Palliative Prototypes or Therapeutic Functionality? Examining C.P. Company's Urban Protection Range.

Professor Andrew Groves
University of Westminster
Email: mailto:a.groves@westminster.ac.uk
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-2756-9024

Human trauma – the body damaged and degraded, the mind uneasy, anxious and disturbed – was a reoccurring motif in art and fashion at the end of the twentieth century, with designers including Alexander McQueen, Hussein Chalayan and Comme des Garçons mobilising a dystopian aesthetic of decay and deathliness.[1] At the same time, a more optimistic – indeed, utopian – response to the imagined challenges of the impending twenty-first century was proposed by designer Moreno Ferrari, whose Urban Protection menswear range for C.P. Company embedded augmented technology within hybrid garments, creating multifunctional barriers intended to protect the wearer against the harms of the contemporary urban environment. Produced at a moment of collective cultural anxiety, these distinct approaches suggested fashion's anticipation of the future as both dystopian threat and utopian promise.[2]

This chapter examines the Urban Protection range through a thematic analysis of ten objects from the collection, emphasizing the complexity of Ferrari's proposition. The Urban Protection range was initially interpreted as embodying a utopian vision of the future in which wearable technology would augment the human body to withstand the challenges of the modern metropolis. However, the passing of time has repositioned these garments. While the inherent obsolescence of technology means that the garments' original functionalities have today been rendered ineffective, Ferrari's metaphysical framework, which employed a variety of semiotic strategies, has enabled the garments to transcend their material limitations. Accordingly, this chapter reads these garments as a rejection of the technology that they ostensibly embraced, and locates them in the context of a long tradition of artists and designers with a quasi-spiritual desire to start again from zero.

This chapter situates the Urban Protection range in relation to this volume's concept of 'curative things', paying particular attention to two frameworks: the palliative and the therapeutic. The term 'palliative' typically denotes a medical situation where there is no prospect of cure, and where treatment is therefore aimed at relieving symptoms and offering comfort.[3] The etymology of palliative, from the Latin verb *palliare*, meaning to cloak, cover or conceal, provides a conceptual connection to the Urban Protection line, which consisted

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[1] On trauma and art, see Hal Foster, 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic', *October* 78 (1996): 106–24. On fashion, see Caroline Evans, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003) and Rebecca Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001).

[2] On culture and anxiety at the end of the twentieth century, see Renata Salecl's *On Anxiety* (2004) and Timothy Bewes' *Reification* (2002).

[3] On the changing use of 'palliative' in medical journals from the mid nineteenth-century onwards, see Taubert M, Fielding H, Mathews E, *et al*, 'An exploration of the word 'palliative' in the 19th century: searching the BMJ archives for clues', *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care* (2013) 3: 26-30.

primarily of outerwear that cloaked, covered and protected the body.[4] This chapter argues that the garments in the Urban Protection range were initially understood as essentially palliative in intent, intended to soothe the somatic symptoms triggered in the wearer by the implicitly unhealthy urban environment. However, closer attention to Ferrari's semantic framing of these garments reveals that the garments were able to serve a psycho-therapeutic function, engaging the wearer on a metaphysical and spiritual, as well as merely physical, level.[5]

Antecedents to the Urban Protection range

In 1909, the Italian poet F. T. Marinetti published the 'Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' in several newspapers, including on the front page of *Le Figaro*.[6] The manifesto championed aggression, speed, poetry, automobiles and the modern industrial city, and lauded man's technological triumph over nature. Central to their artistic practise and dissemination of their revolutionary ideas was the creation of written clothing through the printed word. In 1914, Giacomo Balla, a key proponent of the Futurist movement, published The Futurist Manifesto of Men's Clothing.[7] It stated:

> We want Futurist clothes to be comfortable and practical:
> Dynamic
> Aggressive
> Shocking
> Energetic
> Violent
> Flying (i.e. giving the idea of flying, rising and running)
> Peppy
> Joyful
> Illuminating (in order to have light even in the rain)
> Phosphorescent
> Lit by electric lamps.

This litany of physical, emotional and technological characteristics associated with Futurist clothing can be understood as a direct precursor to Ferrari's approach. As Clark points out, 'the Futurists were not dress designers but painters, sculptors and poets. Dress to them was only one more active canvas upon which to work rhetorically.'[8]

In 1919, nearly 80 years before the Urban Protection range was created, the Italian Futurist Ernesto Michahelles, under the alias Thayaht, designed the TuTa, or what we now refer to as the boiler suit. Thayaht, who later worked for Madeleine Vionnet, saw the fusion of fashion

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[4] Lori Wiener et al., 'Threading the Cloak: Palliative Care Education for Care Providers of Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer,' *Clinical Oncology in Adolescents and Young Adults* 5 (9 January 2015): 1–18, https://doi.org/10.2147/COAYA.S49176.

[5] Deriving from the Greek *therapeutikos,* meaning to attend or to treat, the therapeutic is an elastic concept that sits somewhere between the palliative and the curative (a complex term unpacked in the introduction to this book).

[6] Christine Poggi, *Inventing Futurism: The Art and Politics of Artificial Optimism* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

[7] Giacomo Balla, *Le Vêtement Masculin Futuriste: Manifeste* (Milan: Direction du mouvement futuriste (IS), 1914).

[8] Judith Clark, 'Looking Forward Historical Futurism,' in *Radical Fashion*, ed. Claire Wilcox (Victoria & Albert Publications, 2001), 14

and art as an opportunity to imagine utopian clothing and, in doing so, posed the question, could fashion begin again from zero?[9] Thayaht's revolutionary aim of creating a rational and utopian garment, that was functional, democratic and transcended the restrictions of fashion, can be seen as a direct forerunner of the Urban Protection range. Thayaht disseminated the Tuta through the reproduction of images and its pattern in the Florentine newspaper *La Nazione* in July 1920, as well as though the distribution of a short film, postcards, and a brochure he had produced to promote the TuTa.[10] It is this dissemination, not primarily as a physical garment, but as what Barthes calls 'written clothing' and 'image clothing', that enabled the TuTa to undergo a transformation from functional garment to spectacle.[11] As Loscialpo argues, the TuTa symbolised a break with the past, a transition to a 'new' period, a pragmatic solution capable of bridging the 'real' and the 'ideal'.[12] Five years after the TuTa's emergence, Gerard Heard, the British writer and philosopher, was predicting the convergence of man, machine, and dress:

> But, if living beside a car has already had such effect, how much greater modification may be expected when the association becomes more intimate, and the man is seldom visible outside the machine, when it is his clothing? If like a snail possessed, we learn to carry a rushing house everywhere with us, it will be our costume and habit.[13]

As Wilson notes, dress had always played a central part in literary utopias.[14] For Thomas More, who coined the term, Utopia was a place where people wore plain clothes and fashion never changes.[15] Throughout the twentieth century, fashion designers returned to the concept of utopian dress, most notably in the 1960s, when, fuelled by the space race, designers began to present collections that appeared to suggest an egalitarian vision of dress in the twenty-first century. Among them were Pierre Cardin, André Courrèges, Paco Rabanne, and Hardy Amies, who also designed the costumes for Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film *2001: A Space Odyssey.* The use of uniformity of dress to suggest an idealised utopia was central to how these designers portrayed this predicted future. As Quinn observes: 'These visions of the future suggested fashion would eventually evolve away from the system that had existed for centuries towards a single, functional style of clothing.'[16]

Cardin's futuristic space-age Cosmocorps collection, shown in Paris in 1967, included womenswear outfits with abstract cut-outs as a decorative motif; however, such ornamental features were absent from the menswear presented. Instead, the designs emphasised the functional elements of the men's outfits such as zippers, belts, and pockets. Cardin's aesthetic echoed Thayaht's in this regard, proposing menswear stripped down to its most utilitarian and functional components. The American designer Rudi Gernreich further pared back clothing, augmenting what remained with innovative technology to propose a utopian, genderless future.

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[9] Djurdja Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre That Haunted Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2010), 1.
[10] Flavia Loscialpo, 'Utopian Clothing: The Futurist and Constructivist Proposals in the Early 1920s', *Clothing Cultures* 1 (1 October 2014): 229, https://doi.org/10.1386/cc.1.3.225_1.
[11] Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (London: Cape, 1985), 235.
[12] Loscialpo, 'Utopian Clothing.'
[13] Gerald Heard, *Narcissus an Anatomy of Clothes* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co Ltd, 1924).
[14] Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion and Modernity*, Rev. and updated ed (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 220.
[15] Thomas More, *Utopia*. (London: Cassell, 1901), 56
[16] Bradley Quinn, *Techno Fashion* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 6.

By the 1970s, Gernreich foresaw a future of functional clothing in which: 'Jewelry will exist only as a quality – that is, to hold something up or together, like a belt, of for information, like a combination wristwatch, weather indicator, compass and radio.'[17] As Palomo-Lovinski noted 'Gernreich envisioned an era in which designers would become technicians, "Once a designer can spray on clothing or transmigrate fabrics to the body, new things will happen."'[18] In the 1970s, these visions of the future were still utopian, treating clothing as indicative of a benign, calming, and peaceful technological future. In contrast, the cultural discourse of the 1990s displays a marked anxiety about the coming of the new millennium.

The Anxious Future

Writers such as Renata Saleci and Timothy Bewes identified the 1990s as a 'new age of anxiety', linking this to apparently unresolvable threats such as terrorist attacks and new illnesses, as well as to rapidly changing ideas about identity and subject-hood, and to the social and cultural anxieties of late capitalism.[19] The end of the twentieth century prompted numerous apocalyptic predictions included the second coming of Jesus Christ, the Tribulation, the Rapture, and the beginning of the war of Armageddon,[20] whilst increased reliance on technology led to the fear that with the arrival of the year 2000, computing infrastructures for industries ranging from banking to aviation would fail, with catastrophic consequences.[21]

For fashion designers working in the 1990s, the end of the twentieth century represented a significant source of anxiety for other reasons. The temporal nature of fashion meant that they were faced with the challenge of designing for a future that was both rapidly approaching and had already occurred: the fashion futurology of designers such as Cardin, Courrèges and Gernreich had already staked a claim on this future, forcing contemporary designers to adopt a different approach. As the artist Ad Reinhardt observed: 'The present is the future of the past, not the past of the future.'[22] This paradox presented new challenges, as by consciously destroying the past, fashion reaffirms its existence.[23]

In response to this collective anxiety, fashion designers became fixated on the temporal nature of fashion, transitioning from fashion as a form of industrial capitalism designed solely to sell clothes to fashion as a form of cognitive capitalism in which their practise utilised 'the body as a site for the deployment of discourses.'[24] Some designers, including Alexander McQueen, Olivier Theyskens, and Comme des Garçons chose to locate their response to this anxiety within the decaying, diseased, or deceased body: for McQueen in particular, this was often

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[17] Rudi Gernreich, 'Fashion for the '70s', *LIFE*, 9 January 1970.
[18] Noel Palomo-Lovinski, *The World's Most Influential Fashion Designers: Hidden Connections and Lasting Legacies of Fashion's Iconic Creators*, 1st edition (New York, N.Y: B E S Pub Co, 2010), 126.
[19] (On Anxiety, 2004 and Reification, 2002).
[20] Christopher Walker, 'Israelis on Alert for Millennium Suicide Invasion.,' *The Times*, 22 October 1998, http://global.factiva.com/redir/default.aspx?P=sa&an=t000000020010927duam018k0&cat=a&ep=ASE.
[21] Michele A Schottenbauer et al., 'Computers, Anxiety, and Gender: An Analysis of Reactions to the Y2K Computer Problem,' *Computers in Human Behavior* 20, no. 1 (1 January 2004): 67, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0747-5632(03)00044-X.
[22] Ad Reinhardt, 'Twelve Rules for a New Academy,' *Art News* 56, no. 3 (1957): 37–38.
[23] Caroline Evans and Alessandra Vaccari, eds., *Time in Fashion: Industrial, Antilinear and Uchronic Temporalities* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 119.
[24] Valerie Steele, 'Letter from the Editor,' *Fashion Theory* 1, no. 1 (1 February 1997): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.2752/136270497779754589.

combined with a latent sexuality.[25] These designers reaffirmed Benjamin's observation that fashion initiates a '…dialectical exchange between woman and ware—between carnal pleasure and the corpse.'[26]

For other designers, such as Hussein Chalayan, Simon Thorogood, and Moreno Ferrari, their response was to see the body as a site for augmentation, transformation, and metamorphosis via its interface with technology. Both positions can be interpreted as a reaction against the increasingly commodified environment in which designers were expected to operate at the turn of the twentieth century. The establishment of the luxury fashion conglomerate Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH) in 1987 and the retail conglomerate Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (PPR) in 1994, meant the designer's role became both elevated and expendable, with couture houses employing and dismissing creative directors at an accelerating rate. A new generation of designers began to question their role within this corporate system and started to subvert the parameters in which their practice was situated by using the mechanisms and artefacts of the fashion system to explore ideas that resisted commodification and challenged the fashion industry's value system. Julian Roberts launched the label Nothing Nothing in 1998 by sending press and buyers invitations to a non-existent show; Alexander McQueen presented models wrapped in cling film; and Martin Margiela displayed garments sprayed with mould that grew across their surfaces. While Barthes once described fashion as a "vengeful present" that sacrifices the signs of the previous year, these designers were determined to collapse fashion's temporal structure further by sabotaging their work at the time of its creation.[27]

All of these acts (the collection which does not exist, the garment that exists only once, and the clothes that are already decaying) can be interpreted as a continuation of the Futurists' utopian aspirations to determine whether fashion could start again from zero.[28] At the same time as these designers were trying to reset fashion's clock, others were also attempting to reframe our perception of time itself. Established in 1996, The Long Now Foundation sought to promote slower, better thinking, proposing the construction of the Clock of the Long Now, which would keep time for 10,000 years, ticking only once a year.[29] This desire to think beyond the short term was simultaneously taking place within multinational corporations such as Phillips which had identified fashion as an effective vehicle for integrating its emerging technology to make it more palatable to consumers. Their 1996 *Vision of the Future* exhibition in Eindhoven posed the question: 'How would life be in 2005?' The project explored new product and service concepts across multiple 'domains' of life – personal, domestic, public, and mobile.[30] Their proposals included multimedia clothing with embedded radio chips and drawstring collars equipped with earpieces.[31] Philips launched their Wearables project in 1997 in response to the event, which resulted in a collaboration with Levi's called Industrial Clothing Division and the

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[25] Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety*, 85.
[26] Walter Benjamin, Walter Benjamin, and Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Howard Eiland and Kevin MacLaughlin, First Harvard University Press paperback edition (Cambridge, Mass. And London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 62.
[27] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 1985, 288.
[28] Bartlett, *FashionEast: The Spectre That Haunted Socialism*, 2010,1.
[29] Tim Radford, 'The Time of Our Lives,' *The Guardian*, 12 June 1999. 43
[30] Stefano Marzano, Vision of the Future, Fourth Edition (Philips, 1998).
[31] Miller Freeman, 'Future Perfect - Philips Vision of The Future,' *Electronics Times*, 20 June 1996.

commercial release of four wearable jackets in 2000.[32] Though the accompanying book identified the compression of time and an ever-increasing rate of living as critical issues to address, the project itself only gazed ten years into the future. Looking too far ahead can cause us to ponder a time when we are either no longer alive or, worse, have become obsolete. As Arnold noted: 'Perhaps the greatest anxiety has been that the encroachment of technology will cause loss of self, that machines will take over the work and leisure activities of humans, and identity will be lost through such interaction.'[33] Joe Hunter and Adam Thorpe, who founded Vexed Generation in 1995, were among the first designers to react against the growing intrusion of this technology into everyday life. In response to the increased use of surveillance on the streets in London they created a series of garments designed to conceal the wearer from closed circuit television cameras (CCTV). While in Tokyo, Kosuke Tsumura created Final Home, a jacket designed as a wearable shelter, with pockets that could be filled with newspaper for insulation and then donated to a homeless shelter after it had been used.[34] While at Samsonite, Milan-based designer Neil Barrett was researching wearable technology and developing garments that had pop-up reading lamps and built-in cell phone earpieces.[35]

C.P. Company and Moreno Ferrari

In 1971, designer Massimo Osti established the Italian menswear label C.P. Company.[36] During its first 25 years, it primarily produced menswear from natural fibres such as linen, cotton, leather, and wool. Even though the brand's ideal man might not actually live in the countryside, they wore clothing that reflected romanticised notions of nature and its materials. In 1997, following Massimo Osti's departure, Moreno Ferrari was appointed creative director of C.P. Company. Ferrari immediately repositioned the brand, abandoning its material connection to nature in favour of an exploration of the urban man-made environment. His designs were unified by the use of an industrial nylon, Dynafil TS-70, in the construction of nearly all of the Urban Protection collection. This industrial material was discovered by Ferrari while researching the capabilities of safety workwear to protect the wearer from polluted environments. It provided a barrier that was resistant to abrasion, tearing, oil, and water. Ferrari rejected the notion that natural fabrics were intrinsically superior, opting instead for the fabric of the industrial worker, echoing More's vision of dress in Utopia, '…why should a fine thread be thought better than a coarse one?'[37] In its materiality, Ferrari's work exemplified Benjamin's assertion that: 'Fashion stands in opposition to the organic. It couples the living body to the inorganic world.'[38] Speaking in 2019 about his radical repositioning of the C.P. Company aesthetic Ferrari said:

> I was intrigued by the notion of people migrating from the countryside to the city. There was already an idea of a smart city, an idea of pollution, and an idea of how your body could act as a shield. I was interested in ways of reducing rather than producing, in ways of condensing everything that can be done around a piece of

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[32] Joseph Gleasure, 'An Expanded History of Levi's ICD+ & Philips' Wearable Electronics Program – Shell Zine,' *Shell Zine* (blog), accessed 10 February 2022, https://shellzine.net/levis-icd/.
[33] Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety*, 27.
[34] Andrew Bolton, *The Supermodern Wardrobe*, 1st edition (London: V&A Publications, 2002), 48.
[35] Natasha Singer, 'The Suit That Makes You Feel as Good as Prozac,' *The New York Times*, 11 June 2000. Sec 6, 72
[36] Daniela Facchinato, *Ideas from Massimo Osti*, 01 edition (Bologna: Damiani, 2012).
[37] More, *Utopia*.
[38] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 8.

> clothing into a body, and in ways of making the item functional in a meaningful way for the person wearing it.[39]

In this regard, Ferrari's approach is aligned with Loschek's assertion that the body's appearance is always the constructed body; that it is not a representation of nature, but of culture.[40] Talking about his approach to design, Ferrari said: 'There are so many things one can do with a body and an object that becomes inseparably attached to it as a sort of artificial extension!'[41] His creation of the Urban Protection range, which incorporated complex, mostly concealed technology into each garment, could be considered a form of prosthetics, a method of augmenting, extending, and enhancing the body and its functions.

Informed by Balla's *Futurist Manifesto of Men's Clothing* and emulating Thayaht's TuTa, Ferrari proposed a series of rational garments that explored the relationship between man and his environment. These included a jacket that detected pollutants in the air and alerted users via an LED screen; a parka with an inbuilt anti-smog filtration mask; a trench coat enhanced with hidden electronics that played soothing music; and a jacket with an integrated personal safety device that emitted a loud, piercing scream. However, while the physical garments had inbuilt functionalities that appeared to address specific physical and environmental challenges, Ferrari, like Thayaht and Balla before him, was more interested in the creation and dissemination of his ideas as written clothing. He employed a variety of semiotic strategies to create both 'vestimentary clothing' and 'written clothing,' with the latter serving as a signifier for the former.[42]

Ferrari developed a linguistic taxonomy for the Urban Protection range, giving the garments evocative names such as Metropolis, Atlas, Munch, Life, and Amaca. Attached to each garment within the Urban Protection range was a clear plastic clip-on holder containing an identification card detailing the garment title, materiality, and technical properties. The accompanying text also alluded to ancient concepts of protection by including a phrase that spoke to the garment's more abstract qualities:

> No noise, for inner life, a new womb to listen to silence.
> Freedom of thought, poetry for the soul
> Between sky and earth man's consciousness

These cards are critical to understanding Ferrari's intent with the Urban Protection range. They appropriate the conventions of the art gallery label (listing the title, maker, and medium) to frame our understanding of these objects as abstractions of their ostensibly functional purpose. In doing so Ferrari, like Thayaht before him, produced a poetic mutation, as his work shifted from function to spectacle.[43] This linguistic structure established a system for viewing Ferrari's artistic output as a continuous body of work that transcended the seasonal fashion system's temporal constraints.

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[39] Jonathan Faiers, 'In Conversation - Lorenzo Osti and Moreno Ferrari' (Ambika P3, London, 31 October 2019).
[40] Ingrid Loschek, *When Clothes Become Fashion: Design and Innovation Systems*, English ed (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2009), 169.
[41] Cristina Morozzi, *Carlo Rivetti: C.P. Company - Stone Island* (Milano: Automobilia, 2001), 84–85.
[42] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 1985, 25.
[43] Barthes, 235.

Fig. 1 Attached to the various Urban Protection jackets is an identification card holder.

Object-based analysis of the Urban Protection range

In contrast to the normal practise in the fashion industry, where designers frequently change direction each season, the overarching concept of the Urban Protection range remained consistent from 1997 to 2001.The continuity of material, colour and process across multiple seasons was a rejection of the fashion system's temporal structure, which demands constant seasonal change. Ferrari refused to employ any of the conventional design techniques typically used by fashion to signify seasonal change. This resistance rendered the garment's surface devoid of print, embellishment, or texture, echoing the TuTa's modernist, unadorned aesthetic. By rejecting the desire to engage with the materiality of the garment's surface, he further abstracted each item to its conceptual narrative. Indeed, his use of materials seemed to align his work to More's Utopia, which envisaged clothing to all be monochrome and cut to the same silhouette.[44] Yet these are not the utopian garments predicted in the 1960s by designers such as Cardin, Courrèges, and Paco Rabanne for the new century. Ferrari was far too close to the dawn of the twenty-first century to regard it as some distant utopia. Neither was his work part of the dystopian vision of the future created by other designers in the 1990s such as Alexander McQueen, Martin Margiela, and Rick Owens. Instead, Ferrari positioned his work outside the norms of the fashion system, where the passage of time could not be measured by the shifting seasonal changes inherent to men's attire. It could, therefore, be viewed as existing in a heterotopia, a termed coined by Michel Foucault to describe a distorted utopia that can exist within the world, reflecting, yet distorting other spaces.[45] Lefebvre defined heterotopia as 'the other space and the space of the other.'[46] While for Dehaene and De Cauter it characterised 'the tension between place and non-place.' [47] Marc Auge's exploration of the non-place in his 1995 book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* influenced Ferrari's approach to the Urban Protection range.[48] Curator Andrew Bolton noted that their functionality aligned with the transitional spaces of the airport, highway, and subway,[49] while Ferrari described these non-places as, '…anonymous spaces which annul our soul; a soul which we all pretend to forget about, but which can suddenly re-emerge to remind us who we are and what we really need.'[50]

In their materiality and design, the objects produced for the Urban Protection range intentionally resist a surface reading. The similarity of these objects' external appearance necessitates the inclusion of detailed descriptions as part of this approach. The following section investigates the Urban Protection range through an object-based analysis, grouping them according to the themes of sound, air, and motion. Several of Ferrari's contemporaries in fine art explored similar motifs in their work, which provide an additional framework for understanding his output.

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[44] Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams*, 220.
[45] Michel Foucault, 'Texts/Contexts: Of Other Spaces,' in *Grasping the World*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 371–79, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429399671-24.
[46] Henri Lefebvre, *La révolution urbaine.* ([Paris]: Gallimard, 1970), 172.
[47] Michiel Dehaene and Lieven de Cauter, eds., *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.
[48] Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London; New York: Verso Books, 1995).
[49] Bolton, *The Supermodern Wardrobe*, 66.
[50] Morozzi, *Carlo Rivetti*, 84.

Fig. 2 Garments from the Urban Protection range. Top Row: Metropolis, L.E.D., and Atlas. Second row: R.E.M., Life, and YO. Third row: Munch, Move, and Rest.

Air

The first three garments examined in this chapter are concerned with air and its relationship to health: the air of the polluted city; the air used in flotation devices to keep us alive; or the possibility that the air may contain lethal contaminants that could cause us serious harm.

In 1997, the Metropolis jacket became the very first garment to be released from C.P. Company as part of the Urban Protection range.[51] The black nylon jacket was constructed from Dynafil TS-70 and was lined with a high-density double fleece lining. Its material made it almost indistinguishable from a security guard's jacket. The attached plastic clip-on identification holder further reinforced this interpretation. The I.D. card for the Metropolis contained the phrase, 'No smog, for protection, a shell for consciousness.' The jacket was advertised as having pockets large enough to accommodate 'computers, mobile phones, and documents' and featured a detachable anti-smog mask that attached to the hood and covered the lower half of the wearer's face. However, the jacket's hip-length cut indicated that it was not designed for cyclists, as might be presumed, but for men moving through an urban environment. Ferrari explained, 'I made the Metropolis jacket to say that C.P. Company has to acknowledge the dystopic city as well.'[52] As a statement of intent, with its use of synthetic textiles and deliberate emphasis on the difficulties of living in polluted cities, it was diametrically opposed to C.P. Company's former 'heritage' aesthetic; Ferrari was starting again from zero.

Fig. 3 The Metropolis jacket came with a smog mask and an identification card holder which contained the phrase, 'No smog, for protection, a shell for consciousness.'

[51] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Metropolis Jacket' (1999), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2016-181-1.

[52] Lodovico Pignatti Moreno, ed., *C.P. Company 971-021. An Informal History of Italian Sportswear* (Milan: Tristate International SA, 2021), 414.

In 2001, five years after the launch of the Metropolis jacket, the LED jacket was released.[53] Although the LED jacket is slightly longer than the Metropolis, it is also constructed from Dynafil TS-70 and has a similar layout, with four large front pockets and a high-density double fleece lining. It differs in that the upper-right chest pocket contains a Figaro Sensors gas detector made in the United States of America. This is equipped with a microcomputer and a filter and sensor for the detection of methane, propane, Freon, and other gases in the air. Externally visible through a slit on the top of the pocket flap, a long, thin light-emitting diode (LED) display changes from green to red to indicate the wearer's exposure to airborne contaminants. When asked by *The New York Times* who their customer was, a C.P. Company representative stated: "The gentleman who understands this is beyond normal outerwear. 'He could be an artist, he could be someone visual. Our customer isn't necessarily looking for basic products. He's looking for exclusivity."[54]

Released in 1999, The Atlas jacket is also constructed from Dynafil TS-70 and features a long tunnel neck collar which houses a large inflatable P.V.C. pillow that can be removed and worn around the neck for support while travelling. [55] The jacket was advertised using the phrase, 'From an ancient myth a support to man's thoughts.' In Greek mythology, Atlas was punished by Zeus and sentenced to forever bear the weight of the sky on his shoulders. Atlas assisted Hercules during the Twelve Labours of Hercules by retrieving apples while Hercules carried the sky. However, Hercules tricked Atlas into switching places on the pretext of acquiring pillows for his shoulders. In doing so, Atlas resumed his punishment carrying the sky.[56]

The American artist Jeff Koons explored similar themes by employing air as a metaphor for support, preservation, and protection in his first solo show *Equilibrium* in 1985. For Koons air was symbolic of the delicate equilibrium between life and death: 'Every time you take a breath, it's like a symbol of life, and every time you exhale, it's a symbol of death.'[57] In his exhibition Koons presented a series of inflatable objects, including an aqualung, snorkel vest and a lifeboat.[58] Each was originally designed to function as a piece of lifesaving equipment but had now been recast in bronze. The alchemy of their new materiality facilitated their transformation from functional design objects to high-status sculpture; Koons saw the recasting of objects in bronze not as transformed but as having been 'recodified.'[59] However, their function had also been transformed: they had become symbolic, and their original purpose had become not only obsolete, but lethal. Further by employing the material of ancient statuary, they allude to the object's ability, whether worn or not, to outlive its owner. Their materiality equates to durability, so that we learn to see them not merely as relics from the past, but also as artifacts

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[53] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection LED Jacket' (2001), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2016-093.
[54] Sara Ivry, 'News Watch: Apparel; Rain or Shine, a Coat That Checks Air Quality,' *The New York Times*, 31 January 2002, https://www.nytimesn7cgmftshazwhfgzm37qxb44r64ytbb2dj3x62d2lljsciiyd.onion/2002/01/31/technology/news-watch-apparel-rain-or-shine-a-coat-that-checks-air-quality.html.
[55] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Atlas Jacket' (1999), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2018-86.
[56] Robin Hard and H. J. Rose, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology: Based on H.J. Rose's 'Handbook of Greek Mythology'* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 271.
[57] Jeff Koons, *Jeff Koons, Versailles.* (Paris: X. Barral, 2008), 111.
[58] Jeff Koons, *Aqualung*, 1985, Bronze, 68.6 x 44.5 x 44.5 cm, 1985.; Jeff Koons, *Snorkel Vest*, 1985, Bronze, 53.3 x 45.7 x 15.2 cm, 1985.Jeff Koons, *Lifeboat*, 1985, Bronze, 30.5 x 203.2 x 152.4 cm.
[59] Michael Archer, *Jeff Koons: One Ball Total Equilibrium Tank* (London: Afterall Books, 2011), 88.

whose inherently unchangeable character will persist long into the future.[60] Like Jeff Koons's *Aqualung*, at first glance Moreno's garments also appear to offer salvation; however, upon closer inspection, their distinctive approach to materiality reveals that they, too, will outlast us, thereby mocking human fallibility.

Sound

The following four items are thematically linked to sound as a conduit between inner self and outside world. Like the Metropolis jacket, LED jacket and Atlas jacket, these are all constructed from Dynafil TS-70 and lined with a high-density double fleece. The R.E.M came equipped with a Sony ICD-30 Voice Recorder which was concealed within an external mesh pocket on the bottom of the left sleeve.[61] This positioning allowed the user to operate the voice recorder without removing it from the jacket. The device functions as a note taker by recording the user's voice as they speak into it. It utilises two separate note files, each of which can store up to 16 minutes of audio in long player mode across 99 notes.[62] The R.E.M. jacket included an identification card with the inscription 'Freedom of thought, poetry for the soul.'

Fig. 4 The R.E.M. jacket included a Sony notetaker and an identification card holder with the phrase 'Freedom of thought, poetry for the soul.'

[60] Archer, 13–14.
[61] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection R.E.M. Jacket' (1999), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2016-298-1.
[62] 'ICD-30 Voice Record Instructions' (Sony, 2000).

The Life parka featured four large front pockets and an oversize backpack-style pocket on the rear.[63] It came equipped with a pair of foldable Bilsom 715 noise-proof earmuffs that could be worn over or inside the hood through loops. Founded in 1968, Bilsom are a Swedish company that manufactures personal protective equipment for sound management. Rather than being used to listen to music, as one might assume, these earmuffs are designed to completely isolate the wearer from the sound of the outside world. The parka's accompanying identification card declared, 'No noise, for inner life, a new womb to listen to silence'.

The YO coat featured a large pocket on the upper right and an oversize pocket on the lower front.[64] It included an integrated Sony DE705 ESP2 Discman, which was housed within an internal mesh pocket. The Sony Discman was, at the time, the most advanced portable music player available. The jacket's identity card stated, 'Music as will for growth of inner consciousness'.

Finally, the Munch jacket featured an integrated personal safety device that could be activated by pulling a cord located inside a specially constructed internal pocket.[65] Once pulled, the coat emitted an intensely loud noise like a high-pitched scream, hence the jacket's name. The attached identification card read, 'No panic, a cry as a bridge for a better future'. As McCracken observes, within a consumerist society the acquisition of objects can 'serve as bridges to displaced meanings.'[66] The term 'bridge' is critical to understanding this coat and the rest of the Urban Protection series, as it connects us to Auge's non-place and Foucault's heterotopia. Situated on a bridge on the outskirts of Oslo and the Oslo Fjord, is the location that Munch depicted in *The Scream*.[67] Painted in 1893, this bridge could be viewed as one of the earliest examples of Auge's transitional non-places.[68] In the background of the painting is the city of Oslo, and nearby a slaughterhouse and the mental asylum where Edvard Munch's sister Laura, had been hospitalised; as noted by one of Munch's biographers, 'the screams of the animals being slaughtered in combination with the screams of the insane were reported to be a terrible thing to hear.'[69] By explicitly referring back to an artwork created over a century ago, Ferrari created a bridge between the silent screams on the outskirts of Oslo and those within the non-places of late modernity.

Motion

The concluding thematic section examines three transformative objects for the Urban Protection series: Move, Rest, and Amaca. Uniquely, Move referred to two garments worn in a specific configuration, rather than to a single garment.[70] The bottom coat, called Glove when

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[63] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Life Jacket' (1999), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2019-37.
[64] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection YO Jacket' (1999), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2016-255-1.
[65] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Munch Jacket' (2000), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2017-241-1.
[66] Grant David McCracken, *Culture and Consumption New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 113.
[67] Edvard Munch, *The Scream of Nature*, 1893, Oil, tempera, pastel and crayon on cardboard, 1893.
[68] Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London; New York: Verso Books, 1995).
[69] Sue Prideaux, *Edvard Munch: Behind the Scream* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 151.
[70] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Move Jacket' (2000), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2017-242.

worn on its own, featured vertical anti-wind pockets, and extended internal cuffs with fleece half-mittens. On top of this coat, a multi-pocketed waistcoat could be worn, which housed an aluminium foldable scooter designed for travel through the urban environment. These were made by Micro Mobility Systems Ltd, which had begun selling scooters in Japan in 1999. In this configuration the ensemble was referred to as Move, and the accompanying identification card read 'Movement, protection, comfort on the road.'

Rest was one of the few accessories included in the Urban Protection line.[71] It was a folding aluminium frame chair with an attached multipocketed rucksack with padded straps, and a detachable C.P. Company logo. It was inspired by military rucksacks with integrated field stools that could be transformed into a small folding seat, allowing the wearer to rest momentarily on their travels. Its dual functionality, whether as a backpack with a built-in stool or as a stool with a built-in rucksack, suggests both mobility and immobility.

Amaca, which translates as 'hammock' in Italian, is one of the most conceptual designs in the C.P. Company's Urban Protection series.[72] This extremely long coat could be transformed into a hammock by adjusting the thick nylon tapes at the top and bottom to allow for suspension. In this configuration, it bears a striking resemblance to a shroud or a body bag; thus, it could be interpreted as a final resting place for the body inside, now motionless and inert. When asked about the inspiration for his hammock design, Ferrari stated, 'I liked the idea of taking that bucolic otium and re-contextualising it within a city, which by nature and culture is resistant to this more fluid harmony of time.'[73]

There are parallels here with the work of British artist Lucy Orta. Beginning in the early 1990's, Orta began investigating how clothing functions as a negotiated space between body and world, using the visual language of boilersuits, survival wear, rescue stretchers and modular tents. Sculptural works such as *Refuge Wear - Mobile Survival Sac with Transformable Rucksack* explored how the transitional spaces offered by these garments can serve as sites for withdrawal and exclusion, and act as a physical and emotional barrier.[74] Speaking about her work, Orta observed: 'Since to inhabit a space means to consider it part of one's body, clothes are fully entitled to become architectural dwellings, temporary shelters affording protection against cold and storms in the stopping-places on the long journey of our existence'.[75] Quinn observed of Orta's use of clothing in her artworks: 'By moving beyond their ability to provide protection, she amplifies their inherent power to communicate, negotiate social bonds and unite members of a community.[76] He notes: 'Orta's designs relate the story of the tension between movement and stillness, between the visible and the invisible.'[77]

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[71] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Rest Backpack' (2000), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/misc-17.
[72] C.P. Company, 'Urban Protection Amaca Cape' (2000), Westminster Menswear Archive, University of Westminster, https://access.westminster.arkivum.net/2018-48-2.
[73] Morozzi, *Carlo Rivetti*, 87.
[74] Lucy Orta, *Refuge Wear - Mobile Survival Sac with Transformable Rucksack*, 1996, Microporous polyester, PU coated polyamide, silkscreen print, transformable rucksack, zips, 210 x 90 cm, 1996.
[75] Maria Cristina Tommasini, 'Body Architectures, Survival Clothes,' *Domus*, March 2000. 74
[76] Andrew Patrizio, Bradley Quinn, and Margaret Miller, *Lucy Orta - Body Architecture*, ed. Courtenay Smith and Lucy Orta, 1st edition (München: Silke Schreiber, 2003).
[77] Patrizio, Quinn, and Miller.

If the final garments in the Urban Protection collections can be seen as symbolic of death, then Ferrari's subsequent Transformables range from 2000, with its transparent, ethereal garments, some of which are designed to ascend into the sky, suggest a spiritual ascension. All the garments within the Transformables collection were translucent and could convert into various objects, including a tent, an inflatable chair, and a kite. Bolton argues that these garments transcend numerous functionalities to ultimately become non-functional conceptual garments';[78] for Moreno the Transformables were a continuation of the Urban Protection range into ever more poetic, ephemeral and experimental forms.'[79]

The Future Past

In 2019 the Westminster Menswear Archive staged Invisible Men, the United Kingdom's largest exhibition dedicated to menswear.[80] Divided into twelve thematic sections, the exhibition featured two sections devoted entirely to black clothing. The first, Black Jackets, examined tailoring's pervasiveness as a defining feature of twentieth-century menswear. It featured thirteen seemingly identical black jackets created between 1928 and 2010; upon closer inspection, however, each garment revealed its own unique characteristics. This section was mirrored by thirteen black garments from the Urban Protection collection, the first time the range had been seen together in twenty years. This juxtaposition made Ferrari's historical and allegorical contextualization of technology easier to comprehend. The passage of time has allowed Ferrari's future vision to be reassessed as the future past. The once-new technology they contained has become obsolete. Yet (like the materiality of Koon's statuary) the garments themselves have remained impervious to the passing of time, (the Dynafil TS-70 resisting all marks, tears, or stains), underlining the temporal permeance of Ferrari's work. In constructing allegorical 'vestimentary clothing' and 'written clothing', Ferrari enabled these objects to transcend fashion's fleeting nature and to address spiritual and metaphysical themes. As Benjamin noted: 'Only a thoughtless observer can deny that correspondences come into play between the world of modem technology and the archaic symbol-world of mythology. Of course, initially the technologically new seems nothing more than that. But in the very next childhood memory, its traits are already altered.'[81]

Conclusion

Produced at a moment of cultural and temporal anxiety, the Urban Protection range was initially interpreted as embracing a utopian vision of the future in which the augmentation of the human body with wearable technology would offer a 'curative' remedy to the ills of a toxic urban environment. The augmentation of garments by Ferrari with smog masks, pollution monitors, ear protectors, and personal alarms superficially positioned these 'curative' objects as palliative prototypes for managing (but not curing) the bodily symptoms created by an unhealthy metropolis. The garments' original palliative intentions have been rendered ineffective due to the inherent obsolescence of technology, but Ferrari's philosophical approach has enabled the garments to transcend these initial limitations. It is in their metaphysical representation that they offered therapeutic functionality. Ferrari's work consciously employed Barthes' semiotic methodology for fashion analysis. In *The Fashion System*, Barthes examined

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[78] Bolton, *The Supermodern Wardrobe*, 19.
[79] Moreno, *C.P. Company 971-021. An Informal History of Italian Sportswear*. 424
[80] Andrew Groves and Danielle Sprecher, *Invisible Men: An Anthology from the Westminster Menswear Archive* (London: Westminster Menswear Archive, 2019).
[81] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 461.

the semiotics of fashion and its construction through the vestimentary code of the real garment and its representation in photography and writing. These two other structures, the 'image-clothing,' and the 'written-clothing,' that serve as signifiers for our construction of fashion.[82] Ferrari's garments were purposefully alike in their vestimentary code; they were the same colour, were made of the same material, and had a similar silhouette, with their design language emulating that of the ordinary functional security jacket. However, Ferrari constructed mythical 'written clothing' imbued with therapeutic functionality through the identification cards attached to each garment. Ferrari thus creates both 'vestimentary clothing' and 'written clothing,' with the latter serving as the signifier for the former. The transformation from function to spectacle, even when the spectacle disguises itself as a function, allows a poetic metamorphosis to occur.[83]

Over the past two decades, the shift away from wearable technology and toward the development of internal technology, some of which can both transmit and receive data, has resulted in the emergence of approximately 200 different medical implants that are currently in use.[84] As a result, there is no longer a need for wearable technology to capitalise on the desirability of fashion to facilitate its adoption to augment the human body. Instead, it once again exploits anxieties about health and well-being to facilitate its assimilation into our bodies. As we enter the transhuman era and nanotechnology is implanted, ingested, or permeates our bodies, clothing no longer functions as a barrier between the internal self and the external world. Therefore, if our threats come from within, our clothing can no longer protect us; it can only serve as a symbolic talisman, impotent to ward off harm or danger. As Baudrillard warned:

> The point when prostheses are introduced at a deeper level, when they are so completely internalized that they infiltrate the anonymous and the micro molecular core of the body, when they impose themselves upon the body itself as the body's 'original' model, burning out all subsequent symbolic circuits in such a way that every body is now nothing but an invariant reproduction of the prosthesis: this point means the end of the body, the end of its history, the end of its vicissitudes. It means that the individual is now nothing but a cancerous metastasis of his basic formula.[85]

Today, under the shadow of COVID-19, we enter a time when our bodies will become increasingly politicised, regulated, and contested. As concerns about the intrusive and pervasive role of technology in this context intensify, these artefacts from the Urban Protection range enable us to reflect on the palliative and therapeutic use of design and technology and the blurring of boundaries between the physical and the spiritual.

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[82] Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 1985, 3–9.
[83] Barthes, 235.
[84] Ghislaine Boddington, 'The Internet of Bodies—Alive, Connected and Collective: The Virtual Physical Future of Our Bodies and Our Senses,' *AI & SOCIETY*, 8 February 2021, https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-020-01137-1.
[85] Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, trans. James Benedict and J. S. Baddeley (London; New York: Verso Books, 1993), 119.

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