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Food & Fashion Midterm Essay

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Food & Fashion

One of the most important aspects of one's daily life is food and fashion. It not only fulfills basic needs but also allows one to express oneself and cultural identity in unique ways. Food and fashion are intertwined, as both have a deep-rooted cultural significance and reflect tastes and preferences. An example of how food and fashion are culturally significant in the Dominican Republic is the traditional "Guayabera" shirt and the "Mangu" dish. The Guayabera is a lightweight shirt with pockets and embroidery, representing the country's rich cultural heritage and history (Linen Horse, 2023). Similarly, Mangu is a very popular and well-known Dominican dish made from mashed plantains, usually eaten for breakfast, and it symbolizes the country's culinary art and traditions (Capo, 2023). Both the Guayabera and Mangu dishes are examples of how fashion and food can reflect the Dominican Republic's cultural identity. As well as both can be symbols to identify one's community. Therefore, food is not just about nutrition; it represents diverse cultural heritage and traditions. It allows one to connect with different people and places and also brings loved ones together over a good meal. Similarly, fashion and dress are crucial in creating and expressing identities. Cultural origins, upbringings, generations, and personal tastes often influence clothing choices. Thus, food and fashion are important for physical and emotional well-being and help one connect with roots and create a sense of belonging in this diverse world (Scott, 2022).

Figure 1

Moschino. "Over 20 Billion Served" ensemble, fall 2014



The VAIN x McDonald's collection by Moschino is a fashion line that upcycles McDonald's uniforms to make new garments with a message about sustainability and the impact of fast fashion (Sottile, 2022). The "Over 20 Billion Served" ensemble's colors are bold and playful. The dress was designed to resemble a McDonald's takeout bag, complete with the iconic golden arches and the slogan "Over 20 Billion Served" printed on it (Blanks, 2014). As one can see, this garment has three main colors: *Red, Yellow, and Black*. Red is the dominant *hue*, a *primary color* representing love, power, and demand. It is also stimulating and assertive (Bell & Ternus, 2017). Yellow is also a *primary color* and belongs to the warm family. It represents happiness, sunshine, and optimism (Bell & Ternus, 2017). These two *hues* are the signature colors of McDonald's and add a vibrant and eye-catching element to the garment. Moreover, the use of these colors in the collection serves as a reminder of the fashion industry's environmental impact. By upcycling the McDonald's uniforms, VAIN is making a statement about sustainability and commenting on the culture of fast fashion and consumerism. The dress is a commentary on the fashion industry and encourages consumers to be more conscious of their choices. Finally, the dress has another color, Black, which is a neutral color that signifies sophistication, mystery, intrigue, and ultra-chic (Bell & Ternus, 2017). The combination of black with red and yellow creates a striking contrast, making the dress stand out. The dress was a unique fusion of fast-food culture and high fashion, making a statement about the intersection of food and style.

Line is a direction that determines the effectiveness of the garment. They can be vertical, horizontal, curved, and diagonal (Bell & Ternus, 2017). The garment has bold lines that are an important aspect of the design. These lines can be found predominantly in geometric patterns and *shapes* that closely resemble the design of a McDonald's takeaway bag. These patterns feature fold lines and seams similar to those found on a paper bag, and they are deliberately interwoven into the construction of the garment. These lines are not just for show; they help to evoke the visual and tactile feel of a McDonald's bag. The lines in the clothing are put on purpose to guide the viewer's eye and generate movement within the arrangement. They lead the viewer's sight over the folds, seams, and corners of the clothing, emphasizing classic design motifs such as the golden arches and the "Over 20 Billion Served" motto. By doing so, the lines help to bring attention to the dress's main elements while also establishing a visual hierarchy that emphasizes the fast-food logo and message of sustainability. The lines of the "VAIN x McDonald's" garment fulfill several functions. They pay homage to the design of a McDonald's takeaway bag, direct the viewer's attention to crucial design aspects, and contribute to the garment's structural stability. This design element is critical in producing a visually appealing and unified composition that effectively expresses the mix of fashion and fast food.

Rhythm is a self-contained movement that leads the viewer's eye from the dominant object to the subordinate one (Bell & Ternus, 2017). The recurrence of McDonald's trademark features creates rhythm in the "VAIN x McDonald's" outfit. The golden arches and the tagline "Over 20 Billion Served" are prominent features that appear throughout the design. These components are intentionally positioned at various spots on the dress to create a rhythmic pattern that embodies fast-food culture (Sottile, 2022). The repetition of these elements replicates the visual experience of encountering McDonald's branding in their restaurants, signs, and packaging regularly. The repetitive rhythmic pattern of McDonald's trademark pieces provides a visual beat throughout the outfit. This speed recalls a fast-food restaurant's fast-paced, crowded environment, which clearly displays these trademark elements. The graphic repetition conveys the core of fast-food culture, where efficiency, consistency, and brand familiarity are paramount. The outfit not only pays homage to these features but it also transports the observer to the

familiar and ubiquitous world of fast-food dining. The “VAIN x McDonald’s” outfit achieves rhythm through the deliberate repetition of McDonald's trademark features. This repetition establishes a visual cadence, evokes the essence of fast-food culture, and conveys a message about sustainability and the repercussions of mass consumption in both the fashion and fast-food industries.

In fashion design, *form* is the three-dimensional portrayal of shapes and objects (Bell & Ternus, 2017). The feature makes a garment appear to have depth, volume, and structure even when worn flat. Form is an important part of fashion design because it gives the garment life, improves its visual attractiveness, and guarantees that it fits and drapes correctly on the human body. When wearing the “VAIN x McDonald’s” outfit, the dress itself is actually flat. The designer, on the other hand, employs a variety of techniques to create the illusion of a three-dimensional takeout bag, capturing the essence of fast-food culture in a fashion piece. While the garment is generally flat, the cut, structure, fabric, decorations, and detailing all work together to give the illusion of a three-dimensional takeout bag. This artistic and technical competence enables the dress not only to capture the spirit of fast-food culture but also to make a significant fashion statement about the junction of food and style, as well as the environmental impact of rapid fashion.

Balance is a fundamental design element that refers to how visual weight is distributed throughout a composition (Bell & Ternus, 2017). It guarantees that no single feature dominates or overwhelms the design, resulting in a sense of *balance* and *harmony*. Creating a visually appealing and well-composed piece of art or design requires striking a balance. Balance is important in keeping visual harmony inside the “VAIN x McDonald's” outfit, especially with the usage of vivid and *contrasting colors* like red, yellow, and black (Ahluwalia, 2022). The balance of the dress lets the viewer's eye wander effortlessly across it, taking in the different design components, such as the golden arches and the tagline “Over 20 Billion Served.” Because of the balanced distribution of visual weight, no single feature becomes the only emphasis, allowing the observer to appreciate the overall design. The “VAIN x McDonald’s” dress balance guarantees that the vivid colors and design components complement each other. It keeps any one element from dominating the composition. It allows the dress to visually and coherently express its message about sustainability, quick fashion, and the connection between food and style.

Contrast is a fundamental design approach that includes placing dissimilar pieces in close proximity to one another in order to create a noticeable difference between them (Bell & Ternus, 2017). This visual distinction can be produced by varying the color, shape, size, texture, or other design elements. Contrast is employed in compositions to increase visual intrigue, grab attention, and generate emphasis. Contrast is used in the “VAIN x McDonald’s” clothing to produce a dramatic and attention-grabbing impact while emphasizing the distinctions between elements such as colors and design details. The contrast emphasizes the dress’s overall theme, which includes comments on sustainability and the environmental impact of the fashion industry. The outfit effectively conveys its message to the observer by generating a visually strong and attention-grabbing design. The “VAIN x McDonald’s” dress uses contrast as a major design component to generate a distinctive and visually compelling impact. It emphasizes essential design aspects, provides depth and dimension, and successfully communicates the meaning of the dress. This use of contrast adds to the overall effect of the clothing and conveys the essence of fast food and high fashion.

Dominance is a key design idea that refers to the element or elements in a composition that stands out the most and catch the viewer's attention (Bell & Ternus, 2017). When compared

to other parts of the design, dominant elements are often larger, more prominent, or visually highlighted. This dominance is employed to establish a focal point and direct the viewer's gaze. The concept of dominance is important to the design of the “VAIN x McDonald’s” clothing, since it emphasizes the brand’s identity and the message about sustainability. The dominance of these aspects directs the viewer's attention to these key design elements. It establishes a visual hierarchy in which the logo and phrase take precedence, allowing the clothing to transmit its message and brand association effectively. The “VAIN x McDonald's” outfit emphasizes dominance by making the McDonald's emblem and slogan the primary points of the design. This emphasizes the brand's identity while also effectively communicating the message about sustainability and the consequences of quick fashion. At the convergence of food and style, the dress uses dominance to catch attention and make a memorable fashion statement.

The size and scale of elements inside a design in relation to one another and to the overall composition is referred to as *proportion* (Bell & Ternus, 2017). It is the relationship between the dimensions of different elements and is necessary for achieving balance and harmony within a design. *Proportion* ensures that no element overwhelms or overshadows others, resulting in an aesthetically acceptable and harmonious visual composition. The concept of proportion is critical in the “VAIN x McDonald’s” dress to guarantee that the McDonald's logo features are not only recognized but also balanced within the garment’s overall appearance. McDonald's trademarks, such as the golden arches and the tagline “Over 20 Billion Served,” are instantly identifiable (Nolan, 2022). Proportion guarantees that these pieces are of a size and scale that allows viewers to identify them immediately, even when they are embedded in a fashion garment. Their proportions are kept consistent in order to capture the essence of the brand. In the “VAIN x McDonald’s” garment, proportion is a fundamental design principle that has been carefully considered to guarantee that the McDonald’s logo pieces are recognizable and balanced within the overall design. This considerate use of proportion results in a visually appealing and cohesive composition that effectively communicates the message and corporate identity at the confluence of food and style.

The use of the same or comparable elements across a design to create a pattern, rhythm, or consistency is called *repetition* (Bell & Ternus, 2017). It is a great way to reinforce themes, develop brand identification, and make a design more memorable and identifiable. *Repetition* is crucial to the design of the “VAIN x McDonald’s” clothing since it maintains the association with the fast-food company and produces a consistent and recognized pattern (Scott, 2022). The *repetition* of branding features results in a distinctive pattern that is strongly connected with fast-food culture. The pattern emphasizes the sensation of continually seeing these elements in the fast-food environment, such as on restaurant signage, packaging, and promotional materials. The “VAIN x McDonald’s” dress uses repetition to produce a consistent and recognized pattern by repeating the McDonald's emblem and phrase. This repetition strengthens the fast-food chain's association, provides branding consistency, and effectively communicates the message about sustainability, all within the unusual setting of fashion and food colliding.

The texture is defined as the surface treatment or the “feel” (Bell & Ternus, 2017). So, a fabric's hand refers to how it feels when touched or draped on the skin. It is an essential feature of fabric quality that can have a big impact on a garment's comfort and wearability. The hand of the fabric is an essential aspect in the context of the “VAIN x McDonald’s” outfit, which is supposed to look like a fast-food bag. Given that the dress is meant to be worn, the fabric’s hand should be soft and pleasant against the skin. It should not have the rough or scratchy *texture* of

real paper bags, as this would be impractical and uncomfortable for the wearer. To achieve a pleasing *texture*, the designer would most likely select a soft, smooth, and non-abrasive fabric; in this case, the dress looks like it was made out of wool, giving a relaxed fit. This option would be consistent with the fashion design concepts of comfort and wearability. The fabric may also be lined or treated to increase its softness and avoid discomfort or irritation while in contact with the wearer's skin.

Food has influenced fashion design from the eighteenth century to today (The Museum at FIT, 2023). Food and fashion have a complex relationship that goes beyond aesthetics. This combination of food and fashion influences life in various ways in today's zeitgeist. Both industries recognize the importance of responsible consumption and production, and sustainability is at the forefront. Both sectors' design emphasizes creativity and invention, while challenges of overindulgence and ostentatious spending encourage us to reconsider our habits. They also come together to appreciate the uniqueness of moments, providing a canvas for self-expression as well as a route for cultural recollection. Food and fashion constantly reflect, influence, and mirror our lives in the face of shifting trends and ideals, reminding us that what we wear and eat are not merely utilitarian but symbolic of our ever-changing, connected cultural identities.

Food and fashion need to be celebrated for a variety of reasons. They are colorful representations of our cultural diversity and ingenuity, not merely daily necessity. Food is more than just food; it embodies a culture's history, traditions, and basic identity. Each meal conveys a tale, from the delicate spices of Indian food to the comfortable embrace of Italian pasta. Similarly, fashion is more than just clothes; it is an art form, an expression of individuality, and a tribute to our ever-changing tastes and trends (Nolan, 2022). Colors, textures, and materials are combined by designers to create clothing that are more than just covers; they are statements. Both industries offer forums for self-expression and creativity, allowing us to communicate and celebrate our identities. Furthermore, food and fashion play an important role in our economy, providing jobs for a large number of people. They also act as change and growth agents. Sustainability, ethical sourcing, and responsible consumption are becoming increasingly important, and both industries are reacting with environmentally friendly techniques and social responsibilities (Scott, 2022). Celebrating food and fashion is also about honoring the minor pleasures in life, like as sharing a delicious meal with loved ones or dressing in an outfit that makes us feel confident. They add to our lives, elevate our special moments, and encourage us to broaden our horizons. In an ever-changing world, appreciating cuisine and fashion connects us to our cultural heritage and the history that has shaped us.



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