EXPANDED SUMMARY

Design movements in the new anthropocentric paradigm

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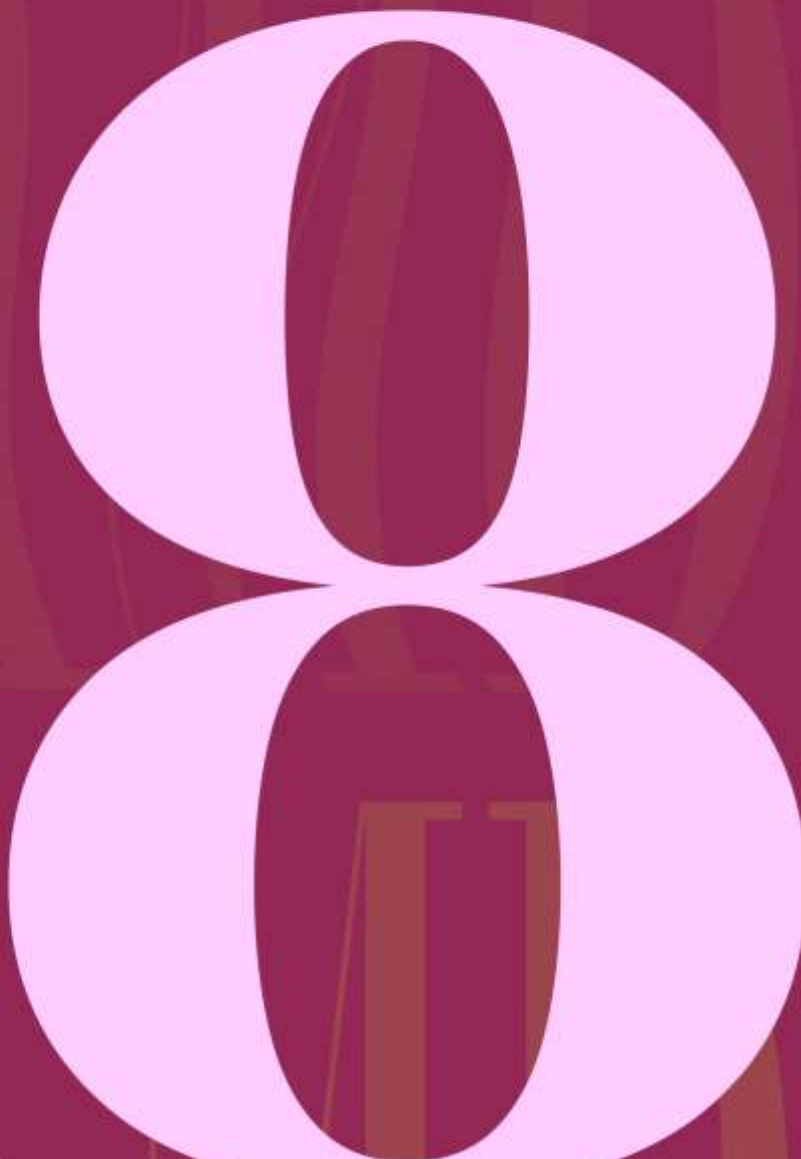

Introduction

In June 1972, the Earth Summit was held in Stockholm, Sweden, focusing on critical issues such as air pollution and the excessive consumption of natural resources. For the first time, various international governmental and non-governmental organizations, along with observers and journalists, acknowledged that human activities are responsible for the depletion of natural resources and the significant impact humanity has on the environment.

Climate scholars argue that achieving full sustainability requires a systemic, multi-scalar, and strategic approach. This includes the involvement of numerous professionals, particularly design experts, who must act as systemic agents within production systems to mitigate the harmful effects of human actions on the environment and address the climate imbalance currently being observed (CESCHIN & GAZIULUSOY, 2016).

This summary reflects on and suggests potential contributions from the field of design, based on a qualitative and descriptive research approach focused on representations, narratives, practices, and integrated design projects aimed at promoting people's well-being while embracing socio-environmental responsibility.

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Development

1 The concept of the Anthropocene

The concept of the Anthropocene is characterized by intense, impactful, and increasingly pervasive human activity within the biosphere. Anthropocentrism, a philosophical viewpoint, places humans at the center and focal point of value and importance in the universe, emphasizing the supremacy of humanity over all other forms of life and viewing the world primarily as existing to meet human needs and interests.

Since the last century, anthropocentrism has positioned human beings at the heart of environmental issues, justifying the indiscriminate exploitation of nature. In essence, the anthropogenic impact that began in the 20th century is recognized as the result of humanity's capitalist exploitation of the natural world.

2 Socio-environmental responsibility in the field of design

Today, designers strive to plan the entire life cycle of products, from the selection of materials to disposal or recycling, driven by the need to act with socio-environmental responsibility. Over the past five decades, a life-centered design system has emerged, rooted in the recognition of ecological unsustainability and the process of planned obsolescence within the cultural industry. This system reflects a reexamination of relationships, whether between humans alone or, more recently, involving other living beings.

In *Design for the Real World* (1984), Papanek argued that design projects should address real human needs and collaborate transdisciplinarily with communities. Therefore, it is essential to challenge and reshape both moral and business values to promote responsible social practices that protect, conserve, and enhance the environment.

3 The new Anthropocentric Paradigm in Modern Design

The **Anthropocentric Paradigm in Modern Design** refers to a human-centered approach in the design and development of products, services, and systems. This paradigm places human needs, capabilities, and experiences at the core of the design process, aiming not only to meet user demands but also to create more ethical, sustainable, emotionally engaging, and adaptable solutions for an ever-evolving world.

This approach significantly influences the field of design by fostering empathy in projects, valuing user experience, and promoting socio-environmental integration. It encourages the creation of intuitive and adaptable products while incorporating principles that positively reshape how products, services, and systems are conceived and developed.

Beyond immediate results, this paradigm emphasizes the anticipation and prevention of environmental and social impacts throughout a product's life cycle. It advocates for the selection of sustainable materials, responsible production processes, and mindful disposal and recycling practices. Furthermore, subjective, affective, and emotional aspects are integral to this approach, fostering meaningful connections through design.

4 Design movements opposing the anthropocentric vision

The following are the main movements that describe how design can contribute in opposition to the anthropocentric approach. It is important to note that these concepts are similar, and that there is no criterion between the best and the worst, the order of relevance and their use.

4.1 Green Design

Green Design focuses on clean, conscious, and efficient production by analyzing the entire life cycle of a product. It emphasizes recycling potential, environmental impact reduction, and the pursuit of fully sustainable design solutions.

4.2 Ecodesign

Ecodesign is a methodology that involves assessing and tracking a product's environmental impact throughout its life cycle—from conception to disposal (cradle to grave). It integrates sustainability considerations into every stage of the design and production process.

4.3 Sustainable Design

Sustainable Design is an approach centered on the creation of products, services, and environments based on the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental. The environmental dimension aligns with the Earth's natural cycles, ensuring long-term ecological balance.

4.4 Cradle to Cradle (C2C)

Developed in the 1990s by designer William McDonough and architect Michael Braungart, Cradle to Cradle (C2C) promotes a circular approach to resource management. It focuses on recovering and reusing materials within two distinct categories: (1) biological nutrients, which safely return to the environment, and (2) technological nutrients, which are continuously recycled and repurposed.

4.5 Biomimetic Design (Biomimetics)

Biomimetic Design, or simply Biomimetics, draws inspiration from nature’s elements and processes to create innovative products, architectural designs, and textiles. It is a creative imitation of nature’s intelligent solutions, adapting them for human use while fostering sustainability and efficiency. Biomimetics serves as a powerful tool for developing novel design methods.

4.6 Durable Design

Also known as Emotionally Durable Design, this approach advocates for reducing waste and minimizing the depletion of natural resources by fostering deeper emotional connections between users and products. It challenges the traditional concepts of obsolescence and disposal, replacing them with values such as attachment, evolution, and long-term use.

4.7 Transition Design

Transition Design is an emerging movement that extends beyond traditional design principles by incorporating transdisciplinary collaboration across various fields and sectors. Its goal is to address complex, systemic challenges by developing long-term, socially and environmentally responsible solutions with input from diverse stakeholders.

Key Principles of Design Movements in Contrast to the Anthropocentric Approach

These design movements emphasize:

- Reducing environmental impact
- Conserving natural resources
- Promoting a circular economy
- Enhancing health and well-being
- Fostering social responsibility
- Driving innovation and competitiveness

Conclusion

The **New Anthropocentric Paradigm** and the **Anthropocene period** highlight the shared responsibility of all human beings and the challenges faced by designers and other professionals in socio-cultural, moral, and economic contexts. Furthermore, the movements driving a shift in the economic-industrial approach to design have been identified and briefly presented, positioning design within the contemporary landscape.

Design holds significant responsibility, particularly when it aligns with the capitalist market solely for profit, producing aesthetically driven but low-quality, short-lived products. This practice contributes to a culture of waste, normalizing disposability and encouraging consumers to purchase new items for reasons such as status, fashion, or planned obsolescence. However, this responsibility can be

redefined by reexamining the designer's role as a **co-creator** and challenging the traditional norms that have shaped the development of objects, systems, and processes.

By embracing a shift in mindset and integrating principles from emerging design movements, designers can inspire new ways of living, reimagine social and economic structures, and promote a deeper respect for the interdependence of all beings—both human and non-human. This approach fosters a transdisciplinary collaboration where diverse fields work together to create more sustainable, ethical, and impactful solutions.

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