



*Figure 1: Tina Turner in chain mail and chicken wire, in Norma Moriceau's costumes for Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome.
Photograph: Moviestore/Rex/Shutterstock*

Title: How will fashion be affected by a dystopian future?

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Introduction

Our interpretation of the word “dystopia” is often far-fetched and otherworldly; a word that may conjure in our minds scenes from films such as *Blade Runner*. According to Gregory Claeys (2017, p. 5) “[there are] three main, if often interrelated, forms of the concept: the political dystopia; the environmental dystopia; and finally, the technological dystopia, where science and technology ultimately threaten to dominate or destroy humanity.” In actual fact, the reality of a dystopian future is not so far-fetched. Dystopian events have affected society all throughout history – world wars, global pandemics, and natural disasters to name but a few. Meanwhile global warming is another catastrophic dystopian issue facing us all.



Figure 2: Scene from *Blade Runner* (1982) WARNER BROS.

Throughout these dystopian events in the past, some form of fashion has continued to function, at least since the early modern period in the West. At its most basic, fashion might be defined as a continuous, collective change of habit by which the past is disqualified and the present defined and celebrated; participation in a shared culture of images and/or descriptions; a means for signalling identity, affiliation and aspiration; and a venue for personal and creative expression within a larger practice of conformity. Fashion is temporal – a sign of the times, affiliative and a juxtaposition of conformity and non-conformity. Entwistle (2000) defines fashion generally as a system of dress found in modernity, and a social system for encoding the presentation of bodies. Roland Barthes (1983) states that fashion is a system of signs, and those signs produce not clothing but rather an abstract notion of Fashion. It is because of this abstraction that Fashion is a reflection of the world. In this essay, “fashion” will refer specifically to Western modes of dress and encapsulate the garments, accessories, adornments (i.e., tattoos/piercings), makeup and hairstyles that are combined by individuals or groups to create their ‘style’.

It could be argued that fashion has acted as a form of creativity, self-expression, esprit de corps, escapism, and distraction at times when society has needed it most. This has allowed it to thrive throughout trying periods in the past, and will likely do so in the future as well. This essay will investigate how the visual iteration of fashion (i.e. the outfits themselves) and the fashion system as a whole might be affected by a dystopian future, be that political, environmental or technological. The sections of this essay will address the effects on fashion by both historical and imagined dystopias as the basis for predictions about fashion in a future dystopian reality.

Fashion in Historic Dystopias

To assess the impact of dystopia on fashion in the future, it is vital to reflect on dystopian events of the past and their subsequent effect on fashion. Since the very birth of fashion*, groups of people have used it to respond to or rebel against current events. In the words of

* There is not a precise agreement on when fashion began. Experts such as Sarah-Grace Heller in *Fashion in Medieval France* argues that the ability of a large portion of society to participate in collective change is part of the definition of a fully developed fashion system, and that the changes present in Ancient Rome, for instance, were limited to a small group of privileged people. Thus, Heller places the beginnings of fashion in the 13th Century. Meanwhile Anne Hollander, American historian, places it in the 14th Century. In this essay, the birth of fashion will refer to the 13th Century.

Gilles Lipovetsky, “fashion becomes the life-guide, because it trains us to live in a world where everything is constantly changing.” (Lipovetsky, Sennett and Porter, 2002, p.149). An early instance of this can be found in medieval and Renaissance Europe, especially from the fourteenth century onward, where conflicts and wars were prevalent. It is apparent that armour was strongly influenced by and consequently influenced contemporary civilian



Figure 3: Portions of a Costume Armour, ca. 1525. Armorer: Kolman Helmschmid (German, Augsburg 1471–1532). *The Met*.

costume according to current tastes and regional fashions. This may have been because armour was so commonly worn by men that it became the ‘norm’ for daily attire and integrated as a fashionable item. The connotations of armour as being masculine and heroic may have added to its appeal as a fashion item, making it more of a status symbol for men – a means of ‘showing off’ to others as a ‘protector’ in times of extreme fear. Knights, especially those who could afford plate armour were wealthy, so it was a mark of status. Those who were most likely to do the fighting tended to be young and had to be fighting fit, seen as more visually appealing. So, dystopia arguably produced a particular definition of ‘sexiness’.

Moreover, the linen caps that men used to wear under chainmail head coverings became a thing to wear even without a helmet; the cyclas, developed in the 13th Century to wear over mail or armour, became the basis for a 13th Century sleeveless overtunic worn by both sexes; the pourpoint or doublet which began as padding under armour eventually became items worn on their own, and perhaps most significantly: the need for a close but articulated fit for armour and its under-padding gave birth to tailoring as we know it. And so, this is an instance of a dystopian setting instigating a change in fashion, particularly for men.

Later, in France during the horrors of the French Revolution, fashion in itself became a form of revolution. At the fore was Marie Antoinette, who was the formerly undisputed leader of fashion. However, Marie Antoinette soon became unpopular, gaining a reputation for excessive spending on fashion, gambling and other indulgences. “By 1791, the queen’s once-praised beauty had vanished under the stress of political reverses ... A prisoner in the Temple, she needed fewer clothes and those of the simpler sort, as there was no longer a court with glittering ceremonial to preside over”, (Ribeiro, 1988 p.73).

In the midst of the terror of the Revolution, fashion choices could be detrimental: if you appeared in the streets in breeches or with an aristocratic wig, you were far more likely to be executed; whereas if you wore working people’s dress and a ‘tricolore’ (a rosette in the colours of the French flag) you were safe. Fashionable revolutionaries from the 1790s were called Incroyables and Mervelliuses for their daring, and even after the terror was officially over, this extreme neoclassical fashion remained (Ribeiro, p.74-80). Interestingly, the informed opinion of Richard Twiss (an English writer, 1747–1821) in the summer of 1792 was that “the common people are in general much better clothed than they were before the Revolution.” (Twiss, 1792, p. 83-4). So, these fashions were formed in conditions of idealistic fanaticism and grew in conditions of dystopian fear.



Figure 4: Crinoline Lady figurine from Royal Doulton.

Much later, during the horrors of World War I, womenswear became practical and less restrictive as women had to take on men's roles. But there was a collective fantasy in the sharing and viewing of fashion imagery that was overtly feminine – evidenced in the 'Crinoline Lady' figurines. It was a manifestation of the women's desire to keep hold of their identities in such a trying time. A different response to dystopian times emerged as resourcefulness in women during WWII, with the onset of shortages and rationing. In Britain, there was a major government push towards a 'make-do and mend' attitude. Rather than buying new, clothes were reused, repaired and reimagined. Some women even drew nylon seams onto their legs to give the

appearance of stockings; homemade bags and gloves made of repurposed fabrics were flaunted proudly. In fact, the make-do and mend movement meant that individuality could still be asserted in a period of strict uniformity brought about by fascism.

In the months following the end of the Second World War, as tensions rose over the control and division of Berlin, Europe was effectively divided along Cold War lines. An age of anxiety, fear and suspicion began, exacerbated by the onset of the arms race and the space race, as well as the threat of nuclear attack. Unsurprisingly, this dystopian climate strongly impacted on the art, design, film and literature of the period. According to Laver (1969, p. 264), "the most extreme 1960s fashions were shown by Paris designers Andre Courreges, Paco Robanne, Pierre Cardin, Emmanuel Ungaro and Yves Saint Laurant. Courreges' Spring/Summer 1964 'Space Age' collection featured 'astronaut' hats and goggles [and] white and silver 'moon-girl' loon trousers..."

Fear was very much an emotion played on by designers, combined with a 'futuristic', hi-tech look drawn from the technological advancements of the time. There were many designs that considered how humans might survive in a dystopian, potentially uninhabitable world, an early one being the Lunar Space Suit, designed by Harry Ross for the British Interplanetary Society in 1949. The design is now considered 'ridiculous' (it even included a folding seat for a tired astronaut to rest on). However, it was revolutionary for its time and was scientifically considerate, with its metallic outer to deflect the sun's rays and an airlock system in the chest. Later, a more realistic interpretation took the form of a plastic decontamination suit sealed using high-frequency welding, designed by Frank Hess in 1965.



Figure 5: The BIS lunar spacesuit. Credit: National Space Centre.

The combination of human and mechanical formed a new kind of fashion: the cybernetic body. It was during this time that perhaps the most monumental crossover between science and fashion design occurred: the Apollo mission space suits for NASA. The technology and craftsmanship that created the foundation of the New Look in 1947 (layers of fabric and rubber that encased and reshaped bodies into ultrafeminine proportions) also produced the

all-fabric, multi-layered, handmade, custom-fit Apollo A7L space suits that kept Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin alive on the moon, (Mears et al, 2017, p. 130-131).

And so, even in the most anxious times, design was a means of expressing fear and rallying hope for a more utopian future. Sometimes sinister but mostly playful, fashion was a literal representation of the complex emotions felt by the masses during Cold War. It even led to ground-breaking textile innovations like Mylar (aluminised nylon) and Gore-Tex (breathable, waterproof fabric) that re-shaped the future of fashion to become a vessel for the symbiosis of body and technology. In trying times, fashion remained an outlet for individuality within group conformity (with the French Revolution arguably being conformity at its worst). Visually, fashion was a means of affiliating with certain groups based upon shared imagery, thus fashion demonstrated an awareness of times.

Fashion in Fictional Dystopias

When writing about dystopias, it is impossible to ignore those imagined in fiction, be that film or literature, which often influence the collective fashion imagination in reality. Dystopian fictions capture attention because they show everyday life in stories that aren't every day and amplify themes that scare and horrify. In the same way, fashion functions as an amplifier for these horrifying themes: Often overly exaggerated and fanciful, the fashions are full of signs and signifiers directly relating to a character and their surroundings. Outfits can also play a major role in reinforcing to the viewer the horrors of fictional dictatorship and corrupt systems (political dystopias) in particular, made clear either through extreme class divides or forced uniformity. An example of this can be seen in Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, in which women are forced to wear a 'uniform':

I get up out of the chair, advance my feet into the sunlight, in their red shoes, flat-heeled to save the spine and not for dancing. The red gloves are lying on the bed. I pick them up, pull them onto my hands, finger by finger. Everything except the wings around my face is red: the color of blood, which defines us.
(Atwood, 1986, p. 77)

Atwood conveys to us the complete control that these women are under, that even their wearing of gloves is dictated. What makes it so shocking to readers is the forced conformity – by depriving characters of their ability to participate in fashion, their power is also stripped away, thus group affiliation and its according signs and symbols are imposed. In addition, the author's selection of red clothing symbolises blood - the menstrual blood of the handmaids, necessary for conception but also a reminder of sexuality. Thus, the red clothing represents the dual symbolism of the handmaids' fertility: their function and purpose as



Figure 6: Costumed actors from *The Handmaid's Tale*, 2017 television series for Hulu. Photo: George Kraychuk/Courtesy of Hulu.

breeders, but also as objects of perversion in this repressed society. This is a remarkably distressing alternate reality, though not altogether far off from the current social climate. It is a dystopia that is somewhat echoed in the 2016 Pussyhat Project, founded by Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman in America as a social movement dedicated to raising awareness about women's issues. At the 2017 Women's March in Boston, USA, hundreds of attendees wore homemade pink/red knitted pussyhats. The hat itself was a symbol of support for women's rights and political resistance.



Figure 7: A sea of pink Pussyhats at the Women's March in Washington, D.C. Photo: Cass Bird.

Similarly, fashion plays a huge role in signifying class disparity in the dystopian *Hunger Games* books (and later film franchise) by Suzanne Collins. Most notably, the protagonist Katniss utilises fashion to convey her rage towards the corrupt president in the form of a dress that purposefully bursts into flames during a public parade. The fashion-obsessed crowd



Figure 8: Melania Trump wearing a Zara jacket in June 2018 during a visit to Texas. BBC.

adore Katniss, calling her “the girl on fire” (Collins, 2008, p. 125), unaware of the political messages it conveys, meanwhile the President is enraged. The use of fashion as a political statement is not exclusive to fiction. For example, in 2018 US First Lady at the time, Melania Trump wore a jacket with the words “I Really Don't Care. Do U?” printed across the back while en route to visit detained immigrant children at the United States/Mexican border. The bold statement and harsh words shocked many, and an organic wave of “I Really DO Care” merchandise followed as the country's rebuttal.

Meanwhile in other dystopian fictional franchises, costumes are directly influenced by real-world fashion movements such as punk, the prime example being the 1979 *Mad Max* film. Butchart (2016, p.175), describes: “In true punk spirit, such objects as car parts and rear-view mirrors were given new meanings as stylistic ornamentation. Emphasizing the primitive as well as the futuristic elements of the post-apocalyptic future, the tribe of children Max encounters are dressed in animal skins and adorned with make-up crafted from mud from a nearby river.” Punk fashion emerged in Britain in the 1980s, during the midst of civil unrest. The look was characterised by torn clothes, metal studs, safety pins and spiked hair, and it acted as a rebellious outlet for youths to communicate their anger, while still feeling united as one immediately identifiable group through their fashion: “Fashion always contains two opposing elements, on the one hand allowing individuals to show themselves as themselves, but at the same time always showing them as members of a group,” (Svendsen, 2004, p.119). From this example, it is evident that in dystopian times, a sense of unity is needed in society more than ever. Fashion styling choices help individuals to identify with a chosen community/movement in a more immediate way.

Blade Runner (1982) is another key example of a fictional dystopian setting in which the fashions embody their dystopian setting and narrative. *Blade Runner* had a film noir feel, and so costume designer Michael Kaplan drew inspiration from the padded shoulders, tapered waistlines and pencil skirts of the mid-1930s to 1940s, (a silhouette which re-emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a ‘power suit’ for women). It is perhaps the juxtaposition of ‘hi-tech’, futuristic scenery and ‘vintage’ looks that makes the film so memorable. Kaplan explains in his interview with *AnOther*: “I wanted to create a futuristic heroine who was believable in the future, but with her feet firmly planted in film noir past.” It is very common for fashion and costume designers to reimagine historic fashion movements, and fashion often sees revivals of bygone eras. In a real-life dystopian future, it is highly likely that revivals will become major fashion trends. Many may reminisce about the “good old days” and seek comfort, nostalgia and regression in fashions from ‘better times’. Such can be seen in the current ‘Y2K’ (Year 2000) trend/aesthetic popular among young people, which is a revival of late 1990s and early-to-mid 2000s fashion.



Figure 9: Pris from *Blade Runner*, (1982) WARNER BROS.

Both *Mad Max* and *Blade Runner*, although being set in the future, still felt relatable to audiences at their releases because the costumes (and props) spoke to their own times. Early 80s fashion influences are evident in the New Romantics-style hair and makeup and oversized shoulder pads as seen in both films. This ‘statement’ argued for the temporal relevance of the films in the times they were made respectively. Looking back on them now from our current perspective, the films could be viewed as classics, that, when paired with newness create a creepy disjunction as well as legitimacy, creating the sense of a timeless fairy tale. Therefore, fashion is important to the imaginative visualisation of the future – even future horror.

Fashion in a Dystopian Future

By observing fashion’s reactions to historical and fictional dystopias, predictions can be made about fashion in a future dystopian reality. Many experts agree that fashion and technology will become increasingly integrated: “Fashion’s potential to engineer and enhance traditional materials, replace computerised devices and assume new forms entirely promises to forever disrupt the historical narrative of fashion evolution,” (Quinn, 2002, p.9). This is especially relevant considering the worsening of climate change and pollution which is damaging environments and making them less habitable – according to the *Met Office*, compared to the UK climate in 1990, by 2070 summers will be up to 60% drier (depending on the region). Thick woollen jumpers may become a thing of the past as global temperatures rise. But ‘techno-fashion’ could be an alternative solution to ease some of the effects of extreme conditions on humans, providing cooling relief from heat, for example. Such garments exist already, particularly in sportswear, where smart textiles enhance the wearers’ performance.

Meanwhile, space exploration is continually pushing boundaries in textile capabilities, such as the BioSuit concept by Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Dava Newman. The BioSuit, a concept funded by NASA, would use a skin-tight elastic material to maintain

pressure while giving its wearer a level of mobility impossible in rigid and even semi-rigid suits – perfect for wearing on the surface of Mars. However, these multifunctional, hybrid survival garments are yet to crossover into mainstream fashion. Functionality still remains the focus – there is a long way to go before these garments become aesthetically pleasing and ‘fashionable’, but they may one day prove to be invaluable for humans’ survival on a dystopian planet (be that ours or another).

Designer and author Sabine Seymour categorises ‘fashionable wearables’ in the diagram on the right, demonstrating the contrast between expressive high fashion and purely functional workwear. Over time, this contrast may become less obvious as high fashion and functionality combine to cater for a dystopian audience.

High fashion has always played on themes of fantasy and escapism, creating the illusion of a different reality through elaborate fashion shows and clever promotion and advertising. In reality, few people dress in such a way day-to-day – not only is high fashion financially unattainable for the majority, social, cultural and gender norms are still at the fore. But as the world slips into more dystopian times, the escape that fashion provides will become more and more tantalising. True escapism through fashion is currently a relatively fringe activity that can be seen in historical re-enactment, roleplaying and ‘cosplaying’ (costume playing as a specific character). They are activities often ridiculed for being childish, having connotations with childhood ‘fancy dress’.

That being said, social media platforms are making these activities more popular and more widely accepted. In fact, the global cosplay costumes market is expected to be worth approximately £10million in 2030 according to *Allied Market Research*. The annual Met Gala is an interesting example of how outlandish, fantasy fashion can trickle down from celebrities to the general population. An article written for *Fashion Network* describes ‘How



Figure 11: Lady Gaga in the meat dress, 2010. Getty Images.

the corset stole the show at this year's Met Gala.’ The theme for the event was ‘Gilded Glamour’, so the corset was a go-to for many celebrities. The global fashion search engine, *Stylight* reports that clicks for corsets recorded an 87% increase just a few hours after the Met Gala, reflecting a seemingly unwavering craze for an underwear piece that has since been refreshed as a garment in its own right.

Celebrities have always influenced fashion and the trends that trickle down. In a way, it is more ‘acceptable’ for them to wear ‘ridiculous’ fashions – their public lives are meant for expression, outrage and scandal. (The most memorable of these instances is perhaps Lady Gaga’s ‘meat dress’, worn to 2010 MTV Video Music Awards, which she later explained was a statement about one's need to fight for what one believes in.)

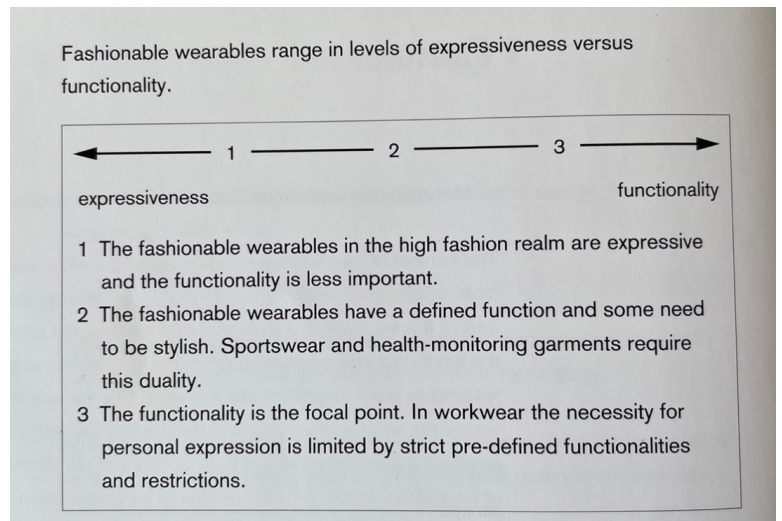


Figure 10: Seymour, p.14, 2008.

Currently, the average person would be highly unlikely to wear such a garment in public. But in a dystopian landscape where societal norms begin to fall apart, perhaps extreme fashion will become more mainstream. People may feel more desperate to express their minds or become more reckless and confident with the increasing threat to life – like a sort of mid-life crisis on a dying planet. Fashion may become even more embedded within semiotics – as Desmond Morris (2013) states, “It is impossible to wear clothes without transmitting social signals.” In a dystopian world, the desire to be perceived and associated with a word or an image through fashion (signifiers and signified) may become even more important. It stems from the basic human instinct to be seen and heard – to let our feelings out: especially important in a world where everything as we know it has changed.

But if complete self-expression through fashion takes over, will trends simply disappear? And will the structure of the fashion system completely collapse? It is difficult to judge just how dystopian the planet must get before the fashion system collapses, but it is reasonable to suspect that it will not crumble easily – most people find comfort in following fashion trends. It provides a comforting sense of belonging, along with connotations of confidence, attractiveness and wealth. In a dystopian future, celebrities and influencers may become the new ‘deities’, with fashion becoming a new religion of conspicuous consumption. The words of Barthes ring particularly true in this instance: “Every new Fashion is a refusal to inherit, a subversion against the oppression of the preceding Fashion; Fashion experiences itself as a right, the natural right of the present over the past,” (Barthes, 1983, p. 133). Fashion is a relentless onwards push, away from the unfashionable yesterday and onto the new, fashionable, utopian tomorrow.

Constant change is and always will be exciting, energising and, of course, distracting from the real world. The commercial fashion world is always accelerating, not just creating new collections for each season as we may expect, but now dozens more micro-trends in between these. In fact, since 2000, European fashion brands went from releasing just two new collections per year to up to 24, according to a report published by the European Parliament. Social media platforms, particularly TikTok (launched in 2016), have dramatically impacted the pace of consumption in fast fashion in the form of ‘cores’. A core is a niche fashion trend, often born from social media, that revolves around a very specific visual aesthetic. In the early part of 2022, ‘cottagecore’ was born on TikTok – an aesthetic that idealised a cosy, rural life and manifested as loose-fitting, flowy dresses with puffed sleeves, Peter Pan collars and knitted cardigans. Since then, there have been countless microtrends including Barbiecore, goblincore, angelcore and clowncore to name but a few. The relentless use of social media, especially in younger generations, has caused a shortened attention span and the desire for instant gratification which is clearly mirrored in ever accelerating microtrends.



Figure 12: Instagram user @froggiacrocs wearing 'goblincore'.

Social media could possibly cease to exist in a seriously challenged natural environment where the resources required to make phones and computers etc. are depleted. In such a case, media consumption may decelerate as the sharing of ideas - and fashions – takes a slower

physical form. But for the foreseeable future, digital platforms continue to thrive, and therefore makes it more likely that the cycle of fashion trend and consumption will accelerate.

There is an alternative fashion community on the increase, however, again popularised by social media. ‘Thriftig’ (buying second-hand clothes from charity shops) has rapidly grown in popularity with the onset of revival trends such as Y2K. On July 28 2022, the #thrifthaul tag had 633 million views on TikTok (*The Boston Globe*). Thrifting, once looked down upon as ‘cheap’ and ‘unhygienic’, has suddenly become gentrified, with influencers hunting down vintage designer pieces at bargain prices. In conjunction with this is the ‘thrift flip’ trend, in which ‘ugly’ second hand clothing items are modified by individuals and made fashionable, often paired with mismatching patterns for a bolder impact. This in turn sparked a renewed interest in handmade clothing, particularly crochet, as well as visible mending and darning. All of these ‘trends’ can be linked with the quarantine of 2020, when physical shops closed, and many began looking for alternatives. Depop, an online reselling platform, drew in hordes of users (in 2020, new users of Depop increased by 163% from the previous year – *The Conversation*).

But are thrifting and crochet just passing fads? Younger generations are also becoming more aware of environmental issues, and so thrifting and making may become habits that stick and buying new may become ‘uncool’. In a dystopian future where fashion production may have to cease, e.g. in a hypothetical world war, society may have to resort to the clothes that already exist, or return to a make-do and mend mindset. Although the desire to be fashionable persists even when thrifting or making one’s own garments, there is a growing movement for personal style that is evolving beyond trends and tropes. An increasing number of online ‘influencers’ are rejecting the typical fashionable ‘look’ and opting for a style that completely represents them, rather than be dictated by social and gender norms and expectations. This could be linked with the popular singer Harry Styles, who *Vogue* describe as a “boundary-pushing fashion force”.



Figure 13: Harry Styles. Photo: Kevin Mazur.

So, perhaps in a dystopian future where social structures are changing, individuality may become the new fashion. Of course, fashion trends today are so fast paced that predicting the future of fashion is difficult. However, prediction is still relevant and important because it enables us to be more mindful of our individual consumer choices – choosing more sustainable and ethical options now can help redirect the route of fashion onto a less damaging pathway in the future. Self-image has never been so important in the age of social media, with extreme pressure to always appear as fashionable and beautiful as your peers. This ‘vanity’ will surely continue into a dystopian future, where the only thing we are in control of is how we look.

Conclusion

Fashion has been so important through past dystopian situations, and is so important in imagined dystopias that it will indefinitely have a place in the future, however restricted it may become. This is because fashion has always been emotional, serving as an outlet for the masses to signify their fear, rage, despair, hope and so on, much like the fashions of the Cold War period. It is distinctly clear that fashion acts as a mirror, responding to current events either in humour, protest or to provide a utopian alternative. Fashion in a dystopian future will provide comfort: a space for childhood reminiscence, nostalgia for better times and revivals of bygone eras, currently evident in the Y2K trend. Nostalgic tendencies and emotional ties to 'better days' will surely continue from present and play a huge role in the function of fashion in a dystopian future.

As for the fashion system, environmental destruction means that one day it will be forced to slow down, but overall, fashion is too powerful a system to be overthrown or rejected completely. As evidenced by a resurgence in thrifting, handmade and mended garments, reusing will become less stigmatised, with costumes from *Mad Max* possibly becoming a reality; Fashion will become more and more of a mashup of past styles, trends, cores and images to become something that appears new. Fashion will simultaneously become more integrated technology that caters for human survival in increasingly hostile environments – a perfect hybrid of form and function. Fashion will also always have its idols and influencers, much like the Hollywood stars during the Great Depression and the awe and glamour they inspired. Lastly, fashion will always act as an elusive, fantastical escape for an idealised version of ourselves: the hero who turns dystopias into utopias.

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