

# Humour, food and fashion: The use of humour and food in fashion shows

**Arie Sover**

Ashkelon Academic College & The Open University of Israel  
[ariesover@gmail.com](mailto:ariesover@gmail.com)

**Orna Ben-Meir**

Wizo Haifa Academic Centre & Seminar Hakibutzim College for Art and Education, Holon Institute of Technology  
[ornaben@gmail.com](mailto:ornaben@gmail.com)

## Abstract

*This article is the first study that researches the combination of three components: humour, food and fashion. It is based on an analysis of three unique fashion shows whose designer is the American Jeremy Scott; two under his brand, and the third as an art director for the Italian brand Moschino. The three shows connect these three components, while presenting the culmination of a food-humour theme in contemporary fashion, which had started with Moschino's brand founder, Franco Moschino, in the nineties. Combining food and fashion is relevant in contemporary culture as it compares consumption of fast food to that of fast fashion. The link between laughter and food is ancient. A few days after birth, there are buds of a smile on a baby's face, expressing its satisfaction with food. Smiles and even laughter often occur throughout a person's life in the context of delicious food. The uniqueness of the above-mentioned fashion shows is not humour in itself, but rather its combination with food and fashion, the two seemingly different. The combination of these three components creates a cognitive challenge for the fashion spectators. We thus argue that this threesome constitutes an important, creative breakthrough in fashion. One of humour's important functions is to challenge social, cultural and aesthetic norms. As thus it has been infiltrated into fashion shows since the 1980s, as a norm-breaker, but also as a marketing strategy. This article discusses the cultural function of food and humour in fashion shows, from a cultural semiotic methodology.*

*Keywords: fashion, humour, laughter, food, fashion shows, Moschino, Jeremy Scott.*

## 1. Introduction

Humour is a central component in a person's integration into society. A person who identifies with a particular social group shares common values with it that are expressed in all aspects of life: communication, culture, ethics, education, aesthetics, etc. Humour has three central social functions. First, it reflects the common values of the members of a specific group; second, it is a critical tool through which a society punishes those who deviate from the group norms (Bergson 1981: 126). The third function is humour as a tool to break down barriers of norms. That is to say, as opposed to the previous two functions, whose aim is to consolidate and preserve common values, the third function appears to contradict the other two. As Horton (2009: 609) suggests,

[d]uring the eighteenth century, the function of humour in New England, slide from an affirmation of the Puritan community's solidarity into an increasing willingness to mock the spokespersons for social order. Through multivalent social symbols like the hoop petticoat, critics used humour to address perceptions of gender roles, national identity, and sexual norms and to subvert and symbolically reverse the balance of social power.

Humour is used to point out unusual situations that are contrary to accepted norms. This cognitive incongruity between the unusual and the known or expected, forces people to activate exceptional cognitive processes to provide themselves with logical solutions to the circumstances in which they find themselves (see among others Morreall, 1983; Forabosco, 1992; Sover, 2009: 18-19; Davies, 2012).

In his book, *The Act of Creation* (1964), Arthur Koestler argues that the brain in a situation of humour works in creative, non-routine ways as happens in science and art. Scientific important discoveries and great works of art are the fruits of unusual and inspirational flashes of thinking that connect components, which appear to have no connection. Koestler perceived humour as the presentation of a problem that a person has to solve. The solution links two strains of thought that normally were not connected before. Creative thinking finds a way of connecting them. Koestler (1964: 27, 44-67) called this type of brain process *bisociation*.

The use of humour in art and fashion is, amongst others, a proposal for a new aesthetics, relevant for our contemporary over-saturated visual culture. Douglas (1991: 304-306) claims that "[a] joke confronts one accepted pattern with another and thus provokes a creative reinterpretation of social relationships".

In this article, which deals with fashion shows, humour is an integral part of the presentation of the clothes that form the fashion show. Sometimes the clothes themselves contain humorous elements, sometimes the way models are styled and mise-en-scened is humorous, and sometimes the place in which the fashion show is held creates the same cognitive incongruity shown in situations of humour. All these unusual expressions raise aesthetic and philosophical questions and challenge spectators who have to deal with them and find appropriate cognitive answers. Deciphering the humour is expressed through laughter.

## 2. Humour and food

The connection between laughter and food is ancient. As written in the book of Ecclesiastes (chapter 8, verse 15), "[t]hen I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun". The laughter of the gods is

described by Homer as “the exuberance of their celestial joy after their daily banquet” (Darwin 1874: 213). A few days after birth, we can see the buds of a smile on a baby’s face, expressing satisfaction with having received food essential for survival (Valentine 1936: 647-648).

Smiles and even laughter often occur throughout a person’s life in the context of delicious food. In banquets and social events where food is served, laughter can often be heard accompanying eating. Mealtimes and their associated rituals are recognised as important aspects of human socialisation. Research findings show that toddlers playfully cooperate with each other in order to develop their own ritual. This ritual accompanied with humour and laughter subverts the routine, communicates togetherness and reinforces the toddlers’ identity as separate to that of the adults (Mortlock, 2015). Medieval French poets employed food and laughter to question the meaning of cultural conventions concerning the body and sexuality, religion, class hierarchies, and gender relationships. They employed food as a powerful device of humour and criticism. Culinary comedy served as both social satire and literary parody, playing with institutional social conduct and alimentary codes. Its power lies in its ability to disrupt and to reinforce the same conventions it ridicules (Gordon, 2007). Among its other qualities, humour is used to shatter norms and expand the boundaries of imagination (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Chanel Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/chanel/slideshow/collection#79>

### 3. Methodology

This study is based on three unique fashion shows whose designer was Jeremy Scott. All three shows connect humour, food, and fashion. We have chosen these shows as an apex in the food-humour theme in current fashion that had started with the founder of Moschino's brand, Franco Moschino, in the nineties (Ben-Meir 2013). Moschino took this theme, as a twofold strategy. First, by doing so, he was walking in the footsteps of Elsa Schiaparelli, who is considered one of the great 20th century designers, who still influences contemporary generations of fashion designers. Elsa Schiaparelli was the first designer to introduce humour into modern fashion (Ben-Meir *ibid*). Secondly, Schiaparelli was of Italian origin and hence Franco Moschino pointed out on his national identity as an innovator in a European French hegemony. The theme of Italian food thus became as a symbol for his national identity in the cultural discourse of fashion in late 20th century.

Fashion, like other components of contemporary culture, is a semiotic system constructed of signs and symbols. For this paper, we follow the semiotic methodology formulated by Roland Barthes in his 1967 PhD dissertation "Système de la mode", which refined and expanded in his later writings (Barthes 1972; 1997; 2013; 2015). We intend to show that the uniqueness of the above-mentioned fashion shows lies in the combination of humour, food and fashion. We argue that this combination constitutes an important cultural statement, as, by the means of humour, fashion can serve as a critical tool towards the much-discussed issue of fast food as compared to fast fashion.

### 4. The expression of humour and food in fashion

Food is a basic visible unmasked component, which connects directly to the stomach, and to the digestive system. Fashion is an external expression. The connection between these two components that seemingly represent two different worlds, the internal and external, creates an extraordinary, innovative encounter. Humour is added to this, as we shall see below.

In the last decade, food has stepped out of the diners' plates onto the catwalks of leading fashion designers (Ben-Meir 2013: 151-160). This culinary theme, which involves the satisfaction of basic human needs, was frequently accompanied by humour. Notably, in recent fashion shows for Fall 2014 the gastronomic theme was heralded in two much talked about collections. The first was that of Chanel, whose long-time creative director Karl Lagerfeld magically transformed the museum of the *Grand Palais* in Paris into a full-scale supermarket. Among loud discount posters, aisles and shelves, there was Chanel-branded everything, from door mats, to Pringles, to Coco Pops, and even natural products such as eggs, fruits and vegetables. Supermarket plastic trolleys were pushed by female models carrying shopping baskets made of iconic Chanel chains, or the classic quilted leather bag, which had been paradoxically vacuum-packed as though it were a pack of lamb chops (see Figures 2, 7 and 14).



Figure 2: Chanel Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/chanel/slideshow/collection#21>

The models strode out browsing the shelves, picking up items, filling the trolleys. It gave the impression of a typical supermarket scene, yet it was incongruously staged to present a fashion catwalk, for totally unaffordable luxuriously expensive clothes. Using food and humour, which are two of Man's existential foundations, brings fashion closer to the viewers' most basic needs and makes them unconsciously perceive fashion as one of those needs. The second example was Jeremy Scott's debut collection for Moschino. The brand's founder Franco Moschino (1950-1994), Italian fashion's "enfant terrible" who rose to fame in the Eighties, was known for his witty designs and is considered one of the main spokesmen of humour in contemporary fashion, the successor of the first fashion designer who applied humour in fashion, Elsa Schiaparelli (Ben Meir: 2013, 155-156). For example, Moschino's famous ensemble from Fall 1989, publicly entitled "Dinner Dress and Jacket", ridiculed literally as well as visually the formal "black tie" dress code imposed on men in previous centuries, which entailed the use of food as an expression of humour pertaining to fashion.



Figure 3: Franco Moschino, 'Show-off' ensemble, Fall-Winter 1989-90

<http://collections.lacma.org/node/211369>

## **5. Findings**

The clothes shown on the catwalk of Moschino's collection for Fall 2014 looked like hybrid mutations of American junk food imagery, combined with Chanel haute couture iconography. There was the familiar red-and-yellow colour scheme of McDonald's together with its trademark Golden Arches curved into a heart-shaped "M for Moschino" iconic motif (see Figure 4).



Fig. 4: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

Left to right: <http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection>  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#3>  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#8>  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#9>  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#7>

Scott used the familiar tactics of a visual pun, frequently employed by caricaturists, that bis paraphrasing on popular mottos by hybridizing the so-familiar image of the fast food brand with the sartorial aesthetics of high fashion. Humour is also produced through the element of surprise. The familiar food cheap packages like the Coke plastic cup with a straw, the French fries' carton container, and the famous "Happy Meal Box" were surprisingly transformed into luxurious leather purses with iconic Chanel chains; one was turned into the famous Chanel-like quilted leather bag and was presented on a tray carried by a model walking on the catwalk, like a waitress. From a commercial perspective, it was a brilliant move to link the luxurious fashion brand with the most famous fast food brand by means of humour. As mentioned above, humour was a typical mark of Franco Moschino's heritage, and thus Scott, who started his fashion career as an intern at Moschino's New York press office, was following in his footsteps.

Humour is an effective tool to gain public visibility and at the same time an allegedly critical tool towards the much-discussed issue of fast food as compared to fast fashion. Being the "favourite child of capitalism", as Sombart (1902: 316) described fashion at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the reference of Chanel and Scott's collections to the so familiar

consumerist perspective of alimentation is deliberate. Consumerism itself, claims Visser (1999: 122), is a word that comes from the idea of eating:

Modern economists love the food metaphor for buying stuff. You eat three times a day, and your appetite renews in time for every meal. The obliging never-endingness of the desire for food is then thought of as applying to all the things we buy, as though cars, CDs, and handbags disappear down our gullets so that we perpetually need more of them. The unrestricted desire that is central to postmodernism makes food symbolism irresistible.

Fashion, with its dynamics of perpetual change and crave for novelty, is thus the ultimate embodiment of our contemporary obsession with instant gratification. Our Western culture is in a constant state of superficial need for the new "IT"—must-have—item: the latest smartphone, the fresh new celebrities as well the thrilling exciting latest headlines. We consume novelties in every aspect of our life, especially visual ones (Jorgan, 2015) and this is well exemplified by the fast food metaphor and fashion alike.

Humour is, then, the effective adhesive that combines fashion with food, and it serves as a sophisticated marketing strategy. This is expressed in Scott's own words: "Ultimately, we need no more clothes. [...] So, you have to have this *reason* to want things. To me, it's to make you happy, and to me, that's linked to humour" (our emphasis; Wong: 2014) Humour is that "reason" Scott talked about, whose main objective is to nurture the desire towards the fashion items displayed. Moreover, humour that is directed to our constant craving appetite is wittingly disguised as a criticism of the act of consumerism. Right after the presentation of this collection in Milan, Scott launched by means of a website a collection of fast fashion items, together with matching accessories, such as shoes, sunglasses and smartphone covers.

Even this fast fashion collection was far from being affordable. One blogger calculated the cost of a total outfit as 500 pounds (McNaught 2014). Ironically enough, MacDonald's employees accused the high-end fashion house of mocking minimum wage earners, who could never afford these clothes at the cost of \$1,000 price a dress (Fleming 2014). Scott told the reporters in Milan that it is "about taking something trashy and making something that you'll treasure forever" (Fashionista: 2014). His choice proved successful, and the collection became a hit. The mocking issue absurdly ended in a plain t-shirt sold at the online shop Etsy—together with other funny McDonalds T-shirts—with the following written text: "I can't afford Moschino BUT I can go to McDonald's and pretend my French fries' container is my iPhone case" (ibid). Scott laughed at us, the consumers, all the way to the bank.

## 6. Humour as a means of Cultural Declaration

Yet, we would like to argue that the use of humour linked to food served Scott for another purpose: for subversive cultural declaration. Although food is important to the physiological aspect of human survival, it is more than just nutrition and fuel, as has been stressed by anthropologists and sociologists in numerous research papers published over the years (see Levi-Strauss 1969; Mennell *et al.* 1992; Mäkelä 2000). Among anthropologists, folklorists and ethnologists, particularly in the U.S, the expression "Food and Foodways" is used to describe the cultural meaning of the culinary theme. The term foodways originates in the Great Depression of the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt initiated a project aimed at gathering evidence concerning traditional folklore, folk life and culture among different subcultures in America. Foodways refers to the connection between food-related behaviour and patterns of membership in a cultural community, group and society. One of these meanings is the national affiliation ascribed to food, as Korthals (2008: 79-80) put it: "the British do when they call themselves 'beef-eaters' and the French 'frog-eaters', or the



Japanese when they call themselves ‘rice-eaters’ as opposed to other cultures”. Fast food is identified as a distinctively American commodity. Adding to the McDonald’s designs on the catwalk of Moschino, there were other exclusively American food brands such as Fruit Loops cereal, Hershey’s chocolate, and Budweiser beer.



Figure 5: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#38>

There are other food brands which are complete unknown to non-Americans. They appear as giant prints for silky evening gowns that looked on the models’ bodies like candy wrappers (see Figures 5-8).



Fig. 6: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#40>



Figure 7: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show  
<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#42>



Figure 8: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#46>

The visual punch line of the runway was a colossal print of a nutritional factsheet of a certain American food brand (i.e. Frito-Lay Potato chips) digitally printed on a ridiculously white puffy bridal dress in the finale (see Figure 9).



Fig. 9: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#48>

## 7. American food and fashion verses European food and fashion

In his influential book *Mythologies* (1972: 63-64), Barthes discussed the everyday myth of certain foods as national signifiers. Such foods are the French steak and chips that were appropriated by the Americans:

[Steak] [...] is a French possession (circumscribed today, it is true, by the invasion of American steaks) [...]. [I]t is the very flesh of the French soldier, the inalienable property which cannot go over to the enemy except by treason. [...] Commonly associated with chips, [...] chips are nostalgic and patriotic like steak. [...] [*L*]a *frite*, chips, are the alimentary sign of Frenchness.

American fast food, with its suggestion of speed, standardisation, and the homogenisation of taste, would seem to represent the direct inverse of European traditional gastronomic practices. By intentionally presenting all-American processed industrial food products in a fashion show in Milan, Scott was declaring a new cultural and aesthetic sartorial hegemony. He did it through a culinary perspective, with a friendly weapon of fun. Scott actually declared it literally on the T-shirt he himself wore at the end of the collection, which said: “I don’t speak Italian but I speak Moschino” (see Figure 10).



Fig. 10: Moschino Autumn-Winter 2014-15 show

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/moschino/slideshow/collection#49>

The humorous tone of the slogan was intentionally communicative on several levels. First, it was a reference to the *literal tactic* of humour typical of the founder, and at the same time an allusion to Moschino's humorous reaction to the struggle of Italian fashion's identity, embodied in the recognisable label "Made in Italy", "which remains even today a guarantee of creative quality around the world" (Frisa 2014: 29). In the Eighties and Nineties, Italian fashion had to claim its significance as a national force (Da Cruz 2004; Reinach 2015) as compared to the French long lasting hegemony in luxurious fashion. Italian fashion reinvented itself by relying on an adherence to the markings of a rich cultural heritage. This was reflected most prominently in tributes to the luxury of the Italian Renaissance, an instinctive progression toward the globalisation of fashion via various modernist aesthetics, and an ability to reinvent image ideals through advertising and promotion (Da Cruz 2004). Hence, Franco Moschino joked about this in his image of the maid he created in the 1980's with a simple black dress with high neckline and long sleeves, with the addition of a crisp white pinafore apron embroidered with black letters "Maid in Italy" and a cheerful red heart. This design had a double reference: on the one hand, it was a paraphrase of the iconic concept of the "Little Black Dress" introduced by the French fashion designer Coco Chanel in 1926, and on the other hand, it was a visual pun on the label "Made in Italy". The appropriation of the French vestment token to the apparent glorification of Italian fashion was done by means of humour. Another example is from Franco Moschino's 1992 collection, where he used actual pasta as part of the garment design, together with the embroidered slogan "Sorry, I'm Italian!" Therefore, considering this, it seems that by choosing American popular food imagery, Scott created in his debut collection for Moschino a homage to the brand's founder,

who had “an obsession with American pop culture” (Hosker & Kent, 2000: 198), through the carnival-like humorous prism that so characterises him.

The seeds for this culinary statement were sown in Jeremy Scott’s own work. In his collection for Fall 2006, entitled “Food Fight”, the anorexic models who walked on the catwalk were wearing clothes in the shape of popular American fast food items.



Fig. 11: Jeremy Scott, Autumn-Winter 2006

<http://www.elle.com/runway/fall-2006-rtw/g4359/jeremy-scott-127538/?slide=17>

There was the familiar coupling of a hamburger and French fries designed on a dress and a man’s outfit. The French fries were printed, while the hamburger was converted into textile pieces and the lettuce inside the roll—also printed—was a gathered frill that popped out from the two-dimensional pattern located right on the abdomen, the bodily organ where fat is shown (see figures 11& 12).



Figure 12: Jeremy Scott, Autumn-Winter 2006

<http://www.elle.com/runway/fall-2006-rtw/g4359/jeremy-scott-127538/?slide=16>

In the following dress, Scott mocked contemporary women's fear of getting fat. In this ice cream dress, he employed the same tactic of pointing to bodily organs as the strapless bodice designed as a pile of vanilla cream and on top of it two biscuit cones as the nipples. "Fashion embodies the constant dialogue with the body, while in the past it was carefully encoded in societal norms" (Ben Meir 2013: 153).





Fig. 13: Jeremy Scott, Autumn-Winter 2006

<http://www.elle.com/runway/fall-2006-rtw/g4359/jeremy-scott-127538/?slide=30>

Scott employed two other techniques of humour. First, *exaggeration* of a body part, the breasts, which is common in contemporary fashion, notably in the famous golden corset Jean-Paul Gaultier designed for the singer Madonna for her “Blond Ambition” tour in 1990. Second, Scott took the breasts out of their sartorial context in the bra and presented them in a new culinary context (see Figure 13). At first sight it is puzzling and then it encourages laughter. Added to this is the non-politically correct degrading-chauvinist connection between images of femininity and consumption, represented by the familiar nickname “Honey”. *Objectifying the human* is another tactic of humour, according to Plato, Hobbes, Bergson, and many other thinkers. Humour is a process in which a person who laughs at the expense of another, degrades and feels superior to the latter (Sover 2009: 20-23). The visual pun that Scott would employ later in the McDonald’s logo, based on ‘objectifying the human’ appeared previously in the dress with the Snickers logo, which he switched to his name “Jeremy”.



Fig. 14: Jeremy Scott, Autumn-Winter 2006

<http://www.elle.com/runway/fall-2006-rtw/g4359/jeremy-scott-127538/?slide=12>

Snickers is a candy bar that consists of nougat, peanuts, and caramel with a chocolate coating. It was created in 1930. Even though Snickers was always a well-known brand, it began an aggressive advertising campaign at the beginning of 1995 to re-position itself on the American market. Snickers ran advertisements that featured someone making a self-inflicted mistake, with the voice-over saying “Not going anywhere for a while? Grab a Snickers!”, as it is quoted in the Snickers site in Wikipedia. What Scott was saying through use of humour was: “grab a Jeremy Scott dress instead of a candy bar”. Here again, humour is in the service of marketing, using the symbolic capital of the original product; for example, using the popularity of the recognised candy image as a vehicle for the reception of the fashion product. Scott would use the same marketing strategy later on in the Moschino collection.

Later on, in his 2011 Fall Collection, Scott went bolder in his humorous attitude. The clothes on the catwalk carried the ever so familiar logo of the Coca Cola brand with the red and white colours and wave, except that the word *Coke* was replaced by the word *God*. The onlooker is confused by this replacement, which elevates the food brand of Coca-Cola to the same level as God (see Figure 15).



Fig. 15: Jeremy Scott, Autumn-Winter 2011

L-R:<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2011-ready-to-wear/jeremy-scott/slideshow/collection>

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2011-ready-to-wear/jeremy-scott/slideshow/collection#5>

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2011-ready-to-wear/jeremy-scott/slideshow/collection#3>

Humour here is produced by the double meaning of reading options. First, the word *enjoy* remains from the original logo as well as the trademark sign, thus creating a new connection of meaning, that of equalisation: “Enjoy Coca-Cola, that is, Enjoy God” which means that Coca-Cola is equally significant to God. Thus comes the second meaning, which is based on the incongruity created by combining a food product that belongs to the physical material world, and a concept from a completely different world, that of the spiritual transcendental. The observer’s awareness is shaken between the two levels of humour and in the dual meaning inherent in each. This cognitive action requires unusual mental effort, which is always required in the process of producing humour. This conscious action is reminiscent of what Koestler (1964: 27, 44-45, 55-67) called *bisociation*. The resulting tension that is created by the initial solution not coming to fruition is discharged through laughter (Kant 1942: 149-151). By building this humorous imagery connecting American food brands with high-end fashion, Jeremy Scott could subconsciously and subversively sell his products to a potential non-American market.

## 8. Conclusion

Both Fall 2014 collections -that of Chanel and that of Moschino marked a culmination of the dietary topic, which was recurrent in the last decade of fashion, especially in accessories, jewellery and fashion photography. Fashion is already considered a sort of art form, but of all the arts, fashion has often been connected with the aesthetics of beauty: pretty clothes, attractive models and charming places depicted in beautiful photographs. All the cognitive

tactics mentioned above, such as visual pun, incongruity, hybridisation, surprise, puzzlement, staging out of context, exaggeration, objectifying the human, pointing onto bodily organs, and combining opposites, signify new values of beauty, absurd, irony, parody, and grotesque, whose common denominator is humour.

Two major conclusions can be drawn from our research:

1. By using food and humour, which are two of Man's existential foundations, the concept's creator (the fashion designer) brings fashion closer to the viewers' most basic needs and makes them unconsciously perceive fashion as one of those needs.
2. The concept's creator, in his unique way, uses the humour that derives from the connection between American food brands and American fashion as a subconscious, subversive means of introducing fashion products to a potential non-American market.

The theme of food has become the object of humour in contemporary fashion, as, in our capitalistic consumerist society that craves for immediate gratification, food represents satisfying one's basic bodily needs, hence its seemingly "natural-physical" connection to humour. Contemporary fashion designers thus perceive a specific potential in humoristic strategies as a means of delegitimising social norms and a cultural weapon meant to attack complacency in cultural practices, identities, and politics. By its novelty and marketing effectiveness, humour has the opportunity to enable cultural commentary and even critique. This double wink adopted by fashion designers is typical of the traditional historical relationship between humour and food, represented by the aesthetic category of the "carnavalesque", which deals "the language of the marketplace", and "banquet imagery" discussed by Mikhail Bakhtin, in his influential book *Rabelais and his World* (1984). The marriage of humour and food with fashion is therefore the novelty of a new aesthetics of postmodernist fashion.

## Notes

Both authors have the same contribution to the article.

The pictures were taken from the sites: [www.vogue.com](http://www.vogue.com), [www.elle.com](http://www.elle.com) and the Lacma Museum.

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