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Fashion As Aerial: Transmitting And Receiving Cyborg Culture - paper

Clynes' and Kline's (1960) conception of the cyborg sees a technological augmentation of the human body for the adverse conditions of space travel (Clynes, Manfred E. and Kline, Nathan S. (1960). *Cyborgs and Space*. In Gray, Chris Hables (ed.) (1995). *The Cyborg Handbook* (pp.29 - 33). London: Routledge). "Altering man's bodily functions to meet the requirements of extraterrestrial environments would be more logical than providing an earthly environment for him in space." Clynes and Kline discussed the possibility of altering human bodily processes through the implementation of artificial, self-organising biochemical, physiological, and electronic modifications. Yet regardless of the internal modifications or alterations the astronaut's body may have been subjected to, the paramount piece of technology enabling humankind's non-terrestrial flirtations was the 'exogenous device' of the spacesuit.

With thermostatic controls, radioactive protection, oxygenated breathing apparatus, buoyancy adjustments, and communicative capacities, the spacesuit provided the astronaut the flexibility and freedom needed to conduct the work intended. Industrial clothing, such as the spacesuit, is that which has been designed to withstand adverse conditions, protecting the human, and can be seen in extremes such as space travel, military and police conflict, arctic exploration, and deep-sea diving. On an everyday level, protective clothing forms part of many vocations.

We argue that these protective and supportive outfits act as ariels, transmitting social and cultural messages that feed into fashion's archives. The utility of the spacesuit, the sturdiness of outdoor gear, the vibrancy of protective wear, the need for interactive communication, can be seen exhibited in fashion through instances such as the backpack or utility belt, industrial branding of streetwear, vibrant dance attire, and personalised, accessorised mobile communication devices. Incorporated into fashion, 'cyborg style' in turn transmits a message back to industry, suggesting that style need not be separated from protection and function. And, indeed, the emerging fashion 'glamourborg' arouses desire and fuses intelligent functions with a distinct techno style.

Drawing on cyborg and fashion theory, this paper will draw from visual sources such as non-fiction documentaries, catwalks, film and magazine and journal images to reinforce key points.

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