use, embody self renewability, and adaptability to changing circumstances. Wearing the same garment in various ways and transformation of it into different objects or pieces firstly reduces the energy, time and resources because instead of creating different pieces designer can encapsulate different specialties in one piece. In other words the designer can *do more with less*. Secondly by not dictating a certain style but providing a bunch of options; it enables consumer be free in his/her choice of use. Thirdly, by including the consumer into transformation process this strategy generates a democratic and active practice. As a result it may stimulate the creativity of consumers. When viewed from this aspect, multi-functional and adaptable design strategy encapsulates many of the other strategies that ethical fashion bolsters.



**Figure 22** A dress designed by Gaffer and Fluf which can be worn in nine different ways according to the choice of the wearer.

Besides designing multifunctional garments designers can encourage consumers to use a simple piece in various ways or consumers can themselves actively engage in

these practices. In 2011, as part of the “FFD 509 Ethics and Social Responsibility in Design” course that was being given in Izmir University of Economics, Design Studies Master Program by Mine Ovacık Dörtbaşı an ethical project has been realized by the author and other students. The image found in the following page is from that project and it is called “How to Wear Your Mother’s T-Shirt in 12 Different Ways”. The author, who is both the user and the designer in this case, showed other students how to transform an old t-shirt into 12 different shirts without sewing it. This experience indicated that in order to acquire variety and novelty in fashion, neither designers nor consumers need to appeal brand new garments. Creative involvement of the user can originate change and novelty even from an old and used garment.

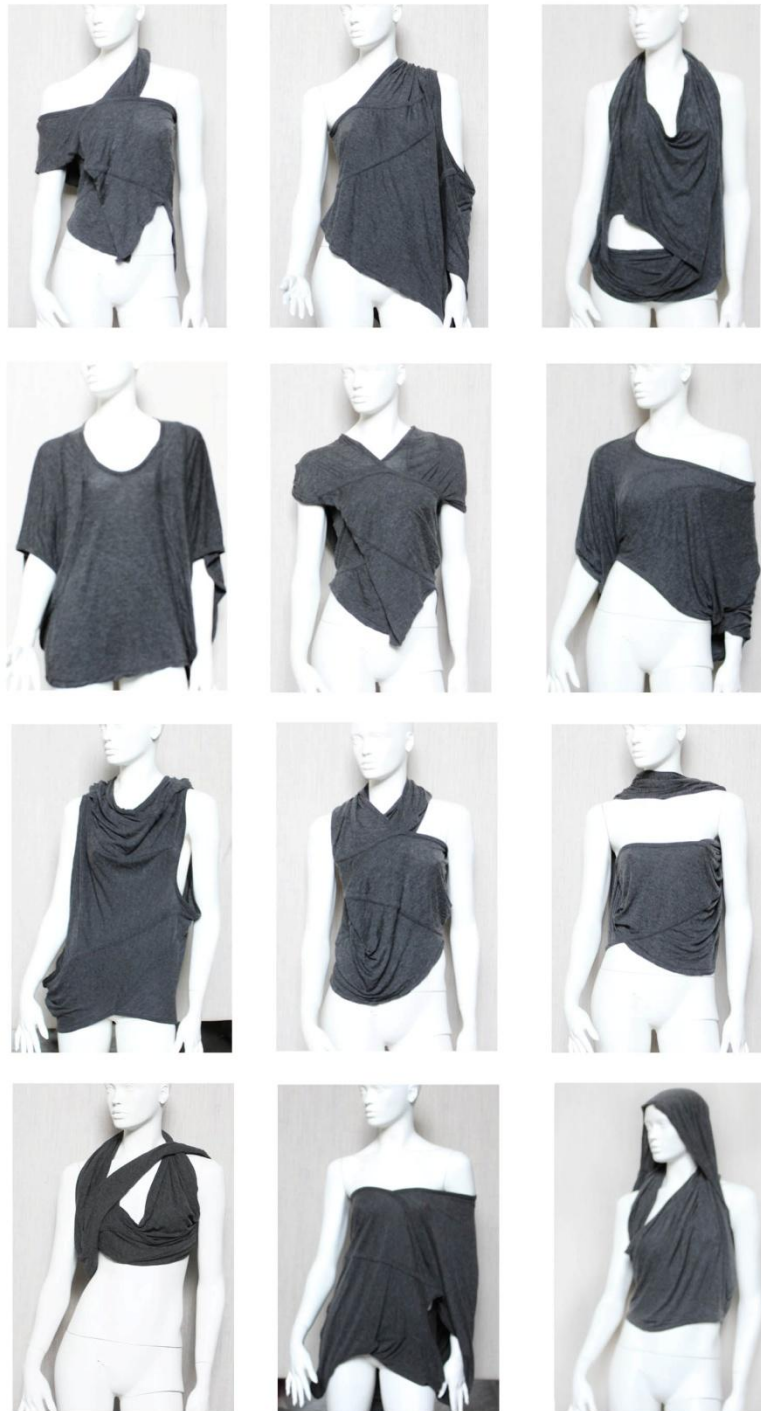


Figure 23 “How to Wear Your Mother’s T-Shirt in 12 Different Ways” Project realized by the author in 2011

There are certain designers who raise the bar of multi-functional and adaptable design by integrating technological improvements into fashion design such as Hüseyin Çağlayan. His “One Hundred and Eleven” S/S 2007 collection pushed the limits of creativity in transformable and adaptable design. In this collection there were 6 pieces that were moving through decades and time in a few seconds with the help of technology. Microchips inserted in the dresses were enabling it to transform its form and details. For instance a Victorian dress that reflected 19<sup>th</sup> century fashion was suddenly transformed to twentieth century garment. Although point of origin of this collection was to point out world events that influenced and shaped fashion over the course of a century, his approach can also be interpreted from the perspective of ethical fashion. The initiative that he started with this collection can be interpreted as the evolution of ethical and transformable fashion together with technology.



**Figure 24 One Hundred and Eleven S/S 2007 Hüseyin Çağlayan Collection**

Being in conjunction with the technological improvements these pieces can be epitomizing the future of *doing more with less* approach which is in tune with ethical fashion. In 2012 Çağlayan prepared another transformable set of dresses for his A/W 2013 collection which is called “Rise”. In this collection the time that is needed to transform the garments are reduced to only one or two seconds. Moreover, the models were able to transform the dresses with a single movement while they keep on walking on the runway. These examples show that embracement of the technological developments might also be effective in shaping the future of adaptable design.



Figure 25 Transforming Dress from “Rise” A/W 2013 Hüseyin Çağlayan Collection

These kinds of technological improvements carry the risk of restraining user involvement to design process because the user may not interfere in the technological

system of garments. However, customization of technologically equipped garments with bespoke tailoring may prevent standardization and bolsters the choice of consumers.

#### 3.4. USE OF SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE CREATION OF ETHICAL WAY OF PRODUCTION AND DESIGN IN FASHION

Within this part it is intended to draw attention to the importance of right material choice of fashion designers because designers' choices are influential on creating demand on sustainable products and they have the potential to define the direction of ethical design. In this part fibres and fabrics will not be discussed one by one but instead; a general frame of the necessity of using right materials will be explained with exemplifications and notions of "human friendly fibres", "low energy used fibres", "low water use fibres", "renewable fibres" and "biodegradability" will be introduced (Fletcher and Grose, 2012).

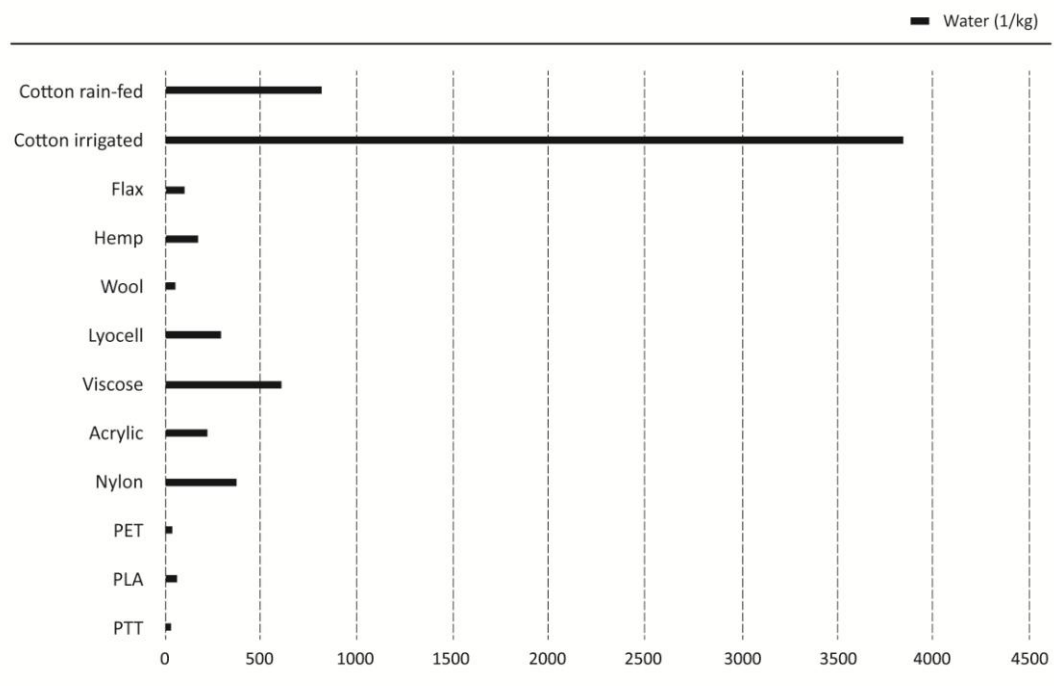
Materials play an emphatic role in our current understanding of what makes fashion and textiles sustainable. They are, more often than not, our starting point for change and a key commodity for farmer, designer, manufacturing industry, consumer and recycler. The fact that materials seem to dominate our ideas about environmental and social responsibility is not really surprising as,

after all, our industry's product is material 'stuff' – fibre, fabric, textile product and garment (Fletcher, 2008: 3, 4).

As it is emphasized by Kate Fletcher materials are the essential part of the ethical design problem. Since they are the core of fashion production they dominate the direction of fashion design. Moreover since designers are responsible for the material choice their decisions are of capital importance in orienting the direction of fashion towards an ethical future.

While sustainability movement emerging at first, many interpreted it as abandoning the use of synthetics and tending towards natural materials such as cotton and wool is the sole and exclusive remedy. However the case is not so straightforward (Black, 2008). Whether natural or not, each fibre has its own inherent environmental weakness and strength (Orzada and Moore, 2008). For instance cotton is a natural fibre and when it is produced organically it is a **human friendly fibre** because it is hypoallergenic, is breathable and transmits moisture away from the body and is absorbent and removes liquid from the skin, protects against from heat in the summer and cold in the winter by providing thermal insulation however whether organic or conventionally grown, it requires excessive amount of water during cultivation. "Globally 50 per cent of the land under cotton cultivation is artificially irrigated" (Fletcher and Grose, 2012: 25) and for instance in Uzbekistan where cost of water is low, the Aral Sea came up against draining due to irrigation needs of cotton and this has been called "one of the most staggering disasters of the twentieth century by the United Nations Environmental Programme" (Black, 2008: 107).





**Figure 26 Water use in fibres**

Besides use of vast quantities of water, agrochemicals used in conventionally grown cotton’s cultivation generate serious problems. “Although cotton occupies only four to five per cent of agricultural land, it consumes 25 per cent of all insecticides and ten per cent of pesticides used worldwide” (Black, 2008: 113). The amount of agrochemicals used in cotton cultivation is not only harmful for the environment but also it is highly insanitary for the farmers. Each year a considerable number of farmers are dying because of the agrichemicals used in cotton farming. According to Fletcher and Grose, “the World Health Organization suggests that there are approximately three million pesticides poisoning a year, resulting in 20,000 deaths, largely among the rural poor in developing countries” (2012: 21).

Discussing problems related to cotton is significant for this study because until recently cotton accounted for the largest share of all clothing fabrics produced with the rate of over 60 per cent, however rapid rise in the production and consumption of polyester in the last decades has overturned cotton production which accounts for about 75 per cent of textile production (Black, 2008). Due to the fact that polyester requires less than 0.1 per cent of the amount of water required growing cotton (Orzada and Moore, 2008), it is a **low-water-use fibre** (Fletcher and Grose, 2012). However it is a **high-energy-use** fibre because of the energy required in its production stage just like other manmade fibres. Moreover since it is obtained from petroleum it is neither renewable nor biodegradable.

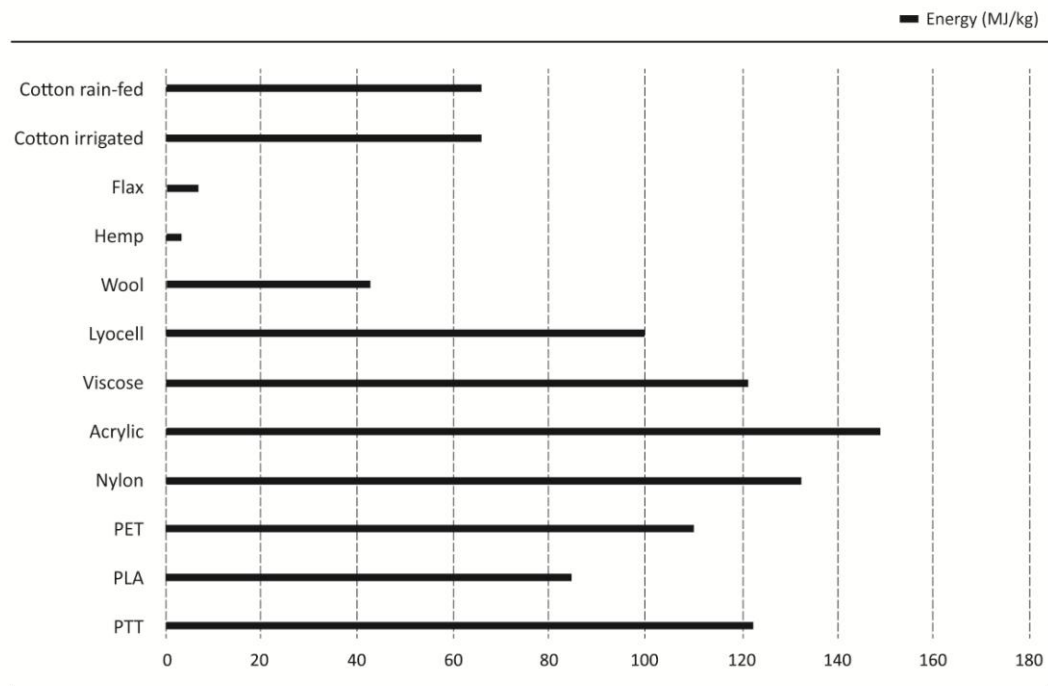


Figure 27 Energy consumption of fibres

The notion of **renewability** is crucial for fashion industry because world resources are limited by the capability of the planet to renew them. For harvested fibres renewability is not as problematic as it is for the fibres which come from petroleum or minerals. With harvested fibres time that is necessary to grow the seeds is problematic, whereas for fibres such as acrylic, polyester and nylon that are obtained from oil there isn't a way for regeneration (Fletcher and Grose, 2012). In recent years bamboo has been promoted due to its vigorous growth, rapid renewability and naturalness by green producers. However, it is realised that "the subsequent processing into viscose of cellulose sourced from bamboo has high impact waste emissions to both air and water (ibid: 14). For this respect although it is obtained from a natural and renewable crop use of bamboo may not be considered as a part of the bigger strategy of ethical fashion.

**Biodegradability** is another specialty that ethically produced fibres is expected to provide. Normally natural fibres are biodegradable, which means they can easily be broken down into simpler substances by micro-organisms, light, air or water in a process which is non-toxic that occurs in a short period of time (Fletcher and Grose, 2012). Synthetics on the other hand are not biodegradable and when they are blended with natural fibres they hinder or slow down the process of decomposition of natural fibres. This happens even if synthetic threads, zippers, linings are used with natural fabrics. Because of this reason, in order to pave the way for biodegradation use of trimmings and threads must be planned and designed in advance (ibid). Another way

of coping with natural and synthetic blends is up-cycling which has been discussed in design solutions part.

Selection of fabric and materials is done during design and production development processes. Consequently, environmental and social impact of the apparel is determined by mainly designers and based on their decisions the “manufacturing process, usage, maintenance and disposal of a textile product may have a range of environmental impacts from minimal to severe” (Orzada and Moore, 2008: 302). Because of this reason it is more ethical to decide the type of materials according to a plan which considers every stage of a product from the beginning till the end.

In order to minimise loads on landfills there are a couple of things that designers can take into consideration. First of all they can eliminate or minimize the use of manmade fibres in their collections or by adopting the design solutions such as up-cycling and recycling they can eliminate apparel waste. In order to encourage socially responsible agriculture and farming they can choose to source materials from suppliers that meet FAIRTRADE standards, for organic and sustainable products they can look for suppliers that meet organic standards.

“Fair-trade standard aims to make sure farmers are paid a fair wage” (Quinn, 2008). The term Fair Trade is an alternative to conventional trade which aims developing an approach based on dialogue, transparency, respect and equality. “It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the

rights of, marginalized producers and workers, especially in developing countries (<http://www.fairtrade.net>).



**Figure 28 FAIRTRADE Mark**

When a product carries the FAIRTRADE mark it means the producers and traders have met FAIRTRADE Standards. The standards are designed to address the imbalance of power in trading relationships, unstable markets and the injustices of conventional trade (ibid).

The choices of designers are surely not limited with the options listed above. If they develop a responsible approach to material selection and interrogate the sources of materials they can be the “key in influencing the agenda for greater sustainability and creating consumer demand” (Black, 2008: 110)

### 3.5. ESTABLISHING THE CULTURE OF ETHICAL FASHION

In the second chapter of this study it is emphasized that “fashion is the product of a chain of activities which are industrial, economic and cultural” (Entwistle, 2006: 220). It is a culturally constructed notion and culture provides a lens for the individuals to accept certain items as fashionable and certain items as out of fashion (McCracken, 1986). Fashion functions as a culture industry and various agents partake in its production. Just as Baudrillard remarked, within the frame of contemporary consumer culture the thing consumed is the image rather than the commodity (1983). And the image is formed by the agents of culture industry of fashion system such as; fashion houses, star designers, fashion capitals, fashion journalists, publicists.

In the presence of such a structure, the practices that ethical fashion design embraces shouldn't remain as solutions which stuck at the product level. Ethical fashion design is also in the need of creating its own mediums, agents and institutions to disseminate its ideology. However, this is not to claim that the products of ethical fashion should also be consumed as images. On the contrary ethical fashion is on the way of developing its own unique language to form an ethical design culture even though it benefits from the structure of fashion system. From this point forth, in this section it is intended to present and analyse a number of agents and institutions that make up the culture of ethical fashion and draw attention to the differences among the languages that conventional and ethical fashion systems develop.

### 3.5.1. COMMUNICATION OF ETHICAL FASHION AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA

In formation of an ethical design culture which approaches design as a tool for creating a constructive relation between production and consumption, communication aspect is of prime importance. As it is discussed in the part called, “The Role of Media on Production of Fashion”, media is not only influential on the communication of fashion, but also it is effectual on its production. The medium where ethical fashion communicates itself is of course the fashion media. However on which channels it should communicate itself is problematic due to the structure of conventional fashion magazines.

When the evolution of ethical or slow fashion is analysed, it is observed that there is a close relationship between the alternative media of internet and ethical fashion’s arrival. The term “slow fashion” first appeared on the articles and blogs on the internet. “Slow clothes movement” appeared on a Vancouver based online magazine (Martin 2005; Sayer 2007; Richmond 2006 quoted in Clark, 2008: 428). Moreover, the internet has made a major contribution in marketing and promotion of ethically produced clothing (Scaturro, 2008) because internet provided a collective and participatory medium that enabled its users benefit from its communicative power. For example, in the website Etsy ordinary people gets the possibility of using their creative potential and create and sell their ethically produced, handcrafted design objects. It is not only the company owners or media giants that share information

there. Any person who has connection to the internet has the potential of communicating his/her ideas with other people. In this way independent individuals and non-commercial organizations make their voices and activities heard.

On the other side, conventional fashion magazines paid attention to the issue only after designers such as Armani, Stella McCartney launched organic lines. Vanity Fair published a “Green” issue in 2006, “the editor, Graydon Carter, declared “Green Is the New Black”(Winge, 2008: 511) to celebrate green commodity fetishism, Vogue in 2008 and later Elle magazine started to publish a green issue annually. This shows that conventional fashion media, while remaining silent to formation process of ethical fashion, as soon as the topic cause sensation in other kinds of media, include ethical fashion to their media coverage.

This situation is parallel with what Elizabeth Wilson asserts about the inability of fashion magazines in reflecting the social changes as they are. According to Wilson instead of documenting or reflecting the social and stylistic changes, fashion magazines commodify contemporary issues (quoted in Breward, 1995). The commodification of contemporary issues takes place because conventional fashion media position the reader as consumer (Currie, 1995), not as individuals that must consider the impact of their consumption activities impact on the environment, workers and society. This occurs because the major part of revenue of magazines comes from the advertisers, not from the subscribers. For that matter conventional fashion media’s role becomes convincing the readers in buying the products of their advertisers, this is why they stimulate a shopping mood by their reports and images.



Parallel to this fact, for Elizabeth Wilson, the embraced view of many fashion historians about accepting fashion magazines as barometers of social and stylistic changes is inappropriate. For her, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, consumers are purchasing the artifact, as well as the “image”; fashion magazines are propagating “the look” and thereby their language became analogous with that of advertisements.

Like advertising, women’s magazines have moved from didactic to the hallucinatory. Originally their purpose was informational, but what we see today in both popular journalism and advertising is the mirage of a way of being, and what we engage in is no longer only the relatively simple process of direct imitation, but less conscious one of identification (Wilson, 1985, cited in Breward, 1995: 197).

This means fashion magazines do not directly transfer information. They do not just reflect social and stylistic changes but construct and commodify contemporary values and while doing it they institute a monopoly by engendering “*speech without response*” (Baudrillard, 1972). Baudrillard uses the notion of “speech without response” to indicate that fashion magazines conduce toward a system that generates a single direction flow of messages, in which the magazine becomes always the sender of the message and the reader is always the receiver. By this way they fabricate non-communication even if their major role is expected to be the provider of communication of social and contemporary issues. By positioning themselves as the giver and to whom no return can be made, fashion magazines

impose its readers a biased face of fashion system and exclude its negative impact on human and environment.

For these reasons ethical fashion culture and the potential of design in generating positive change is in the need of being presented and communicated with a method which is different from conventional fashion media's implementations. Since in ethical design culture transparency and adaptation of ethical actions that take into consideration of their impact on human and environment in the process of production and design became more important than the final product and image, a new communication strategy that is based on informing the consumers about this emerging ethical design system and processes is needed. This is the best possible way for the media of generating, proclaiming, propagating the positive change that design offers. In other words, only an ethically designated communication system in terms of content, unbiased and objective publishing understanding can fully present and publicise ethical fashion design philosophy.

In 2012 a research has been conducted by Kipöz and Atalay which is entitled as "Promises and Conflicts of the Ethical Fashion Debate: How ethical is the "ethical fashion"?" for the conference Fashion Tales which took place in Milan. In that research the reflections of ethical fashion in conventional and alternative media were compared. Due to the participatory and democratic atmosphere that internet has offered, this research was conducted on the websites of two conventional fashion magazines; Vogue and Elle and a website which is dedicated to promotion of ethical fashion; Ecouterre. During the study discursive and commercial representations of

ethical fashion was analysed in regards to design and production strategies. By back-casting the literal and visual representations of four ethically producing brands which are; Edun, John Patrick Organic, Martin Margiela- Artisanal Line and Edun, languages and approaches of conventional and alternative media was compared.

According to results and observations;

The way that ethical fashion presented to society in conventional fashion magazines' websites is mainly exclusionist of the ethical context that presented brands are tied to. Conventional fashion magazines' websites are mostly discussing the material manifestation of the ethical fashion by publishing articles on brands and they leave the general content of ethical fashion out. While ethical fashion motto becomes "consume in a green way" in conventional magazines' websites, alternative websites such as Ecouterre represent ethical fashion from various perspectives including green commodities and support ethical fashion movements' resistance to fast fashion system (Kipöz and Atalay, 2012 (in press))

The study proves that conventional fashion media's publishing understanding is in contradiction with ethical fashion design's objectives and parallel with the approach that seize upon designer's role as the shaper of objects. For this reason they promote products rather than ethical fashion philosophy and this makes conventional media far from reflecting and being a part in ethical design culture. This study strengthens the idea that ethical fashion design culture needs to originate its own communication channels and mediums in order to present and propagate ethical fashion consumption.

This kind of alternative media have already called into being with emerging design culture and internet provided a base for its proliferation worldwide due to the participatory and democratic atmosphere it generates.

**Eco Fashion World** is a website that aims to inform and inspire its readers about ethically and ecologically producing labels by presenting them within the frame of ethical fashion design philosophy. With interviews and reports they provide a transparent information flow which gives consumers the possibility of knowing the materials or producer/designer behind the products that they purchase. This feature of the website is strengthening and supporting the transparent design strategy of slow fashion movement. Besides, introducing ethical fashion brands, the website constituted a glossary section that presents the vocabulary of ethical fashion to the readers. By this way they inform the readers about the concepts and events that ethical design culture is generating. Website's educative aspect is not limited with the glossary; it also provides book reviews and presents schools that strengthen the base of ethical fashion (Eco Fashion World, 2013).



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## Glossary

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### Agenda 21

One of the main documents created during the Eco 92 climate conference in Rio de Janeiro. Based on this document signed by 170 countries, a global action plan for social and environmental sustainability was created, ultimately resulting in many local agendas all over the world. Many eco fashion initiatives have also been inspired by Agenda 21.

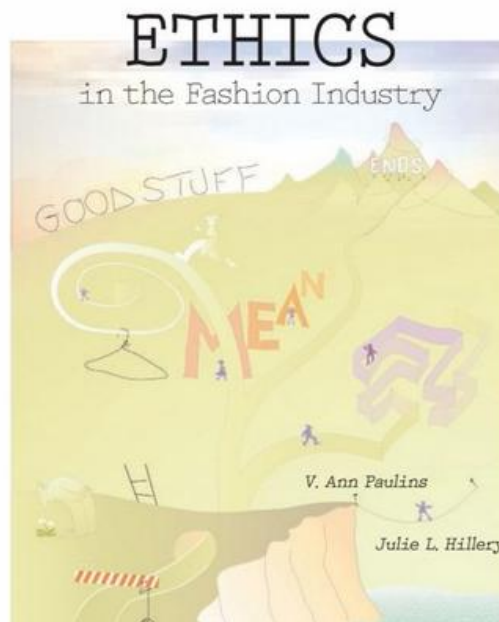
### Agriculture

Agriculture is strongly intertwined with the world economy, livelihood of the world's poor and biodiversity conservation. Agriculture uses more than half of the Earth's habitable land, employs more than one billion people and produces goods worth one trillion dollars annually. It's also the biggest user of water, accounting for almost 70% of global withdrawals, and up to 95% in developing countries (FAO, 2006). Furthermore, pesticide and fertilizer use on agricultural crops lead to widespread ecological degradation. Estimates indicate that up to 40,000 lives are lost around the world each year due to improper pesticide application and handling (WHO, 2002).

### Agro Toxics

The pesticides used in farming, livestock breeding and domestic environments. Examples are insecticides, herbicides and pesticides. They may also be the toxic solvents, paints, lubricants and products for cleaning and disinfection. They cause a lot of damage both to

**Figure 29 Eco Fashion World, glossary section aims making the reader familiar with ethical fashion terminology**



**Figure 30 Eco Fashion World, Book Review: Ethics in the Fashion System written by A. Pauline and J. L. Hillery: besides news and articles website provides several book reviews to inform fashion consumers**

**Ecouterre** is another website whose publication philosophy shows similarities with Eco Fashion World. The website was found in 2009 and dedicated to supporting designers who adopted ethical design philosophies and encouraging consumers to be informed about sustainable fashion and be responsible in their choices. At the same time it provides an information portal in which the designers and producers are informed about latest innovations in the field of ethical fashion. Similar to Eco Fashion World, Ecouterre not only introduces and promotes fashion brands, but also

it promotes books, blogs and publishes DIY tutorials in which the readers encouraged to be pulled away from consumer culture's dictations and engage in design activities (Ecouterre, 2013).



Figure 31 Ecouterre, DIY NationSection: Several design tutorials are presented in order to inspire readers

**Refix Magazine** presents an online ethical magazine format which aims to reduce carbon dioxide emission by publishing on the internet. In their words; “As an eco-conscious advocate, REFIX Magazine is dedicated to offering a publication that fuses fashion and art with philanthropic values. By reporting exclusively on ethical fashion, socio-ecological issues, and sustainable innovations, REFIX bridges the gap between environmental ethics and life in a modern society” (Refixmag, 2013).

On their website, in “Eco Fashion News” section, Refix while introducing the latest news about ethical fashion, gives links of other ethically communicating websites. By this way Refix Magazine makes a major contribution to the formation of an ethical fashion communication network. In the magazine, it is observed that advertisers and brands that are presented are different from the ones who are in conventional fashion magazines such as Vogue, Elle, Harper’s Bazaar. This shows that the magazine responds to the needs of ethical fashion market and dedicates itself to ethical fashion’s development.



Figure 32 Refix Magazine Volume 3 (on the left) Hunt & Gather Advertisement: Advertisement of a brand that sells recycled and reworked garments and products



These examples put forth that the necessity of ethical fashion design to communicate itself in an honest and unbiased way. It is observed that ethical fashion is creating its own channels which differ from publishing understanding of conventional fashion media. The common point of this emerging ethical media is that they engendered a common language which is fed from not only the promotion of commodities but also they place great emphasis on the presentation of ethical production and design strategies. In other words, ethical fashion media designated their communication methods according to the frame of ethical design culture.

### 3.5.2. EVENTS OF ETHICAL FASHION

Its remarked in the production and diffusion of fashion part that in conventional fashion system fashion shows play a significant role in the production of fashion as image. Caroline Evans briefly summarizes the function of fashion shows from the notion of spectacle of Guy Debord as;

Catwalk fashion show, sealed into a hermetic world of its own with its attendant protocols and hierarchies. Like spectacle, it spatializes time and destroys memory. It is 'the triumph contemplation over action' (Jay 1993: 428) and the quintessential form of commercial seduction through theatrical novelty and innovation. Its *spectacular displays are calculated to obscure its financial heart*. Only the gilt chairs in the show, each with a journalists name

on it, and the banks of photographers, hint at the complex professional networks to which the spectacle is tied and through which its imagery is disseminated worldwide (Evans, 2008: 19).

While designers and fashion brands market their products via catwalk fashion shows they actually create a new realm, a dream world, and a spectacle which masks the commercial reality behind it. The outcome of the fashion show is the image. the image created by the designer and stands still as if it is a magical object isolated from its bounds with reality; the labour that goes in its production is never visible and the ones who take part in its production are always absent from the show. Furthermore, the spectacle is intrinsic to specific cities such as Paris, London, and Milan which are “made” the capitals of fashion culture. This explains how fashion shows function in the conventional system.

On the other hand in ethical catwalks the hermetic and concealed structure of conventional fashion shows is being obliterated thanks to the embracement of transparent way of display. While conventional catwalks hide labour and process for the sake of spectacle, ethical fashion shows are based on revealing them since transparent way of production is embraced by its practitioners principally. **Ethical Fashion Show** which was founded in 2004 epitomizes this genre with its scope and activities. Each year approximately 65 ethically producing fashion labels are brought together in Paris and Berlin within the frame of Ethical Fashion Show Fair and besides exhibiting their products they participate in fashion shows. In order to support transparent and environmentally friendly way of production and design EFS

has developed a marking system which reveals the ethical method of production that each company is engaged. Thus EFS praises human labour and emphasizes the importance of process in ethical fashion design and shows it as the real source of value.

Another aspect that differentiates the structure of ethical shows from conventional ones is the organization of seminars, conferences and workshops in the field of ethical and ecological design. In addition to catwalks, Ethical Fashion Show holds seminars, conferences, workshops, exhibitions and organizes public days for the consumers to participate and grow their interests in ethical fashion. In this way fashion shows get beyond being the space of spectacle and become a medium of creating awareness (Ethical Fashion Show, 2013).

In addition to this, new capitals that challenge the dominance of conventional fashion centres are emerging. As it is discussed in the previous chapter fashion centres such as Paris, Milan and London are producing and directing the culture of fashion by bringing out star designers who display in fashion weeks. Similar to conventional fashion system, designers who produce ethically gain recognition from fashion shows and fashion weeks. However, the language and method that ethical fashion developed is different than conventional fashion weeks. One of the biggest ethical fashion weeks has been taking place in Vancouver since 2009 twice a year. Besides introducing ethically producing fashion designers with fashion shows, speaker seminars and industry panels are organised during the **Vancouver Eco Fashion Week**. Unusual for conventional fashion weeks, VEFW organizes the seminars as

free educational series for industry members. The aim of these seminars is to provide information and stimulate discussion on ethical fashion practices to increase the level of awareness (Ecofashion Week, 2013).

Another type of event that is embraced by ethical fashion brands is exhibitions. While the principal aim of conventional fashion shows is creating an enchanting, dreamy atmosphere that captivates its spectators to its orbit by leaving all of the explanations and history out, exhibitions are based on consolidating the visual objects with explanations. Exhibitions structurally provide mediums which stand at the opposite direction of fast flowing, consumerist language of fashion runways. They have a constant nature and idea, process and purpose behind the products are explained more clearly. Therefore they are mostly preferred by designers and institutions that contribute to ethical fashion design culture.

Martin Margiela's exhibitions epitomize ethical exhibitions that designers hold. A collection of his works including the Artisanal Line which praises human labour as the real source of value and criticises novelty obsessed value system of fashion by using old and used materials was exhibited in 2010 in Antwerp, Munich and London. In order to celebrate his 20 years in the fashion industry he chose holding an exhibition rather than a runway because exhibitions have the potential of elevating the value of products by differentiating them from conventional fashion consumables. In the exhibition, garments were represented on white dummies which are far from alluring the gaze of spectators, recycled materials used in the design process were

clearly stated. In this way the spectator, the consumer focuses only on the object of design and labour.



**Figure 33 Maison Martin Margiela Artisanal Elastic Band Jacket, Maison Martin Margiela '20' The Exhibition at Somerset House, 2010**

### 3.5.3. ETHICAL FASHION EDUCATION

The irresponsible and market oriented structure of design education has long been criticised by design theorists and historians who are actively working in academia.

One of the first reactions about the structure of design education came from the educator and designer Victor Papanek in the 1970s.

Education for designers is based on the learning of skills and the acquisition of a philosophy. It is unfortunate that in our design schools both of these are wrong. The skills we teach are too often related to processes and working methods of an age just coming to a close. The philosophy is an equal mixture of the kind of self-expressive bohemian individualism best expressed in *la vie boheme* and a profit-oriented, brutal commercialism (1972: 109).

For Papanek, the core of design education is grounded primarily on commercial concerns and it is far from considering social and ecological circumstances that the design object created in. Instead of directing the structure of the industry towards a socially and ecologically responsible direction, design education subserves the profit oriented structure of the industry and in that system design operates as a tool to escalate consumerism.

Another design theorist and educator Victor Margolin defined this way of education as “market model” (2002: 24). In the paper; “A “Social Model” of Design: Issues of Practice and Research” together with Sylvia Margolin, Victor Margolin criticises the educational structure that casts social outcomes of design out by embracing solely the concerns of the market.

When most people think of product design, they envision products for the market, generated by a manufacturer and directed to a consumer. Since the

Industrial Revolution, the dominant design paradigm has been one of design for the market, and alternatives have received little attention (V. Margolin and S. Margolin, 2002: 24).

Also in his paper “Design for a Sustainable World” Margolin emphasizes that general design education is restricted by the act of giving form to materials and design’s relation to other disciplines and natural or cultural system are rarely considered in that educational structure (1998). Besides this, he draws attention to the fact that if designers do not reinvent the structure of design, they will remain as part of the problem and the solution will come from other professions (ibid). In order to become a part of the solution designers are potent to the reinvention of design culture and certainly restructuring the educational system is of great significance.

In the light of Papanek’s and Margolin’s emphasis, it is certain that fashion design discipline needs to develop a more socially and environmentally responsible education system. Although in the field of industrial design and architecture sustainability culture was formed by the undergraduate and postgraduate degrees fashion has left behind. However some of the design schools added sustainable and ethical methods of design courses in their curriculums and there are new degrees at master level. Although these attempts are not fully embraced by education institutions entirely and social and environmental concerns are not at the centre of fashion design education objectives, they are still promising for the future of ethical fashion design.

Buckinghamshire New University has developed the first sustainability and ethics focused undergraduate fashion degree in the United Kingdom. Course leader Sian-Kate Mooney states that in the three year bachelors of arts program they provide an experimental and creative environment built upon an understanding of ecological and labour issues (Buckinghamshire New University, 2013).

Moreover, London Collage of Fashion has developed a postgraduate degree which is based on fashion and sustainability. The program called “MA Fashion and the Environment” aims to challenge current dynamics of fashion through design practice. Educating fashion professionals who can interpret the ecological, social and cultural consequences of their discipline can generate the possibility of changing the landscape of fashion industry (London Collage of Fashion, 2013).

In addition to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, design schools support ethical and sustainable fashion design by organizing conferences and establishing councils. For instance, Fashion Institute of Technology established The Sustainability Council to develop and foster sustainability initiatives throughout the FIT Community. Since 2007 the council holds a yearly conference on Sustainable Business and Design and provides a medium in which scholars and professionals share and develop ideas about ethical fashion. Furthermore as part of FIT’s initiative “FIT Forever Green” a yearly fund is given to support sustainable initiatives including educational projects, scholarly research, creative endeavours, procedural changes, new technologies, new methods of operation, or professional activities (FIT, 2013).



Increase in the number of these examples is highly important for ethical fashion to develop a new language on its own. Design education and collages are the point of origin for bringing up professional designers who can change the face of the system and industry entirely. If they are taught to understand social, cultural and environmental consequences of their designs they can be part of the solution.

### 3.6. ETHICAL DESIGN IN TURKEY

During the thesis an informal research was carried out on the development of ethical fashion in Turkey. It is observed that although Turkey is one of the biggest textiles and fashion producers of European countries, ethical fashion design culture hasn't been fully embraced yet. Despite of the fact that there are fashion and textile companies which produce organic and eco-friendly products, only a few of the ethical design solutions that are presented within this thesis are adopted by Turkish fashion brands. However practices applied by academics, design students and design schools are promising.

As a developing country, Turkish citizens are expected to be engaging actively in the process of design or production of their own clothing however it is certain that shopping malls have made a great contribution to the formation of consumer culture in Turkey. Especially in big cities such as İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara cheapness of apparels due to the impact of mass manufacturing and shopping malls, repairing

culture, traditional crafts and act of sewing is diminishing. Lack of social awareness on fashion production and ethics help consumer culture inadvertently. Nevertheless there are entrepreneurship practices, exhibitions, workshops, and festivals which are promising and signal the formation of an ethical design culture.

The research was started in Beyoğlu, Istanbul. As the initial purpose was to find designers that practice up-cycling, Cihangir and Galata regions where second hand and alternative fashion shops accumulated were investigated. After a web-based research and analysis of design magazines, nine second-hand shops were selected. During the interviews it is found out that four of these shops have been closed due to lack of awareness and interest in second-hand items in Istanbul. Five shop owners and sale persons that sell second-hand apparel were interviewed in the shops called as; Mozk, Pied a Poul, Şeymel, Sentetik Sezar Vintage and Petra Vintage.

The main purpose of questions was to measure their level of awareness on the second hand and up-cycled garments in preventing environmental pollution and standing against the novelty dictating, centralized and standardized norms of ready to wear industry. According to the responses it would be right to state that their level of awareness on ethical fashion was lower than it was expected. None of them developed an ethical point of view towards second-hand culture and thought it in a different context which is out of consumer culture. Petra Vintage and Pied a Poul support and realize clothing exchange in Turkey, but two of them stated that they purchase the garments from non-Turkish sellers, from second-hand shops that are in England, Italy, France, Belgium and Germany. According to their remarks it can be

claimed that they embrace an elitist approach to second-hand culture. Because within the scope of ethical fashion these shops were expected to protect firstly the environment that they are living in which is in this case Turkey, however they create their own niche market which is similar to conventional fashion system norms in terms of valuing and commodity based approach.

Apart from these second-hand boutiques there was a store which embraced a different approach to design and second-hand which is called as Nahıl. It is a commercial enterprise founded in 2003 by Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW). Main goal of Nahıl is to support and provide sustainable source of income to low-income women by marketing their creative works. The income acquired from two shops, which are in Istanbul and in Mardin is used to support women's labour and children's education. This store located in Istanbul was composed of two floors and one of these floors was assigned to second hand garments and items which were donated to Nahıl in order to be sold and provide income for women and children. Until now more than 10,000 children had preschool education and more than 3000 women had the possibility of developing business or producing and selling their products in Nahıl shops.

Apart from second hand garments, Nahıl has a wide product range including clothing, accessories, personal care and spa products, home decoration products, stationary supplies and toys for children. Clothing and accessories that are produced within Nahıl are made from eco-friendly and natural materials. The operational structure of Nahıl is parallel with the three lines of reflection of Slow Fashion Movement.

Women producing for Nahıl are using local materials and local crafts or methods of production. Moreover they make a point of choosing organic or recycled materials in order to produce in an eco-friendly manner.



**Figure 34 Handmade Scarf out of Felt and Crochet with Turkish Motif sold at Nahıl**

Argande is another brand that practices Slow Fashion Movement's principles. Argande launched its first collection in 2009 and started to be displayed in 17 stores of MUDO which is one of the biggest retail companies of Turkey. It is a social responsibility project created in the scope of "Innovations for Women Empowerment in the GAP Region" run by the GAP Regional Development Administration with technical support from UNDP and financing from the Swedish International

Cooperation and Development Agency. Design coordination is done by Turkish designer Hatice Gökçe and designs are created by leading Turkish designers. Designs are manufactured by 145 south-eastern women who were unemployed and having a small income. Revenue gained from sales are directly and totally transferred to these women who are manufacturing



**Figure 35 Silk dress by Argande, Spring / Summer 2011 manufactured by south-eastern women in Turkey**

Besides benefiting from local workforce in Argande collections mainly local fabrics which are peculiar to south eastern part of Turkey are used. The collections were showcased in Istanbul Fashion Week in 2010 and 2011. In addition to MUDO stores, collection is sold on the internet to make it more accessible. Although these kinds of entrepreneurships are promising for the future of ethical fashion in Turkey, there are

a couple of weaknesses in the marketing and design process of Argande. Firstly, Mudo Stores that are selling Argande designs do not inform consumers about its ethical and responsible philosophy therefore a better way of presentation is certainly needed for consumers to recognize the activities of Argande. Secondly, although these products are produced in the south-eastern part of Turkey and the labouring is done by local women, local elements of design are missing to a great extent. Adoption of local crafts that are indigenous to the region could make a great contribution to the formation of a unique and local design language. Moreover, by this way, women workers can not only produce the garments, but also could play an active role in the design process. Thirdly although Hatice Gökçe is doing the design coordination permanently, designers change in every season. For the continuity and permanence of the brands identity it would be better to work with designers who take the responsibility of the brand one hundred per cent and guarantee to be involved in the process of design constantly. Lastly, as it is mentioned before, until now Argande displayed its collections in Istanbul Fashion Week twice with the contribution of volunteer models and personnel. Its involvement could be supported with organizations such as Association of Fashion Designers and it could get the chance to showcase constantly in Istanbul Fashion Week and become apparent by the help of Turkish fashion media.



**Figure 36 Argande's 2011 Spring / Summer collection were displayed on the runway during İstanbul Fashion Week on 27 August 2010**

Another entrepreneur that supports local workforce and evaluate waste by up-cycling is Çöp(m)adam. Çöp(m)adam aims to provide solutions to problems of unemployment of women and recycling in Turkey. It was started as a local development project in Ayvalık by Tara Hopkins and Melih Özsöz whose goal is to evaluate packaging wastes in a creative, aesthetical and unique way by the help of design. Today Çöp(m)adam carries on its business in two ateliers in Ayvalık and Diyarbakır. On one hand Çöp(m)adam empowers women who do not have a regular income throughout their life, and on the other hand by up-cycling wasted materials they protect the environment. Handmade bags are the main product marketed and

designed by Çöp(m)adam. Each piece has a unique design and a positive impact on environment and labourers. (<http://www.copmadam.com/>)



**Figure 37** Women working on bag design from package waste in Çöp(m)adam atelier, Ayvalık





**Figure 38 Wrapper Bag designed by Çöp(m)adam by using package waste**

Besides ethical business practices, organization of exhibitions on ethical fashion became influential in educating industry members and as well as consumers. An exhibition of this type was held in 2008, in Garanti Gallery which was entitled as; "Fashion for Sustainability". The curator of the exhibition Kate Fletcher gave a speech on sustainability and evaluation of resources on the second day of the exhibition 19 March, in Istanbul Technical University. Main goal of the exhibition was to emphasize the power of fashion in creating a positive change for the sake of sustainability. In order to do that products and process of global brands', independent designers', workers' were gathered and presented as a new fashion practice. The

exhibition was composed of six sustainability based subthemes; Evaluation of Resources, Fairness, Slowness, Cycling, Lightness and Engagement that emphasize a new agenda for fashion which is change based and become critical to consumerism by creating awareness. In addition to the exhibition, with the contribution of international experts workshops and seminars were organized and thus an open education atmosphere was created (Mimarlarodasi.org, 2013).

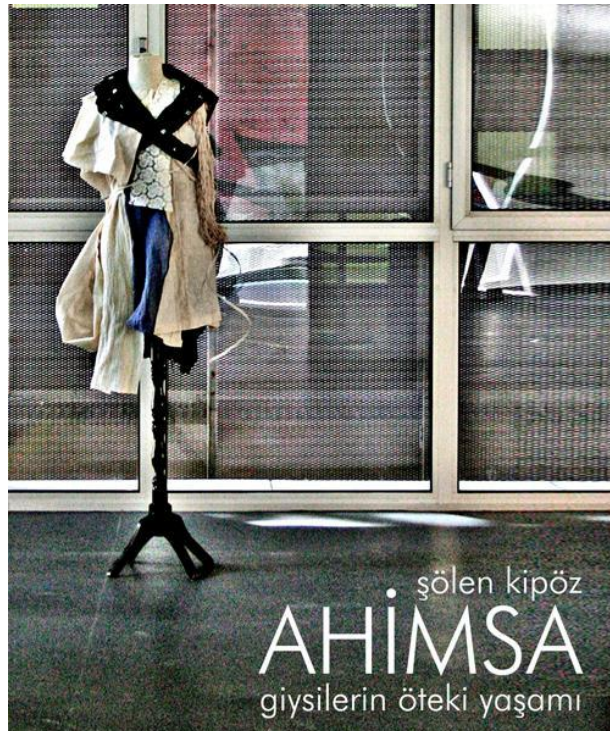
Another exhibition was organized in a Fashion school called as İstanbul Fashion Academy in 2009. The mobile exhibition “Eco Chic” which was held with collaboration of Swedish Institute and the Swedish Consulate in İstanbul, presented 16 designs of 14 Swedish fashion designers including Filippa K., Julian Red and Dem Collective. Within the framework of the exhibition, a seminar and two workshops were organized. Designer Annika Axelsson and ecological design instructor Marcus Bergman emphasized the significance of designers’ role in changing the direction of fashion. According to them, design is effective 80 per cent on the environmental impact of the products produced. Within the frame of sustainability the role of designers’ and design is becoming more important than ever before. With the workshops and seminars designers and educators drew attention to the significance of design for ethical fashion and raised the awareness of participants (<http://www.istanbulmodaakademisi.com/>).



**Figure 39** Two designers taught how to design simple dresses by using organic and used fabrics at Eco Chic Exhibition held in İMA in 2009

Ahimsa was another inspiring exhibition which was prepared by designer and academic Şölen Kipöz in İzmir in 2012. Being the first conceptual fashion exhibition of Turkey; Ahimsa was prepared within the frame of sustainable and ethical fashion design understanding. The point of departure for the exhibition was Slow Fashion Movement and the pieces that were designed by Kipöz were highlighting the power of design in creating eco-friendly, ethical and aesthetical garments in an experimental way. The term “Ahimsa” means kindness and non-violence. It emphasizes the necessity of considering all living beings as a unity and accepts that they are connected. The concept is translated into fashion practice as respecting aged and used garments with an attempt to give new lives to them. Being

based on the core idea of Ahimsa, the pieces that were exhibited were emphasizing that the designer, producer, consumer and the environment are on the same line. Transparency in production systems, respecting nature, humanity, memory and materiality paved the way for generating a new design understanding which protests irresponsible and consumption and novelty obsessed nature of conventional fashion system in a virtuous manner. 12 garments which were prepared under three concepts; Nearest Things, The Old News, and De-structured contributed to the emergence of a new design culture in Turkey which is based on ethical and slow fashion movements. By adopting up-cycling as a method, the design practice applied by the designer is among the first projects that realised in Turkey one hundred per cent by a Turkish designer.



**Figure 40 AHİMSA: A conceptual fashion exhibition based on sustainability, ethics and slow fashion held in İzmir, in 2012**



**Figure 41 Naive: Up-cycling grandmother's dress from 1940s, 19th century silk cotton shirts and designer's shirt into a new ensemble**

Another project realized by Şölen Kipöz is called as Clean Cloth Design Workshop. Together with designer Jörn Fröhlich who is instructing at the Department of Fashion and Textile Design at Izmir University of Economics they conducted two workshops with different profile of students in 2013. The aim of the workshops was to create awareness on ethical fashion and environmental issues among young students by encouraging them to reevaluate down-cycled materials from our everyday lives. For the first workshop that took place in Izmir University of Economics, university members donated their cleaning cloths which are made of garment remnants. Kipöz

and Fröhlich provided these clothes and incited the students to designing and realizing fashionable garments. The second one was organized in Denizli, Buldan with vocational fashion school students, in which the students brought their own used garments. This project is significant in terms of creating awareness on ethical issues on students who are studying design, because in Turkey there is lack of courses and workshops that is based on informing design students about ethics and sustainability issues.



*İrem Aşılbal*  
*Winner of the Clean Cloth Design Workshop*  
*Clean Cloth Tasarım Atölyesi'nin Birincisi*

**Figure 42** The process of up-cycling ended with a competition at University of Economics, one of the students' was rewarded with Sass Brown's book called as "Eco Fashion".

Events, seminars and workshops are supporting the evolution of ethical design in Turkey. "Cloth Swapping" is an event that has been organized 16 times in Istanbul, Berlin Goteborg and Istanbul Design Biennale by three entrepreneurs; Hasan Cenk

Dereli, Nazlı Ödeyici and Fulya Tekin. The project is based on the idea of eliminating fashion waste and acting against the dictations of consumer culture by embracing sustainable activities. The participants of the event usually meet at different points of İstanbul such as art galleries, design ateliers, clubs and bring 10-15 pieces of clothes, bags, shoes, gloves, scarves, belts, ties, hats, accessories which are still good in shape. The participants are given a ticket for each item they give away and they can take as much as they want with their tickets. Besides swapping the garments participants can attend interactive design ateliers and workshops in which they have the possibility of designing or altering their own garments. In this way the participants not only contribute to the formation of second-hand and recycle culture in Turkey but also they engage in Do it yourself and participatory design activities. At the end of the events clothes that are left over are donated to schools and/or charities.



Figure 43 Poster of Cloth Swapping Event

These examples surely do not comprise all of the activities and practices that are taking place in Turkey. However they still illustrate the situation that in Turkey ethical fashion design hasn't been professionalized and individuals haven't embraced it as a business model yet. The initiatives remain at the level of being social responsibility projects. Nevertheless when the philosophy of ethical design is considered starting with social responsibility projects and incentive of academics shouldn't be underestimated. In the prevalence of idea of responsibility and awareness, academics that teach at universities and project initiators are substantially influential. However lack of independent and responsible media is one of the biggest obstacles that these individuals and institutions face. Due to the lack of conscious media in Turkey the scope of ethical fashion design is degraded into use of organic materials only. Designers' and fashion brands' ignorance to environmental and social issues confronts formation of consumer demand towards ethically designed and produced fashion items. Events and workshops on ethical fashion must become widespread in Turkey. Academics and instructors such as Kipöz and Fröhlich play a significant role in shaping the formation of ethical practices because they raise a new generation of designers in Turkey. Integrating social and environmental responsibility to their design understanding via education will certainly be helpful in the formation of ethical design culture in Turkey.



## 4. CONCLUSION

This study was set out to investigate the notion of ethical fashion. Throughout the study, potency of design in generating a change in the operational structure of dominating fashion system was explored. Its main objective was to create awareness on the consequences of conventional fashion system in begetting wasteful consumption, environmental and cultural degradation by presenting the solutions that emanated within the discourse of ethical fashion.

In order to do this the body of the thesis is structured in two main parts. The content of the second chapter was dedicated to illustrate the process of production and consumption in conventional fashion system from social, cultural and economic perspectives. Introduction of the negative consequences of the conventional system in this chapter provided a ground for the embodiment of the ethical solutions that are presented in the third chapter. That is to say, the third chapter came out as a response to the problems that the second chapter comprised.

In this respect, the two chapters of the study propounded the following findings and outputs;

Second chapter:

- By the beginning of the twentieth century, significance of consumption has been reshaped with the impact of consumer culture. Along with the

proliferation of mass production technologies a new era started in which, in terms of fashion consumption, we moved from the “economy of needs” to economy of desire and pleasure” (Baudrillard, 2004).

- As a consequence of the birth of mass society there has been a transition from class fashion to consumer fashion (Crane, 2000). Reaching material novelty became the only way of getting pleasure and this process is followed by the notion planned obsolescence which shortens the lifespan of fashion commodities and leads to wasteful consumption.
- Star designers, opinion leaders, fashion magazines, fashion capitals such as Paris, London, Milan; institutionalization of fashion as an established organization with French Fashion Trade Organization formed a hierarchy among cultures, cities and designers. The hierarchy that make up the culture of fashion incurred imposition of fashion consumption. Among these actors the fashion media has played a major role in the inducement and imposition of consumerism.
- Propensity of consumption that has been triggered with the impact of the fashion media was consolidated with the proliferation of shopping spaces such as department stores, shopping malls globally.
- At the end of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and by the beginning of the new millennium because of the impacts of globalization, free market economy and commercial treaties; sourcing, manufacturing and marketing of apparel has started to be effective worldwide. Developed countries outsourced

manufacturing of apparel to developing countries where working conditions and wages are poor. As a result, there has been an inequality among nations and countries that adopted the mission of design and innovation and countries that are manufacturing.

- By the beginning of 1990s fast fashion production emerged as a new system. The core of fast fashion was based on the shortening of the whole business cycle throughout the chain from raw materials to the consumer and accordingly providing cheap and fashionable products by introducing up to twenty collections annually. Companies that take part in fast fashion promote low quality, disposable fashion products to generate higher sales regardless of considering the adverse impact of these cheap consumables upon humans and environment.
- Operational structure of the dominating system brought along a good deal of problems such as;
  - Consumers become dependent on an industry which passivates them by dictating certain styles and consumption patterns which are promoted by a network of professional individuals and institutions.
  - Workers are exploited due to low salaries and sweatshop conditions. Employees, ordinary designers and producers are put on psychological and physical burden and it degrades the role of design and designers into merely shaper of commodities.

- By creating low quality products and using toxic chemicals it threatens health of consumers and workers during the production process and use. Moreover it leads to environmental pollution.
- The relation between design, production and consumption became linear which means design is used as tool to increase the consumption.

Third chapter:

- Throughout the study it is emphasized that repositioning of design and design culture can provide solutions to the problems of production and consumption. When the linear operational structure of dominating fashion system is replanned and transformed to a cyclic one design can provide a balance between production and consumption.
- Solution seeking to negative consequences of production and consumption process is brought to fashion system's agenda by dint of the sustainability culture which is formed with the impact of conferences and forums such as; United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and Rio Earth Summit.
- Ethical fashion understanding which was born in the 1960s and 1970s as part of do it yourself culture was systemized by Slow Fashion Movement during the 2000s. With the impact of slow fashion movement, euro-centric, standardized, global operation of fashion design has been transformed. Open and transparent production systems, use of local materials, local crafts, local

know-how, local workforce has seen to become challenging for the standardized entity of conventional fashion design system. Praising quality over quantity, diversity over monoculture and encouraging the active involvement of user to creation of sustainable products became the keys to change the existing dynamics of design, production and consumption.

- It is observed that when the role of designer is not reduced to merely shaping objects and giving form to commodities and he/she gains different roles such as; educator, activist, facilitator, entrepreneur; fashion and novelty perception of the consumers can change. Going beyond the conventional fashion system that approaches designers as dictators of certain styles, servants of the market economy and makes them ignorant towards social reality, helps designers to annihilate their dominance and ignorance over consumers and employees. Encouraging the active involvement of consumers and employees to design process provides a more democratic atmosphere that lays the way for ethical implementations.
- Questioning the notion of novelty and approaching old and used materials as valuable source for fashion design can subvert value mechanism of conventional fashion system which is based on the appreciation of physical and material novelty.
- Encouraging consumers to repairing, reusing and redesigning their apparel prevents disposal and prolongs the lifecycle of products, thus protects the environment.

- Multi-functional and adaptable design strategy indicated that in order to acquire variety and novelty in fashion, neither designers nor consumers need to appeal brand new garments. Creative involvement of the user and intelligently designation of resources and apparel can originate change and novelty.
- Materials are the essential part of the ethical design problem. Since they are the core of fashion production they dominate the direction of fashion design. Designers are responsible for the material choice. Their decisions are of capital importance in directing the direction of fashion towards an ethical direction. By choosing environmentally-friendly and fairly produced materials, designers can eliminate the negative impact of fashion system on workers, farmers, consumers and environment.
- In order to popularize and infuse the philosophy of ethical fashion to consumers and industry members, ethical fashion develops its own unique language. This unique language is being formed with the active participation of designers, institutions, educational establishments and with an independent and responsible media because ethical fashion cannot be represented from the perspective of conventional fashion system.

This research indicates that fashion industry needs a holistic approach to design, production and consumption processes. The role of design in directing the process of production and consumption is essential to the formation of an ethical fashion system because the principal role of design is providing solutions to problems that are

generated within any system. When design do not let the consumer culture shape its identity and its objectives according to capitalist system's requirements, it becomes a tool for creating a system which is based on democratic, eco-conscious and socially responsive practices.

The study has offered an evaluative and informative perspective on the problematic of dominating fashion system and formation of ethical fashion design culture. As a direct consequence of the analysis of ethical design profoundly, the study encountered certain limitations. Firstly, during the exemplification of the design strategies only women's wear brands, designers and practitioners are chosen. The first reason of this is that the diversity and amount of ethical practices that are being experienced in the field of women's wear is much more than children, men's wear and accessories. Secondly the devastating impact of fashion industry on human and environment stems mainly from the wasteful consumption habits of women because the fashion industry and fashion media targets woman consumers more than men.

Secondly the research was limited with the perspective of design however perspective of design turned into a holistic view in a way to include production and consumption stages. The study proposed a cyclic model of operation as opposed to the linear structure of conventional fashion system. In this model the role of consumers and other actors in design process became as effective as designers'. Just as many other social movements, the ideology of ethical fashion has also pervaded from the bottom-up reactions of certain groups of people and later adopted by designers. According to my personal observations the second level of pervasion of

ethical fashion took place from designers to a specific group of people who are from intelligentsia; intellectual, culturally conscious and have raised environmental awareness. One of the biggest obstacles that ethical fashion encounters might be the lack of awareness of sustainability among mainstream designers and ordinary consumers. Further studies can focus on surveying the level of awareness created among these groups and look for a way to pervade ethical fashion philosophy to different levels of the society.

The last limitation was indispensable due to geographical and economical circumstances. Interviews with designers were limited with the ones who are in Turkey. It would be more meaningful to interview and check the accuracy of the information obtained from books and articles about the mentioned designers and brands. In the future these designers and brands can be taken as case studies and analyzed elaborately. On the other hand, since this thesis was written in Turkey, investigation of evolution Turkish ethical fashion became useful by making a contribution to the national fashion literature.

The research on Turkish ethical fashion showed that although there are very few brands that adopted ethical fashion as a business model, there is a great potential for its evolution in Turkey. The first reason is that while this study was being written “Occupy Gezi” protests started and spread all around Turkey. On 28 May 2003 it started as a reaction to Turkish Government’s decision about the urban development plan for Gezi Park. When trees in the park were cut down and riots attacked the innocent protestors it became a national protest. Besides its political impact it



showed that there is a new generation that is sensitive and reactive to environmental issues. Most of the principles that ethical design offered were put in practice by the protestors during the time that they spent in Gezi Park. They all engaged in DIY practices. Collectivism, participation and importance of communion are emphasized and all together they became the symbol of creative resistance. The protests proved that the future of sustainability might be promising in Turkey.

The second reason for finding Turkish ethical fashion promising is the realization of the fact that Turkish and especially Anatolian culture is autochthonously sustainable. DIY activities, reusing and reclaiming, application of local and traditional crafts are the practices that are embedded in the everyday life of the Anatolian people. Economical use of resources and sustainability is still a way of life for the majority of people of Turkey. The state of being effortlessly ethical and sustainable in Anatolia is worth to be researched profoundly for this reason it has the potential to be analyzed as a PhD subject.

Ethical fashion practices are at their primary phase. Adoption of ethical design comprises approximately thirty years of fashion design history, however a rapid progression is being observed. Functional, versatile, environmentally and socially conscious, local, intelligently planned designs constitute the core of ethical fashion because of this reason to my opinion transformable, adaptable, and customized designs are the most promising ones for the future of ethical fashion. This research showed that although conventional fashion might seem as if it promotes change and variety, with the impact of globalization it generated standardization and impaired

the very constituent and essence of fashion which is “change”. To sustain the essence of fashion, ethical fashion offered an intelligent devising of the system. It probably won't change the entire fashion system however by creating its own space within the conventional one; it will strengthen and pursue the existence of fashion's essence.

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