The (non-)narrative functions of fashion in contemporary film explained with paradigmatic examples:

*Game of Thrones, The Divergent Series and The Hunger Games.*

Félice Kuijntjes [s1381008]
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION: FASHION IN CINEMA
   1.1 Academic relevance 2
   1.2 Theoretical framework 3
   1.3 Narrativity 4, 5

2. FUNCTION 1: TIME AND SPACE
   2.1 Fashion to represent time and space 6-10
   2.2 Example case study: *Game of Thrones* 10-12

3. FUNCTION 2: EXPRESSIVE - DEFINING CHARACTER 13
   3.1 Expressive function 14, 15
      3.1.1 Expressivity and narrativity 15, 16
   3.2 Example case study: *The Divergent Series* 16-18
   3.3 Defining character 19

4. FUNCTION 3: SPECIAL EFFECT
   4.1 Spectacle 20-22
   4.2 Fashion as a special effect 23-26
   4.3 Example case study: *The Hunger Games* 26-28

5. CONCLUSION 29-31

6. APPENDIX 32-35

7. REFERENCES 36-39
1. INTRODUCTION: FASHION IN CINEMA

1.1 Why is this research important/relevant?

Some main themes that reoccur in the literary field of film studies are time, space, affect, subjectivity, indexicality, stillness and motion, representation and mass art. Many of those topics relate to fashion in cinema, nevertheless this connection is rarely discussed within the academic research of debates regarding the field of film and media studies. This thesis gives insight into how fashion and its functions contribute to the narrative of a film, such as the expressive function, the function to represent time and space or fashion to serve as spectacle. I believe this research is relevant since there is more to discover about the influence of these functions, since narrativity and fashion have not been connected often in existing research and literature. Especially in a digital age with many technical developments which have engaged many changes in the field of film, fashion has adopted a new role in which these functions - particularly fashion as a special effect - must be reevaluated.

In this thesis I will examine the narrative and non-narrative functions of fashion in film, such as the narrative function of fashion to represent time and space and the non-narrative function of fashion as a special effect. Therefore the research question is as follows: ‘what are the narrative and non-narrative functions of fashion in contemporary film throughout the 21st century?’ I distinguish narrativity and non-narrativity since I would like to argue fashion can have a narrative function, a non-narrative function or both. The narrative cause and effect relationship which takes place in a time and space with a clear beginning and ending can be emphasized by costumes, just as it can serve as pure spectacle which is seen as non-narrative. By addressing several functions, I would like to prove that fashion is important and relevant in the studies of film and should be further examined as the digital age develops quickly.

I will answer the research question with the help of theoretical texts by for instance Geoff King (who wrote about spectacular narratives), Tom Gunning (who introduced the term “cinema of attractions”) and Michele Pierson (who examined the wonder years of the special effect). Besides literary research, I will also analyse three case studies: the young adult science fiction adventure film series The Divergent Series set in a post-apocalyptic dystopian Chicago, the American fantasy television series Game of Thrones set in a mythical world and the dystopian adventure film series The Hunger Games set in the nation of Panem what once used to be North America. I have chosen these three case studies, since fashion plays an important role in all three contemporary cases in distinctive ways. I choose The Divergent Series since it is suitable to connect to the expressive function of fashion in film; the clothing plays a big role in defining the characters of the series and therefore contributes to the narrative. Game of Thrones was chosen as a case study, because it shows how fashion can function to represent time and space in an interesting way. It is interesting because you cannot exactly pinpoint a specific time or place for any of these worlds portrayed in GoT, but there are some recognizable
elements that come together in a very unique way. The viewer is transported to another world, but different cultural influences from our real world are combined into something fresh by use of costumes in an appealing way I have yet not seen in other television series. *The Hunger Games* is definitely indispensable in my selection of case studies, because in this film fashion as spectacle is central to the story. Besides that, fashion also truly functions as a special effect by using computer generated images in combination with costume design which is only visible in contemporary films like this one. The mixture of fashion as spectacle and narrativity shows spectacle does not merely go hand in hand with non-narrativity and in this way *The Hunger Games* can embody and even validate King’s theory which will be discussed later on.

### 1.2 Theoretical framework

Before I start to discuss the narrative and non-narrative functions of fashion in film, I will first describe the concept of narration in the first chapter with help of the book *Film Narratology* by Peter Verstraten. This book provides a critical guide to the narratological analysis of film and is of great importance for this analysis. In this thesis I do not only use the term fashion, but also costume. The fashion and cultural studies scholar Kaiser came up with this definition of the term costume: “a style of clothes belonging to a particular cultural or historical context” (Jablon, 2016, p. 10). The cultural and historical context of clothing is important in this thesis, and therefore the term costume cannot be ignored. However, costume is often related to theatre. In this thesis when I refer to the topics fashion and costume, I solely refer to costumes designed for films, not theatre. To some, the words costume and fashion are not interchangeable, even though they are similar. When I address the topic fashion I refer to clothing used to dress the characters in both narrative and non-narrative ways, which is similar to the definition of costume: “all the body garments worn by actors, all the accessoire they carry as part of their characters and everything associated with the face and body makeup” (Jablon, 2016, p. 8).

The second chapter, which addresses the narrative function of representing time and space, is written after reading Verstraten’s *Film Narratology* and Sesonske’s article ‘Time and Tense in Cinema’ which I compare to the article ‘Time and Space’ written by Khatchadourian (1987), who examines the concept space and time in film as the organizing and structuring principles of film. The third chapter revolves around the expressive function of fashion in film, which embodies both narrative and non-narrative elements. Bordwell & Thompson’s book *Film Art* shows how the creative choices filmmakers make affect the experience of the viewer. In this chapter I also refer to Fabe (2004) who wrote an introduction to the art of narrative film technique which provides an examination of the narrative function in film through works of various film directors whose careers were important to the history of the narrative film.

The last chapter demonstrates how fashion can serve as a spectacle and can function as a special effect. In this chapter I argue it can be both a non-narrative and narrative function, and that is why Geoff King’s book *Spectacular Narratives: Hollywood in the Age of the Blockbuster* is one of the...
most important sources for this chapter. He both emphasizes the spectacular and suggests even the most spectacular contemporary blockbusters offer a blend of spectacle and narrative and therefore takes a different position within the debate about whether (fashion as) spectacle can be seen as narrative or non-narrative. This chapter also builds on *The Cinema Effect* by Cubitt who proposes a history of images in motion from a digital perspective, just as Pierson’s book *Still in Search of Wonder* about fashion as a special effect in cinema is highly relevant to this chapter. Pierson (2002) examines the history and growth of special effects. The article ‘Fashion in Film: Birds of Paradise’ examines how fashion as spectacle functions as a special effect in film and therefore is useful for this chapter.

### 1.3 Narrativity

In this thesis I discuss three functions of fashion in cinema: one mostly narrative, one mostly non-narrative and one that can be seen as both. Before discussing the first function, I would like to look at a definition of the concept narratology in film.

Head of the programme Film and Photographic Studies in Leiden is Peter Verstraten, who wrote a coherent book about film narratology. In the introduction of this book Verstraten (2009) describes how the classic way of narrating, where the causal relations are consistent, have changed; there is a crisis of (classic) film narratives. Last years there has been a rise of films which are based on a narrative structure that differs from classic narration. The changed nature of narration in cinema is “an urgent reason to rethink filmic narrativity” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 5). He claims his book about narratology is relevant, because of the developments in the field of new media studies. He wonders how digital media relates to narratives and how cyberspace influences cinema. I will address this topic in chapter 4. Verstraten (2009) defines narration as follows: “narration is the representation of a (perceptible) temporal development” (p. 8).

Verstraten discusses the criteria that determine the narrative aspects of cinema. The first ‘level’ of narrativity is the display of the moving images. The term for these moving images which are put into a scene is mise en scène, which include elements such as design, lightning, setting and costume. Verstraten points out the issues regarding mise en scène, such as the narrative agent being responsible for who or what can be seen, locating the characters in a certain space and what kind of lightning is being used in the shots. Besides mise en scène, it is also essential to realize how exactly the scene is being shot, Verstraten addresses this as the cinematography; movements and angles, the distance of the camera (long shot or close ups), lighting, which type of film stock is used and how the images could be manipulated with accentuating colours or use background projections. The second level of narrativity discussed is editing, such as time leaps and the flash back.

Verstraten also discusses an issue that technically falls outside the range of film narratology; (exorbitant) stylistic elements. Despite the fact he calls this issue non-narrative, it can still be of imperative importance to an analysis of the story. It is interesting to consider if and why the functions discussed in this thesis are narrative or not, if we consider the diverged opinions on the topic. In Film
Narratology, Verstraten argues that “stylistic conventions strictly speaking transcend the field of narratology”, but however he would like to propose “that stylistic procedures belong to the domain of narrative theory in a broader and more practical sense, even when they do not seem to propel the story” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 189). Stylistic elements include the narrative, sound, editing and the camera angle. In my opinion fashion has a narrative and non-narrative function, and belongs - just as these stylistic elements - to the domain of narrative theory in a wide ranging sense.

In *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, narrativity is defined as “the descriptiveness of description/ a description” (Porter Abbott, 2011, p. 1). Fashion can have a function within a narrative, since it helps to describe a character or a storyline that is being described/shown in a movie. It could also be just a non-narrative function, since it could serve just for the main purpose of spectacle, satisfaction or amusement and a special effect. Whether the function of cinema is narrative or non-narrative, it is clear that fashion is part of the stylistic elements and plays a crucial role in the field of cinema. Fashion represents and plays with the concept of time and space (discussed in chapter 2), it helps to portray the characters and make the story vivid and sensational (discussed in chapter 3) and can serve as entertainment, spectacle or a special effect (discussed in chapter 4).
2. FUNCTION 1: TIME AND SPACE

“Throughout history, clothing has played a role in defining an era. Fashion is the mirror of our civilization.”

- Deborah Nadoolman Landis (AMPAS, 2015).

The first function of fashion in film is representing time and space. Whether a film takes place in any time in the past (called period films), takes place in the future or a flashback refers to another place and time; the movie’s time period can be defined and expressed by the costumes. I will start to examine how the position of characters within time and space can be defined through fashion, before I examine how these characters express themselves and go through transformation with the help of fashion in the next chapter. Even though the function of representing time and space is the most distinguishable, it is worth investigating since it is also one of the most imperative ones. The time and place in which the story is set is therefore of great importance to the costume designer. In this chapter I will examine how fashion represents time and space, which I connect because they are interdependent.

The equivalent case study raises several questions, such as ‘Which connotations are evoked by costume design regarding the subjects of time and space?’ ‘How can costumes offer a certain perspective on a period of time?’ and ‘How accurate is the representation of time and space through historical costumes in contemporary films?’ I will answer these questions on the basis of the analysis of the chosen case study for this chapter: the fantasy series Game of Thrones.

2.1 Fashion to represent time and space

In narrative, it is often suggested space and time are inseparable and together form the foundation of the story: “Time, space and causality are the main principles of narrative cinema” (Verstraten, 2009, p.16). Fashion can represent a certain time period, for instance in the past, which makes costume dramas and period films look credible. For example, the romantic drama Pride & Prejudice filmed in 2005 - based on the novel written by Jane Austin in 1813 - is a movie in which costume plays a critical role. The story takes place in the 18th century in the class conscious England, but was filmed in the 21st century. To make it look like actress Keira Knightley and other actors from this movie were actually in the 18th century in England, the costumes are of great importance. The novel was also made into a tv series in 1995, starring Colin Firth. The costume designer for this six-episode British television drama was Dinah Collin. Her task was to design costumes that represented the clothing style during the 18th century in England, but also to show the contrast between the extremely rich Bingley sisters who were based in London and the less rich Bennet sisters based in the countryside. She did so by dressing the Bingley sisters in bright colored silk gowns with lots of ornaments such as feathers and brooches. She also created some cross-over evening bodices, which were right out of that period.

Figure 1 shows princess Augusta in the Buckingham palace, born in 1768, with attire that has a similar
style to the clothing of Jane Bennet (one of the Bennet sisters) and Mrs. Hurst (Bingley’s snobbish sister) which are also portrayed in figure 1.

Furthermore, fashion can also portray the current image of the time period in which the movie is filmed such as blockbuster movie *Mean Girls* from 2004, which depicts the modern look of the early 21st century, although the styling in this movie is slightly exaggerated. The movie *Mean Girls* is similar to the movie *Heathers*; a 1988 film defined by vivid visual interpretation that created a genre about privileged high school “mean girls”. The costume design in this film illustrates the concepts obedience, tribalism and the lust for power. Costume designer Rudy Dillon converted the late ‘80s fashion in the film; the shoulder pads and ankle socks reflected the nature of the mean girls in a ‘status-hungry’ society.

Besides representing place and time in the past or in the present, fashion can create a world in film which does not correspond to the reality as we know it: an unknown or fantasy world such as the one depicted in the *Harry Potter* movies. Jany Temime, costume designer from the third to last film of the series, created a world of magic through clothing starting with the iconic black wizard’s robe. One of the most important characters Lord Voldemort, the darkest wizard of all time, wears layers of very dark silk that look like a second layer of skin and belongs to his spirit. The clothing style of Hermione Granger, one of Harry Potter’s best friends, changes through time. As the years pass by, her clothing style becomes more feminine and shows how she develops as a person. All the character’s costumes have a narrative function in the Harry Potter series; the costumes evoke connotations with factors related to time. The combination of fashion and time in film is rather obvious, but the connection between fashion and space is slightly more complicated.

In the *Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, space is defined as the “physically existing environment in which characters live and move” (Buchholz & Jahn, 2005, p. 551). In the pre-nineteenth century space in narratives seemed to have no other function than to supply a general background setting which received little attention from the spectator. In contrast to this view, later on a ‘spatial turn’ took place in narrative theory which showed space is not less important than time. The great number of space-oriented narrative genres such as science fiction, dystopian fiction, fantasy and historical novel reflects this change. Also useful is Ronen’s definition of space: “the domain of settings and surroundings of events, characters and objects in literary narrative, along with other domains (story, character, time and ideology), constitutes a fictional universe” (Ronen, 1986, p. 421). Not all representations of space are necessarily narratives though, a geographical map is an example. However, all narratives imply a world with spatial extension. There are different kinds of spaces, and a distinction between literal and metaphorical uses of the concept should be made (in narratology and other fields).

In *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, different forms of spatiality are distinguished: spatial frames, setting, story space, narrative (or story) world and the narrative universe. Spatial frames are described as the shifting scenes of action which may flow into each other: a kitchen frame can turn
into a living room frame as the characters move within a house. They are hierarchically organized by relations of containment; a room is a subspace of a house. The setting is the “general socio-historico-geographical environment in which the action takes place” (Ryan, 2012). This category is rather stable, in contrast to the spatial frames, which embraces the entire film. To elaborate on the example given before, we could say that the setting of *Pride and Prejudice* is early 18th-century middle-higher class Hertfordshire. The story space is described as the space relevant to the plot, “as mapped by the actions and thoughts of the characters” (Ryan, 2012). However, I argue the description of just the actions and thoughts of the characters is incomplete; the costumes of the characters also contribute to this process of mapping. The narrative universe includes the worlds created through thinking, dreams and fantasies, besides the presented world as actual in the movie. I would say that in this chapter the categories setting, story space and the narrative universe are the most important since those are the categories in which fashion can help to depict the space - which is disregarded in the text of Ryan. Especially for the setting costumes are crucial, since this kind of space refers to the social and historical environment.

In narrative film it is common to divide the concept of time in the ‘screen time’ and the ‘diegetic time’; the screen time is the amount of time it takes to view the film and the diegetic time is the amount of time that the narrative embraces (Hedges, 1980). For example: every Harry Potter movie takes about a year in the diegetic time, but the screen time is usually just two hours. Diegetic elements belong to a fictitious world, in contrast to the non-diegetic stylistic elements that help the narrator to tell the story. Space is also divided into the ‘screen space’ and the ‘diegetic space’; the screen space is the composition of images as projected on the screen and the diegetic space is “the mental image of space within which the narrative takes place, as constituted by the viewer’s imagination” (Hedges, 1980, p. 28). As stated before, time and space are interdependent. The diegetic time could be influenced by space and place: when the configuration of images show for example a boat trip from America to Europe, the viewer knows the amount of time the narrative embraces must be longer than a few hours.

Professor Khatchadourian writes an article about space and time in film in the British Journal of Aesthetics. In this article Khatchadourian examines the concept space and time in film as the organizing and structuring principles of film: “in different ways space and/or time are organizing principles of all art, just as they provide the basic framework of the world and of subjective reality” (Khatchadourian, 1987, p. 169). Time and space are important in film because they make motion (of animate and inanimate things) possible. Khatchadourian agrees with the major points of professor Alexander Sesonske concerning the discussion of space and time in film. Sesonske claims cinema space is a wholly visual space which is quite objective, in the sense that it is a “genuine visual space whose visual reality is immediate and inescapable” (Khatchadourian, 1987, p. 169). Cinema space has a two faced character. There is the screen-space; the two dimensional visual space occupied by the surface of the screen, and the action-space; the three dimensional visual space created by the images on that surface within the action occurs. The viewer can be taken (visually) into the space of the film
which is an entirely created space. Sesonske points out the frame always encloses and shapes the visible action-space, however it does not usually confine it (Carr & Casey, 1973).

Khatchadourian sees his article as an extension of those major points of Sesonske. He agrees with Sesonske that the frame plays a crucial role in providing a structure in terms of balance and movement, but the action space is truly the space created by a film: the space in which the action of a narrative film ‘takes place’. The screen and action space lead us to the concept time, which also has a two-faced character: screen time and action time, as discussed earlier with the quotes of Inez Hedges (founder of the Cinema Studies program at the Northeastern University). Sesonske (1980) explains the difference: “Screen time is natural time, the time of our ordinary world as measured on the screen. But action-time is created; its form is not dictated by nature, but chosen by the film-maker” (p. 421). Khatchadourian refers to action time as the time in which we must imagine the characters to exist. The screening time is the film’s length in minutes, but the viewer’s experience of those minutes is what Khatchadourian calls the ‘lived time’; “the felt or lived duration of a narrative film as it unfolds in action space/time” (Khatchadourian, 1987, p. 173). The action time in the series Game of Thrones is for me as a viewer intensely long, since it feels like a lot of things happen during the screening time. The lived time or ‘psychological time’ on the other hand is rather short for me as a viewer, because I fancy the show and therefore passes quickly. Khatchadourian concludes that action space and time and screen space and stage time have greater similarities than differences. He describes the duality of form in space and time as a central feature of film in a distinctive way.

However, his article does not discuss the narrative function of time and space very thoroughly and the subject of editing is disregarded - in contrast to Verstraten and Cubitt. Cubitt states cinema has not been narrative from the moment of its conception, because in his opinion true narrativity can only be the product of the possibilities of editing. However, Verstraten addresses the argument of retrospectivity: with the knowledge we have now, it is also possible to classify the earliest films as narrative. Gaudreault for example believes editing to be a second level of narrativity: “the narration is no longer exclusively determined by what is being projected, but mainly by the transitions from one shot to the next” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 16). The transitions between images shape the narration according to Gaudreault. Editing is relevant in this chapter, since it allows time and space to be manipulated, and thereby has the power to disconnect the story from the fabula. Cross-cutting can transfer the viewer to another temporal shot and in this way increase the tension: it creates a new way of perceiving spatial and temporal segments. In contrast to early films, action can take place in separate locations and time no longer has to be uninterrupted.

To transport the viewer to the diegetic space and create a celluloid vision of the past or future, the costume designer must put great effort into creating a specific ambience. Hollywood and History: Costume Design in Film is a popular exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The catalogue from this exhibition focuses on the ways in which the style and design of the films discussed reflect the eras in which they were created. “Whether a film is set in the present, the past, in
a distant location, or in an imaginary time and place, costume designers and makeup artists collaborate with the film’s director, cinematographer, and production designer to tell the story” (AMPAS, 2008, p. 2). Costume designers assist the transformation of bringing the fictional characters played by the actors to life in the screenplay. The process of costume design always begins with analyzing the screenplay, which among others describes the time period and location of the scene. To make the screenplay look realistic and actualize the general vision and mood of the film costume design plays an extensive role: “costumes do not have to exactly duplicate the film’s period, but they need to look right to the audience” (AMPAS, 2008, p. 4). To make the clothing look right to the audience, costume designers can ‘age’ a costume by washing it numerous times to make it look older. To represent a certain period of time, aging tools such as bleach, airbrushes, seam rippers, suede brushes to scrub leather and dye to color clothes are used to create the right effect.

2.2 Example Case Study: Game of Thrones

In Game of Thrones (GoT), the viewer is on a journey through different times and places as if on a flying carpet. Cinema has the power to transport the viewer to other worlds and times, which is distinct in the series GoT. GoT revolves around the story of nine noble families who fight for control over the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros and the continent of Essos and all want to sit on the Iron Throne. The author of A Song of Ice and Fire (the series is based on this book) George R.R. Martin wrote the story with the intention of creating a historical fiction rather than a contemporary fantasy. The Seven Kingdoms of Westeros and Essos are constructed places, belonging to a fantasy world.

Time as well belongs to this fantasy world and is not certain for the viewer, but several aspects are comparable to the late medieval period in Europe, especially in the 15th century. Most settings in the episodes feel quite medieval, because of the use of crossbows (firearms were not introduced yet), sailing ships like galleys (propelled mainly by rowing) and the architecture which seems classic medieval European. The medieval realism is seen in all the violent battles, nightly tournaments, castles and political intrigue. To create this effect most of the lands of Westeros is evocative of high medieval Europe and therefore filmed in (among others) Northern Ireland, Malta, Croatia, Morocco, Iceland and Spain. Also the fashion is consistent with late medieval Europe, approximately between 1400 and 1500 AD; plate armor is worn by the wealthy families and poorer combatants rely on mail armor. Of course the fashion is a little bit adjusted for the viewer, some gowns are way more daring than would have been appropriate in the 15th century. Transporting the viewer to this fictional world which resembles parts of the European Middle Ages could not have been possible without the costumes.

Benjamin Wild, cultural historian who writes and lectures about the history of dress, wrote an article ‘Draped in the Past’ in which he finds that the Middle Ages inspired a number of leading designers nowadays (such as Vivienne Westwood, Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen). Wild writes many commentators have argued for a long time whether fashion did or did not exist until the later medieval period. Wild uses the chronicle of John of Worcester (an English monk who is held to
be the author of Chronicon ex chronicis, a worldwide history from the creation till 1140) to illustrate how garment indicated someone’s social position in the earlier middle ages. Three social orders could be identified through their attire: “the prelate in clerical vestments; the knight in armor; and the peasant, poorly attired, with his agricultural implements” (Wild, 2013, p. 4). Not only is the medieval setting depicted through fashion, it also offers a certain perspective: costumes create connections and produce meaning, such as classifying those social ranks.

The costumes in *GoT* evoke certain connotations: beauty, power, pugnacity and allocate social orders that correspond with a certain period of time or place. The social orders represented through clothing in *GoT* are typical; noble families and church figures who occupy the highest rank in society is not an image we recognize in current time. The prelate in clerical vestments are represented in *GoT* by the High Septons, a title held by the head of the Faith of the Seven which is the dominant religion of the Seven Kingdoms: a position of supreme authority within the church (GoT Wikia, 2017). High Septon Maynard, who served around the time of Robert’s Rebellion (a great civil war among the Great Houses of Westeros that took place roughly seventeen years before *GoT* begins), is dressed similar to the Pope - the leader of the Catholic Church. The character Melisandre of Asshai, is a Red Priestess in the religion of R’hllor - the lord of Light. She is often referred to as the Red Women, which shows in all her red gowns and cloaks. Besides her signature color, draping is one of her tools to create drama and mystery in her look, which is visible in figure 2.

Clothing can easily help to identify the literal kind of space in which a story is set: character Jon Snow, also known as King in the North, wears costumes made of animal skin like the Inuit which reflect the rough climate in which they are worn. His clothing is mainly very practical to protect him from the cold. Jaime Lannister, brother and at the same time lover of Queen Cersei Lannister, belongs to a noble house and was appointed as the commander of the Lannister armies. The knights in armor such as the knights of the Lannister armies also have an important social status, but not as important as the noble families. They are always armed and dressed in armor, but the quality of armor can show the difference in ranking. Character Brienne of Tarth, warrior of House of Tarth, is a strong woman which is depicted in her tough armor, usually with a belt femininity. Lowest on the social ladder in *GoT* is the poorly attired group smallfolks. The smallfolks refer to the peasantry and common folk of Westeros, basically everyone who does not belong to a noble house or fights as a knight. Most of the common people of the Seven Kingdoms are peasants who lead an agrarian lifestyle, depicted through plain clothes.

Michele Clapton, costume designer of the first five seasons, drew inspiration from several origins such as Japanese and Persian armor. The costume designer uses fashion as a tool to show the viewer in which part of the fictional *Game of Thrones* world and in what time the character is located. The traditional clothing and accessories in the series indicate a medieval setting, such as the very detailed crowns which say something about the character of the king or queen who wears them. They try to show how patriotic they are by the colors of their costumes. The clothing for the people in the
southern climate are more loose and sensual such as silk inspired by Indian and Persian outfits, the costumes for the children of the forest are made out of organic features such as feathers and leaves and the characters of the Wildlings in the North are also represented in their practical costumes. All these costumes are not seen in most of the clothing worn in everyday life in the 21st century. The traditional clothing in *Game of Thrones* remind many of the Golden Age in Holland. The costume designer points out that the characters who belong to the Free City of Braavos, the wealthiest and probably most powerful of the Free Cities, wear costumes which are inspired by the 16th and 17th century in protestant Holland. This century was the wealthiest century for this country and this wealth is reflected in the scenes filmed in Braavos. The more colorful and the brighter means the more wealth. Many of the costumes are made by silk, leather and chainmail - which are expensive materials. Those expensive clothes refer to the Dutch Golden Age.

One of the most significant and inspiring tasks of Clapton is the design of all the dresses worn by the most powerful and important characters such as Daenerys Targaryen (also known as Mother of Dragons), Queen Cersei Lannister and lady Sansa Stark at the royal court in King’s Landing which imply their wealth and fortunate status. Clapton considers the symbolic meaning of the costumes; in all the layers of clothing are many layers of meaning embedded. Strong collars and padded shoulders are symbolic for strength, quite ornate and over the top details and embroidery are symbolic for wealth and power. While numerous women desire and fight for the throne, the battle gets more and more intense and darker. The costumes of these women have become darker ever after the first seasons, but the details within each of them are extremely important. The red details in Daenerys’s monochrome colors refer to the color of her house, such as the red sash hanging from her chain. The chain she wears is slightly scaled and pleated, which is symbolic for her title the Mother of Dragons.

Even though the costumes relate to a specific temporality, in this case medieval, the representation of this time period is not completely accurate. The historical costumes are mingled with costumes of other times, with roots in different places: elements of different cultures are used to attract a wide range of mixed viewers in the contemporary world. The makers and costume designers of *GoT* have a lot of freedom which results in an original and creative result. Therefore *GoT* is an interesting case study: the viewer’s subconsciousness is stimulated by a fictional, new and intriguing world but can still identify with and recognize different cultural and social elements in the costumes.
3. FUNCTION 2: EXPRESSIVE - DEFINING CHARACTER

“Costume, hair and makeup can tell you instantly, or at least give you a larger perception of who a character is. It’s the first impression that you have of the character before they open their mouth, so it really does establish who they are.”

Colleen Atwood (Colleen Atwood Quotes, 2018).

This chapter focuses on fashion as an expressive element of motion pictures (also called film or movie) and how fashion in this way is able to define a character. According the dictionary, the word expressive means “effectively conveying thought or feeling”, which descends from the medieval Latin expressivus, from exprimere ‘press out’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). Not only can clothing define an era as discussed in the previous chapter, fashion can also express thoughts and meaning through which characters arise and the transformations of those characters can be represented.

Expressive elements are essential to convey drama in film. Drama can refer to “a play for theatre, radio or television”, “the activity of acting” or “an exciting, emotional or unexpected event or circumstance” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). Etymologically, drama refers to actions. The word drama descends from the 1510s, “from Late Latin drama “play, drama,” from Greek drama “play, action, deed,” from dran “to do, act, perform” (Etymology Dictionary, 2018). Drama is often used to refer to a fictional performance in which the characters go through emotional developments as a result of certain events and actions. When I appoint the word drama, I do not refer to the drama typically designed for theatrical performance; there is a distinction between film and theatre. I do refer to the development and transformation of characters in film as a central feature set up through events, action and dialogue in which conflicts and emotion are involved.

Costume designer Colleen Atwood, twelve times nominee for the Academy Awards for Best Costume Design, believed in fashion as a power to give the audience a larger perception of who a character is. (Moving) images and sounds are the creators of the expressivity of the cinema. The expressive techniques a filmmaker or cinematographer can use to produce a reality conveyed to the audience consist of framing, scale, camera movements, usage of color and other highly expressive techniques such as fashion/costume design. The cinematographer uses these techniques to create an atmosphere and ‘the look of the film’. One of the techniques, color, introduced a new world into the cinema and grew more productive. Color can be used to generate an impressive powerful expression. These colors can appear in the background projections of the shot or in the clothing of the characters portrayed. The colors of the costumes are expressive because they allure a particular feeling and have a symbolic meaning. I will demonstrate this in the case study about The Divergent Series later on in this chapter.
3.1 The expressive function

The cinematic language used in movies to tell a story consists of visual elements that can be both narrative and non-narrative. Costume design is part of this visual element to express the look of the film. According to the dictionary, expressivity is the quality of being expressive which relates to expression and serves to express, utter or represent. It effectively conveys meaning or feeling (Merriam Webster, 2017). Costumes in film can represent important data through which we can see characteristics of a certain era or create a particular feeling for the look of a film and in that way convey meaning and feeling. Fashion helps the actors to portray a certain image in a film scene and can help to express feelings from the character since the actor can identify him- or herself more with the character when in costume. Fashion in film can also evoke feelings for the viewer, such as astonishment, admiration, recognition or even classical conditioning.

The book Reading Costume Design identifies an important shift in costume practices. In contrast to the mid-nineteenth century when actors wore their own clothing on stage, by the early twentieth century “costume was firmly established as an expressive artistic tool building a character and shaping the complete theatrical experience, overseen by a professional designer” (Holt, 2014, abstract). By 1920, the audience viewed costume as an expressive art form and designers designed costumes for audiences to look through: “reading costumes not only for their surface beauty or accuracy but also for commentary or reflection upon the text or overall performance” (Holt, 2014, abstract). Costumes interacted as a form of expression in their own right.

Cinematic expressionism depends on “contorted bodily and facial gestures, which are amplified by decor and camera angle” (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2017). Not only is this amplified by decor, also by costume. This brings me to motion-picture design, which include all the elements of a picture’s setting such as “art direction, scenic composition, set design, costume and makeup” (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2017). Since the beginning of film history, actors in motion pictures have been dressed in meaningful ways. Already in the 1920s and 1930s costume played an integral role in actor’s identities for stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Mae West. Not only for the actor, but also for the audience was the aspect of clothing important; “audiences were often able to discern the type being portrayed—hero, villain, comic foil, romantic rival—simply by regarding the character’s clothing” (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2017). Costume and film makeup was and still is being used as a characteristic expression for both the actors and audience.

The term expressivity should not be confused with cinematic expressionism. In a study about German cinematic expressionism, post-World War German “expressionistic” films were analyzed. The characteristic elements of the films that were labeled as expressionistic were for example the use of lighting as an active element in production to motivate dramatic action. Byrne (1962) described expressionism as a reaction against naturalism; the modern movement expressionism tries to distort the world radically for emotional effect to evoke ideas rather than express subjects in a truthful way.
Later on I will analyze the expressive effects of costumes in films through a case study of my own choice, namely *The Divergent Series*, but first I will examine how Kim (2016) analyses the expressive effects of King Henry VIII’s costumes in films. As the story unfurls, movie costumes reflect the mood and emotions of the actors which leads to a certain reaction of the viewer: “expressive effects are those fusions that lead us to such feelings as excitement or calmness, strength or delicacy” (Kim, 2016, p. 149). Movie costumes are supposed to consider the ambiance of the character in the movie, and therefore the expressive effects of movie costumes are very important in a movie. According to Kim, the expressive effects are not shown by one color or line, “but it is shown through a way that those are connected, in other words a method of individual factors uniting as one idea” (Kim, 2016, p. 149). Kim distinguished four different expressive effects (excitement, calmness, strength and delicacy) at the hand of examples of Henry VIII’s costumes, as explained in figure 3. Henry’s costume in a scene in the movie *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) shows how the gown expresses the feeling of strength and power of the king: “in terms of costume elements expressed in this scene, the shape itself is large, highlighting the silhouette by the gigantic gown, while the line is formed along the thick gown furs flowing downward.” (Kim, 2016, p. 151). The colors of the costume express a contrast between the gown and the garment worn inside.

**3.1.1 Expressivity and narrativity**

The function in the previous chapter (time and space) is mostly narrative, the function in the last chapter (the special effect) is mostly non-narrative and the function in this chapter (expressive) could be both. Fashion as an expressive function constructs meaning; such as expressing power or social status, the ability to emphasize the contrast between for example rich and poor and accentuate typical features of a character. By expressing a certain feeling within the film’s narrative, fashion can help to tell a story and therefore could be interpreted as a narrative function. Fashion on the other hand can also express features that do not adjoin the story with the sole purpose of creating spectacle and therefore be interpreted as non-narrative, which will be further discussed in chapter 4.

In her book, Fabe describes how films work and how they tell a story. By using passages from classic films such as *The Birth of a Nation* (D.W. Griffith) and *Avatar* (James Cameron) she examines the narrative function in film. Her book *Closely Watched Films* focuses on works of various film directors whose careers form a part of the history of the narrative film. Interesting in this book is that she also includes narrative experiments in new digital media, since the case studies discussed in this thesis were also created in the digital age. The first chapter of this book ‘The Beginnings of Film Narrative’ revolves around D.W. Griffith, “arguably the most influential pioneer in the art of the narrative film” (Fabe, 2014, p. 1). He found ways to compensate for the lack of spoken words in silent film from the early nineteenth century by increasing the drama of his fiction films in several ways.

The first way was improving the mise-en-scène, which concerns the director’s choice of setting or set design, props, make-up and costumes. A stylist or couturier is imperative in mise-en-
scene, because the story can be told by the costumes instead of words. Griffith choose the costumes with “an eye to providing narrative information that would enhance the film’s dramatic effect” (Fabe, 2014, p. 2). The second way is the enframed image. He exploited the dramatic potential of techniques specific to the film medium by placing objects in front of the camera in a certain way to add powerful dramatic effects, such as a close-up shot. Using a close-up while filming a character could magnify the emotional significance in the narrative and zoom in on the expressions of the characters. Not only did he use the close-up for the human face, but also of meaningful props which can be a part of the costumes.

Disregarding the racist message carried out through Griffith’s film The Birth of a Nation, it is on a technical level historical. The new uses of close-ups and clever editing created the possibility to tell multiple stories at once. The use of the cross and close-ups and narrative produced powerful drama and this film was even argued to be one of the most influential films ever made. In The Birth of a Nation clothing has an important narrative function. The usage of white and black clothing is symbolic for the conflict between white and black people during the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865. Black men were portrayed unintelligent and sexually aggressive, while the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was portrayed as a heroic force dressed in white. The drastic contrast Griffith sets up between the way the white heroes and the black villains are depicted is partly detained by the clothing and especially its colors.

Fashion as an expressive function means the costumes can be suggestive and representative such as the black and white garments in The Birth of a Nation represent a racist message and therefore has a narrative function. Fashion as an expressive function also means the costumes can be striking in appearance or dramatic effect and serve the visual spectacle rather than the story and therefore could be seen as non-narrative. However, in general, the expressive function of fashion is narrative.

3.2 Example Case Study: The Divergent Series
A narrative film influenced by digital technology whereby fashion plays an important and expressive role is the film Divergent, part of the Divergent Series. I have chosen to analyze The Divergent Series, since the narrative function of fashion in film is apparent here. The expressive function of fashion could also be interpreted as a non-narrative function, when clothing does not express anything that narrates but instead functions as a spectacle. Extravagant uses of color and splendor materials can dazzle the public and function as a special effect in film. In this case, the expressive function of fashion in film is narrative. This case study is suitable for especially this chapter, because the clothing is expressive and helps to define the characters in a very coherent and interesting way. The clothing of the main characters in the beginning is a huge contrast to the end of the film, which is a decisive factor in showing the transformation of the character.

The Divergent Series, based on the Divergent trilogy by the author Veronica Roth, is a film series consisting of four science fiction films, set in a dystopian society. In The Divergent Series a
world is shown where people are divided into definite factions based on character traits. The main character Tris Prior does not belong to any of the factions, which makes her Divergent. Being Divergent is considered a dangerous thing and all Divergents must be destroyed, according to a conspiracy because they threaten the system. The clothing helps to tell the story, by showing us more about the character and their development.

The costume designer of *The Divergent Series* is Carlo Poggioli. He created five different clothing styles for the five different factions described in the series. Faction Dauntless is the faction for the brave ones. They wear tight-fitting dark clothes, leather jackets, combat boots, tank tops and skinny jeans. Their color is black, preferably matched with dark makeup, tattoos and piercings. The faction Amity is for the peaceful ones, they wear comfortable clothes and shoes such as sandals (to walk and not fight) and their colors are red and yellow. The faction Candor is for the honest ones, their colors are black and white because they see the truth in black and white. They dress formal, for example black wedges. The faction Abnegation is for the selfless people, they wear grey and simple clothes which reflects their selflessness. The hair of the women is worn low in a bun and accessories, makeup or nail polish is allowed. The last faction Erudite is for the intelligent people, they usually wear glasses and wear one piece of blue clothing because the color blue causes the brain to release calming chemicals which affirms to their saying “a calm mind a is clear mind”.

If the stylist carries out his/her job correctly, the clothing is a tool to represent characters and support the storyline. One of the aspects of clothing which is important in this particular case study is color. Colors have a symbolic meaning that can evoke a certain feeling for the viewer, even if they are not completely aware of this. In a study about costume color design as a symbolic expression in (the independent) film, it becomes clear there is a relation between a film and the clothing color by investigating the symbolic meaning of the colors of costumes as reflected in the situations and psychological state of the characters (Kim, 2004). In this study the colors in small details of costumes were examined. The result of this study showed that symbolic color communicated the whole image of transformation as the story progressed in an effective way. It became clear color delivered gentle emotional messages to the observer/viewer.

Faber Birren, American consultant on color and color theory, wrote many books about his theories on color such as *Color and Human Response*. His theories and other studies have shown that for example red is a very intense color because it has a high visibility which enhances human metabolism (raises blood pressure) and red is used to indicate courage. Birren called the color red the ‘passionate and ardent hue of the spectrum’. Green relieves tension and indicates restfulness; it is the most restful color for the human eye because it conveys stability and perseverance. Green in contrast to red means safety and is directly related to nature. The vibrant color yellow generates a warm effect, provokes cheerfulness, indicates honor and loyalty but is also connected with cowardice. The yellow clothing of the faction Amity expresses their loyal and peaceful character. The color blue is commonly associated with serenity, formality, coolness and serenity. The symbolic meaning of this color is truth
and purity. The blue clothing of the faction Erudite expresses the calmness of their intelligent minds. The darkest color black (an achromatic color without hue) undoubtedly represents death, evil, fear and the unknown, but also stands for authority and courage (Zeven Design, Color Association, 2017). The dark clothing worn by the faction Dauntless expresses their brave characters who try to discover the unknown and be powerful. Using certain colors for the clothing evoke a particular reaction of the viewer, because of the way our brain receives and processes colors.

Fashion has a characterizing function, because it describes specific aspects of the storyline in a film. In the appendix you can see how Poggioli drew the costume sketches belonging to each faction (figure 4 till 8). Figure 9 shows how Beatrice (full name of the main character) is dressed prior to the aptitude test, while she is member of the faction Abnegation because this is the faction she was born into. The clothing represents her character at this point in the story: calm, stiff and a little bit shy. Figure 10 on the other hand shows how Tris not only adapts a new name, but also a new faction. This outfit shows how she has developed as a character; she opened up, got stronger and more confident. Without this ensemble the filmmaker could not have expressed the development of the characters in the film as it is done now. Let us imagine every character in this series was portrayed with an identical set of clothing, the story could never been transliterated to a film screen - unless another way of expressing the plot and showing the development of a character was to be found.

One aspect fashion can express in film is the social status or power of a character; fashion speaks a language. The exhibition ‘Pattern Language: Clothing as Communicator’ organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery examines clothing as expression. The message of this exhibition is that the clothing we wear communicates meaning and mark social relations. For example, character Jeanine Matthews (played by Kate Winslet) serves as the main antagonist in the series. She is the leader of the faction Erudite, a powerful position which reflects in her clothing style. Her clothing collection mainly exists of high heels, dark colors and plain but elegant expensive dresses. The dark colors represent her cruel and heartless character (she develops a serum to control the faction Dauntless and make them kill the faction Abnegation) and the dresses and classic coat pads remind the viewer of clothing from a royal house. This indirectly creates an image Jeanine is important, ruling and superior - which is true in the divergent series. She never wears informal or anything remotely comfortable, her look depicts a formal and orderly ‘no-nonsense look’. The contrast of her lavish look in comparison to for example the factionless people who dress like homeless people existing of plain colors and fabrics, accentuates the contradiction between the powerful leader of a faction and the people who are not even part of a faction and belong to the bottom of the social ladder. If every character would wear the same garment, it would indicate equality and in that way there can’t be talk of differentiation of power - a frequent theme in film.
3.3 Defining character

As mentioned before, figure 9 shows how Beatrice is dressed in *the Divergent Series* prior to the aptitude test while she is still member of the faction Abnegation. Members from Abnegation value selflessness extremely, are dedicated to help other people and live a simple life. The simple life is shown in her simple clothing: it represents her calm and stiff character at this point in the storyline. Later on she develops and not only adopts her new name, Tris, but also a new faction: Dauntless. This change required a change of garment as well. The outfit in figure 10 shows how she has developed and grew to be more confident. To define a character and show the development of a character in a story, the costume designer determines the most effective way to express the personality of the character to the audience after considering the character’s personality, challenges and dramatic arc together with the director and actor(s) (oscars.org, 2017). Costumes convey information about a character, even before the dialogue has started. Tris goes through a lot in the films and many serious events have changed her life. The emotional and psychological changes she undergoes (such as processing the death of her parents, losing friends and falling in love) also influence the way she looks like and the costume designer has to keep those changes in mind to process this into the costume choices.

Famous costume designer Colleen Atwood said the suitable costume determines the character, serves the story and helps the actor to empathize with the character. Actors and actresses who adopt the acting style called method acting - a technique whereby actors use their own experiences to display a character in its most authentic way - can truly benefit from design, costume and makeup to empathize with the character. The costume designers do not only collaborate with a director, cinematographer and production designer, they also collaborate with actors to bring the characters in the screenplay to life. A costume - every garment worn in a movie - is one of the many tools the director has to tell a story and communicate the details of a character’s personality to the viewer. It helps the actor to transform into a person who looks believable on the screen.

Costumes can help to identify the main character for the viewer in the audience by using silhouette and colors and become recognizable. The costumes need to look right to the audience to define a character and therefore have to represent that time period in which the story takes place. For dramatic effect, the designers sometimes may magnify the style. The costume designer is accountable for how he brings the characters in the story to life: each garment in the film has been chosen explicitly for that particular character. The director, cinematographer and costume designer work together to define characters and achieve the desired effect in the final result of the film.
4. FUNCTION 3: SPECIAL EFFECT

“Historically, spectacle tends to move toward participatory narrative in order to retain our attention, to lengthen the immersive experience”

- Janet Murray (Murray, 1998)

So far I have discussed how fashion can represent time and space in the second chapter and the expression of character by fashion in the third chapter. In this last chapter I will discuss the third function of fashion: fashion as a special effect by creating spectacle. This is usually associated with non-narrativity since one of the main characteristics of spectacle is to function as entertainment. Non-narrativity implies that fashion does not narrate. However, in this chapter I would like to argue that spectacle can also be associated with narrativity.

Special effects through digital editing developed rapidly last years and this has caused a tremendous amount of spectacle in contemporary films that are able to depict fantasy worlds: “From a digital perspective, it is no longer necessary that films need to present, express or debate reality or society” (Cubitt, 2004). The case study that represents such a fantasy world and goes in hand with the function special effect is the movie The Hunger Games, because this is both an excellent example of how fashion functions as a special effect and how special effect can be both non-narrative and narrative by serving the story.

4.1 Spectacle

Fashion can function as a special effect because it serves spectacle. Before I examine the relationship between fashion and spectacle, it is necessary to define the concept spectacle which has been the subject of attention in film studies for the last years. Geoff King, author of Spectacular Narratives (2000) defines the spectacle as the “production of images at which we might wish to stop and stare” (p. 4). Steve Neale (1979) refers to “a system which is especially concerned both to stress, to display, the visibility of the visible” (p. 66). Tom Gunning analyses the temporality of the cinema of attractions, which refers to the earliest stage of the history of film in which the act of looking, the impulse and excitement for the film image were more important than the narrative. According to Gunning (1993), this attraction is temporal and very limited in comparison to the narrative: “rather than a development that links the past with the present in such a way as to define a specific anticipation of the future (as an unfolding narrative does), the attraction seems limited to a sudden burst of presence.” (p. 45). While Gunning states the attraction (a term which includes the concept of spectacle) is limited to a sudden burst of presence, this is not strictly true according to Slocum: “even the briefest attraction consumes substantially more chronological time and perceptual attention than ‘a burst of presence’” (Slocum, 2001, p. 53).
In the debate about spectacle it is usually assumed that spectacle is in a way the opposite of narrative and that spectacle and narrativity are exclusionary from one another. It has even been said that plotlines are being sacrificed in favour of spectacle. Brown (2008) explains how the relationship between spectacle and the narrative seem to evoke “an image of narrative as a horizontal line moving forward, while spectacle resides in moments one can represent with a vertical line” (p. 158). He sees the treatment of spectacle and narrative as opposites as an obstacle. Is it, then, possible to combine spectacle with a narrative? Among others, Neale (1983) does not think this is possible, he points out when the spectacle takes over, the narrative starts to freeze. On the contrary, King argues against the idea that accentuation on the spectacular has led to deterioration of the importance of narrativity (King, 2000). He even argues that narrative and ideology remain essential components of the spectacle film and spectacular sequences actually do contain narrative elements: “In some cases spectacle reinforces, rather than interferes with, the narrative. Moments of spectacle sometimes help to move the plot significantly forward” (King, 2000, p. 4). I will demonstrate how the spectacle can reinforce the plot forward in my analysis about The Hunger Games later on. However, even writers such as King and Tasker (2004), who think spectacle and narrative are intertwined concepts, “still seem to imply that they are nevertheless separate concepts that do different things and offer the spectator different kinds of experience” (Lewis, 2014, p. 215).

Unlike King, who states the spectacle can reinforce the narrative, Neale does not think this is the case. I agree with the more nuanced statement by Lewis, who claims it is unfair to suggest that a narrative sequence contains no spectacular elements or the other way around. In his article, Lewis (2014) tries to adapt a practical and nuanced approach to spectacle. He divides spectacle into two categories: the event and the object spectacle. The event spectacle is the most common one in which something happens to the character and it is “intended to work with the narrative and to increase the emotional impact of the film” (Lewis, 2014, p. 217). Explosions, (natural) disasters and fights are examples of the event spectacle, which tends to produce feelings of excitement, fear or admiration. To heighten the impact of the event spectacle, some sequences are ‘manipulated’ by digital editing such as a slow motion. The other category of spectacle is the object spectacle, which emerges in the moment when the spectator looks at a particular object as a spectacle in itself which relates to the narrative because it can for example establish the status of a hero or reveal the face or body of the main character. When the film treats a particular object in a particular way to draw attention from the spectator to that object as a site of spectacle in its own right, it is object spectacle. To summarize, Lewis (2014) describes spectacle as “a shaping or manipulation of narrational and non narrational transmission through the mise-en-scène” (p. 218).

Brown argues that the study of classical Hollywood cinema has failed to acknowledge and understand the role of spectacle therein. He also defines two kinds of spectacle, however associated with the historical film: ‘the decor of history’ and ‘the spectacular vista’. The decor of history is an excess of detail: “detail in the mise-en-scene (both decor and costume) that is excessive to the
requirements of historical verisimilitude” (Brown, 2008, p.159) which functions as an ornamentation of the sense of place and time such as the extravagant and spectacular costumes of eighteenth-century Versailles or the 1650s heavily embellished costumes in Western Europe. The spectacular vista is the second kind of spectacle, by Brown (2008) defined as the excess of action: “excessive in scale and qualitatively excessive (a battle occupying a large valley would be a stereotypical example)” (p. 159). This excessive vista can be mind-boggling. Professor Leger Grindon points out that the visual display and illusion the spectator’s experiences can be so overwhelming that the spectator is not able anymore to make critical judgments (Pierson, 2002).

To examine the relation between spectacle and fashion and how fashion as spectacle can be narrative and non-narrative, the film *The Hunger Games* in which fashion plays an important role by serving the spectacle will be analyzed thoroughly later on in this chapter. The costumes in *The Hunger Games* are stylistic adjustments to achieve an effect of astonishment and wonder, generated by the spectacular ensembles of the main characters. These costumes are a good example of object spectacle, since the emphasis lies on conveying purely stylistic spectacle and feelings such as bewilderment - even though their outfits can work with the narrative by portraying wealth and status. I will examine what kind of effect this kind of spectacle generates and if this is strongly cued within the film’s narrative structure or not.

A film which embeds fashion as event spectacle, which is cued more strongly with the film’s narrative and increases the emotional impact of the film by generating feelings such as awe and possible fear, is *Nocturnal Animals*. This film is directed by fashion designer Tom Ford, who makes magnificent but emotionally distressing films. Costume designer Arianne Phillips gave main character Susan Murrow a powerful style which masks her inner turmoil (she faces the emotional consequences of her actions in the past through a novel her husband has written). The dark eyeliner, colossal jewelry and charming well fitted dresses contribute to this powerful style. However, the scenes where Susan is at home, Phillips chose for a more natural clothing look: this contrast in her character was costume-wise a chance to help tell that part of the story. The viewer sees how Susan is portrayed as a strong and sophisticated woman because of the fashionable and rigid clothing she wears. Susan is the owner of an art-gallery and has a co-worker who wears avant-garde fashion which is done on purpose since the costume designer wanted her to portray one of the Hollywood women in the art world who wear beautiful but very unpractical clothing.

Despite the fact that Tom Ford - one of the most established fashion designers of this era - directed the film, it is mostly label free since they wanted it is to be less about desirable clothes and more about creating narrative. The idea of Gunning that the cinema of attractions suggest that audiences watch film for the show of spectacular technology over narrative is related to the object spectacle, since this relies less on narrative cueing. King however believes there is a balance between the power of those two and therefore connects with event spectacle, since this is cued within the film’s narrative design.
4.2 The special effect

Nowadays, most special effects are created through computer generated images (CGI). CGI provides the idea that within cinema anything is possible. The advantage of this is that digital technologies can actualize unrealistic fantasy worlds that the audience wants to see. CGI has the power to give the audience a fascinating, supernatural world: “at the beginning of the twenty-first century, computer-generated visual effects are not only a major attraction of Hollywood blockbuster cinema but one that, [...], continues to be presented to contemporary audiences as magic” (Pierson, 2002, p. 12). However, there also is a disadvantage attached to the rise of CGI. The idea that anything is possible has completely transformed the psychology of movie-watching: “armed with the knowledge that anything is possible, conditioned to expect the incredible and to accept the unbelievable, modern movie-goers have become a jaded lot” (Pierson, 2002, p. 1). When moviegoers have become a jaded lot, cinema has lost one of its greatest powers - which is the power to amaze.

Sean Cubitt argues that ‘the magic of cinema’ emerges from the intertwining relations between different kinds of movements, time and space. In The Cinema Effect Cubitt describes how cinema changes from cinema as magic to cinema as special effect. Cubitt (2004) states digital cinema specifically involves the loss of ontological connection between film and reality: “the digital corresponds so closely to the emergent loss of an ideological structure to social meaning”, because it “no longer pretends to represent the world” (p. 250). According to Cubitt, an analysis of film also entails an understanding of the evolution of commodity form. Pierson however states that cinema’s failure arises from its slavery to the commodity and receives its success from mutuality.

I will provide a historical overview of the term special effect, because it has changed dramatically in the process of filmmaking through the years. Special effects have played an important role in filmmaking for a long time, every time period in a different way (narrative or non-narrative). Expectantly the historical background of special effects will contribute to a better understanding of the term. In Editing and Special/Visual effects, Keil and Whissel analyse how special/visual effects have changed in the process of American filmmaking. In this volume they focus on the history of the special effect, starting with the silent screen period (1895-1927). In the first films cuts were hidden, but during the early 1900s editing became visible. During the silent era of the American cinema special effects changed severely; it developed from simple in-camera edits to more technologically complex effects. The first kind of special effects called trick effects served as a spectacle, but at the same time supported the narrative, according to Keil and Whissel. During this early period the special effect or so called trick film was introduced: short silent films which were created to present inventive special effects. Cubitt claims that the earliest forms of cinema were not narrative. Verstraten (2009) explains how the the most miraculous effect of cinema was based on pure movement without past or future: “it was straightforwardly sensational and yielded an experience that was not bound to narrative expectations” (p. 14). Cubitt claims narrativity is not inherent in cinema and according to him “it is
only when the cinematic cut is introduced that temporality is given a direction” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 14).

After the silent screen, the classical Hollywood (1928-1946) period followed, then the postwar Hollywood (1947-1967), the auteur renaissance, the New Hollywood (mid 1960s to early 1980s) and finally the modern entertainment marketplace from 2000 till today (Keil & Whissel, 2016). The classical Hollywood cinema is a narrative and visual style of filmmaking which still is one of the most used styles worldwide. After the Second World War, more innovative films indicate the start of a new period in Hollywood picture making (Schauer, 2010). The New Hollywood cinema was a period in which a new generation of young filmmakers were able to express their visual ideas. For Geoff King, author of New Hollywood, the term new Hollywood refers to both the artistic renaissance (when directors like Scorsese and Coppola unsettled the studio system) and the blockbuster phenomenon launched in the ‘70s by by Jaws and Star Wars (Gordon, 2002). The original trilogy of Star Wars produced between 1977 and 1983 set a high standard for the future of special effects and during the late 1990s and early 2000s the franchise revolutionized the special effects industry again. The original Star Wars franchise was the first big-budget blockbuster to rely “on realistic action scenes and explosions, and essentially invented the techniques to achieve this” (The New Economy, 2014).

Julie Turnock, media and cinema studies professor, studied the development of the special effect from the revolutionary innovations in 1970 till the business as it is today. Turnock indicates in her article ‘The True Stars of Star Wars?’ that the true stars of this franchise are the filmmakers in the late ‘70s who used their talents to create various aspects of the special effects industry. Many of the well-known artists such as Roberta Friedman and Adam Beckett “founded or freelanced for independent optical, title, and effects houses, participating in feature film projects such as Star Wars (1977)” (Turnock, 2014, p. 120). Her article suggests that the groups of experimental artist-filmmakers and special effects technicians overlap largely instead of contradict each other. During the 1970s and 1980s independent special effects business, these two groups converged. Turnock argues that the enhancement of the practice of special effects in the ’70s initiated a “technological, aesthetic and narrative shift in feature filmmaking” (Turnock, 2014, p. 122), which she calls just as significant as the introduction of sound in the late 1920s. The young filmmakers wanted to make movies that would be both sensually exciting, intellectually stimulating and moneymaking: the type of movie Star Wars strove to be like. To create a film which represents imaginary impossible worlds such as represented in Star Wars, filmmakers used technology; computer generated imaging (CGI) filmmaking set in during the late 1970s. After this, technology developed rapidly. The modern entertainment marketplace from 2000 till now in Hollywood is dominated by high profit commercialism in which technology and the special effect is impossible to repel. Since this thesis focuses on contemporary film, this last period affiliated with technology and the special effect is most important.

In Special Effects: Still in Search of Wonder professor Michele Pierson examines and reflects on the early part of the last decade, when the spectacular CGI was being featured in Hollywood genre
films. Between the early and mid-1990s, computer generated special effects became an object of fascination in mass media, referred to as the “wonder years” for CGI (Pierson, 2002). In these wonder years distinguished films like Jurassic Park, Forrest Gump and Titanic won the Academy Awards for Best Visual Effects. In the 2010s eminent films like Inception, Life of Pi, Harry Potter, Star Trek, and The Hobbit won the Awards.

All those films are spectacular films, nominated for their remarkable special effects. In Film Narratology Verstraten (2009) mentions that it has often been said that “big Hollywood productions sacrifice consistent plotlines in favor of spectacle” (p. 3). Actor Bruce Willis confirmed this by saying nobody cares for stories nowadays, when he was asked why digital effects overshadowed the plotline of the film. Verstraten claims the remark of Willis is right, but only when it refers to the classic way of narrating which presumes causal relations are consistent. When it comes to the new way of narrating, which is less traditional, simple references suffice: “for the modern day ‘popcorn movie’, intended simply to provide entertainment, the typical, standard elements of a story no longer require elaborate psychological motivations” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 5).

However, others like Geoff King do not agree with the idea that the spectacular has led to destruction of the importance of narrative and Hollywood. Instead, he believes it is possible to combine spectacle (non-narrative) with a plot line (narrative). He suggests that even the most spectacular and effects-led contemporary blockbuster like Jurassic Park and Titanic can offer a mixture of spectacle and narrative (King, 2000). However, a mixture of spectacle and narrative is not the same as the spectacle actually has a narrative function. In the case study later on in this chapter I will examine if there is a combination of spectacle and narrativity, or if the spectacle can actually be narrative. Whether it is considered narrative or not, it is undeniable special effects have a huge impact on the contemporary Hollywood blockbuster age.

Now that we have a clear understanding of the concept and background of the special effect, I will connect this to fashion. The Fashion in Film Festival held at the Central Saint Martin’s College of Art in London (2010) examined how fashion as spectacle functions as a special effect in film. The article ‘Birds of Paradise’ provides information about the festival, reviewed by Sonya Abrego (lecturer at the New School University in New York). The Festival is titled Birds of Paradise: A Major Extravaganza in Costume Spectacle, Dance and Diabolical Glamour, curated by Marketa Uhlirova. Uhlirova selected the films from three distinct periods in cinema history; early ‘trick’ films, Hollywood exotica from the 1930s to 1940s and experimental underground films from the 1960s (Abrego, 2012). In these films, the costumes are visually intriguing and become an opulent spectacle on account of the spectacular colors, shapes and materials: “costume is integral in evoking atmospheres ranging from the theatrical and peculiar to the dense and kaleidoscopic” (Abrego, 2012, p. 378).
In narrative cinema, which continues to be the dominant viewing experience, costume plays a secondary role. In non-narrative cinema, costume can play a primary role by creating an astonishing spectacle. The costumes in film such as *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005), *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *Star Wars* (1977), *Moulin Rouge* (2001) and *The Great Gatsby* (2013) show that fashion has the power to amaze, create a visual exciting image and can contribute to the spectacle and therefore be seen as a special effect. Designer Catherine Martin designed costumes that created a hyper-real fantasy of high-end couture inspired by the roaring twenties. The glitter and glamour interwoven in the costume design aroused a certain feeling of spectacle, which is also visible in the film *Moulin Rouge*: the rows of chorus girls wouldn’t have been spectacular without the three hundred marabou-feathered costumes. These last two films are accurate examples of how fashion can provide entertainment and therefore be non-narrative. However, as King (2000) and Lewis (2014) argue, those moments of spectacle and entertainment can sometimes help to move the plot forward and therefore also be interpreted as non-narrative. In the next case study I will examine if and how their view is applicable to *The Hunger Games*.

### 4.3 Case study: *The Hunger Games*

In this paragraph I aim to investigate the relationship between fashion as spectacle and narrative in *The Hunger Games* series. The reason for choosing this blockbuster trilogy as my case study includes that it achieves a not so common combination of fashion as special effect spectacle and epic narrative storytelling. The outrageous looks designed for these films are perfectly suitable to analyze the relationship between fashion, spectacle and narrative.

*The Hunger Games* film series are based on the trilogy of novels, but the film series consists of four films. The science fiction dystopian adventure films were filmed between 2011 and 2014, consisting of *The Hunger Games, The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1* and *2*. In this case study scenes of several films are important since fashion becomes more meaningful as the plotline continues. *The Hunger Games* takes place in Panem (formerly North America), a fictional nation in an unknown, post-apocalyptic world. Panem is divided into 12 districts, main character Katniss Everdeen belongs to district 12. The Capitol run by President Snow forces each district to select two tributes to fight the Hunger Games as a warning reminder of the past (when there was rebellion). Out of the 24 tributes, only one will survive. All the tributes have to try to kill the other tributes to become the survivor.

All districts are under the authority of the Capitol and have no influence regarding the national politics. The influence of the people of the Capitol is huge, shown in a very specific way which makes this case study interesting to analyze. The costumes from the inhabitants of the Capitol represent power, money and influence - an extreme contrast with the costumes of all the other districts. In this series the costumes of the citizens of the Capitol are so extreme, it becomes a true spectacle to watch and is referred to as “Capitol Couture”, as portrayed in figure 11. Every district has a unique culture
and matching clothing style, but all not as spectacular as the wealthy Capitol: sleeves, flower-inspired hair pieces, bold colors, dazzling footwear and bizarre wigs are completely normal here.

As seen in figure 12, the costumes in several scenes of the Hunger Games serve as a spectacle. Most special effects nowadays are created with CGI. Even though fashion is usually not a computer-generated image (but can be), it can have the same effect as a special effect: create spectacle. Furthermore, the costumes are portrayed in an even more spectacular way by digital editing. The scene which serves as a perfect example for this is the scene of the main character Katniss in a white wedding dress which catches fire while the twirls and transforms into a black dress with feathers which represents a mockingjay, shown in figure 13 and 14. The dress itself was spectacular, but fashion became a special effect here by the digital editing of the dress.

The costume designer of this franchise had a very important task: use fashion as a spectacle to create a fictitious world. The distinguished costume designer who designed the costumes for these films is Judianna Makovsky, also the costume designer for the all-time top film franchise Harry Potter. Makovsky did a splendid job by using very colorful clothes, sparkly suits and magenta or blue hair colors for the frivolous inhabitants who love to dress up. In this story, the clothing both serve the narrative and create spectacle which is why Makovsky has to pay a lot of attention to the costumes of all the characters. She worked with theatrical hats, voluminous shoulders and excessive ruching to create an ‘overplumed’ and excessive clothing style for the people in the Capitol who live an excessive life on the expense of the others in Panem. This style can be overwhelming, just as Verstraten mentions in his chapter the filmic excess in which he describes how style can ‘drown’ the plot. In that case we speak of a non-narrative “overkill” in which fashion as a designed object is foregrounded. This exorbitant way of dressing, seen in figures 11 and 12, contributes to a surreal look which creates spectacle, or as film theorist Laura Mulvey’s famous phrase “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Brown, 2008).

However, it also contributes to the narrative. Katniss, who usually wears simple and functional clothes combined with her bow and arrows, is pushed to shine under the spotlight when she becomes a tribute and arrives at the Capitol. To survive, she needs to look good so that she can gather sponsors and gain the support of the Capitol crowd. Therefore she must become a celebrity persona, with the help of the District 12 stylist (in the film, not in real life) named Cinna. In the film, stylists play a key role because they prepare the tributes for the games. They are responsible for the tributes’ public image and entire wardrobe during their stay in the Capitol. Cinna decided a certain look for Katniss, depending on which stage of her character is within the plotline. The Capitol controls her public appearance, which emphasizes the political power of dress. According to Sweeney (2012), Katniss experiences subjective violence due to the fact she is incapable of choosing her own attire: “Katniss’ inability to choose her own apparel, due to her exceptional political position, irreparably damages her subjectivity” (p. 5).
The spectacular gowns Katniss has to wear contribute enormously to the image of the Capitol which all revolves about fashion as spectacle. Wealthiness is presented by costumes in an extreme way. Besides serving the spectacle, Makovsky also serves the plotline by using colors to separate world: more gloomy clothes such as grays and blues were worn for most of the districts who almost are all poor in contrast to the bright colors for the gowns and disproportional accessoires for the Capitol (Costume design, 2015). In this way, styling also has the ability to serve the narrative, besides being spectacular and provide entertainment for the spectator. Even such a spectacular and effects-led contemporary blockbuster as The Hunger Games offers a, as King suggest, mixture of spectacle and narrative. However, a mixture of spectacle and narrative is not the same as the spectacle actually being narrative, which I argue to be the case. The narrative function of fashion as a special effect becomes apparent in the scene in which Katniss transforms into The Girl on Fire (literally and figuratively). While her dress burst into flames, as portrayed in figure 14, the costume is the cause of the spectacle in this scene, but the transformation of an ordinary girl to a symbol of hope for the people of Panem in disturbing times emphasizes how fashion as spectacle can complement the narrative.
5. CONCLUSION

Narratology is thoroughly discussed in the field of film and media studies. However, the relationship between narrativity and fashion is moderately discussed, but little analyzed. The goal of this research was to provide a new perspective on fashion as a narrative and non-narrative concept, through discussing three different functions. Since fashion is usually slightly underexposed in the literary field, I felt this thesis is very unprecedented. This study was prompted by my personal attentiveness for fashion and costume design in especially contemporary film. The major questions posed by this study are the following: ‘What are the narrative and non-narrative functions of fashion in contemporary film throughout the 21st century?’, ‘Are those functions solely narrative, non-narrative or both?’ and ‘How important is fashion in defining character, representing/expressing time and space and the function of fashion as a special effect?’ The results of this research and answers to these questions have been attained through the three divergent case studies: Game of Thrones, The Divergent Series, and The Hunger Games.

The methodology used in this thesis was set forth in the first chapter. The first chapter embraces the theoretical framework, but also focuses on defining narrativity. This is done on the basis of Verstraten’s (2009) book Film Narratology. Verstraten defines the concept of narration as the representation of a noticeable temporal development. In the second chapter, I analyze the first function of fashion in film: the function of representing and expressing time and space. Also in this chapter Verstraten’s research is of importance; Verstraten points out time and space are the main principles of narrative cinema. This function of fashion is in my opinion the most obvious and coherent one. Buchholz (2005) provides a clear definition of the concept space, and the concept of time is comprehensively discussed in the article of Khatchadourian (1987) who examines the concept of time and space in film as the organizing and structuring principles of film. The findings of this study are compared to the views of Sesonske (1980) who also investigated time in cinema. In contrast to their approach to time and space in film, this research connects these concepts to fashion since fashion is the most important aspect of representing time and space, next to decor and scenery.

The third chapter revolves around the second function of fashion in film: the expressive function. In this chapter Fabe (2004) is discussed, who describes the beginnings of film narrative. She examines how films work, how they move the viewer and make us think. Providing a historical background of film history gives us the opportunity to see more in the movies we see. Birren (2013) devoted his research to the relationship between color and psychology. He focuses on the effects of color on people; how people react to certain colors. After reading this study, it becomes clear color can be expressive which is also valid for the colors of costumes. Kim (2016) studies the expressive effects of King Henry VIII’s costumes. According to Kim, the way colors and lines are connected show the expressive effect. My conclusion in this chapter corresponds to Holt’s approach of costume design:
Holt (2014) states that costumes interact as a form of expression in their own right. However, most of these theorists surpassed the topic of fashion in film while discussing narrativity and expressivity. An exception in this chapter is Kim, but that study is mainly limited to period dramas. The research in this thesis has met the need for further theory development about the expressive function through showing how fashion can function as an expressive component in contemporary film. Colors, jewellery and other details of costumes have the ability to symbolize; every single detail expresses aspects of the characters. I find costumes so interesting, because just looking at the costumes should already give you an idea of what the characters are trying to express.

The last chapter demonstrates how fashion can serve as a spectacle and can function as a special effect. Pierson’s (2002) examination of ‘the wonder years’ of the special effect in the early part of the last decade provides a clear understanding how the special effect has developed and what a special effect exactly entails. Gunning’s view of the special effect is compared to the views of King and Lewis. Gunning (1993) has the idea that the cinema of attractions suggest that audiences watch film for the show of spectacular technology over the narrative, while King (2000) suggest a mixture of spectacle and narrativity. King thinks the spectacle helps to move the plot forward, just like Lewis (2014) who claims the spectacle in some cases can reinforce the narrative. Fashion as spectacle usually is not associated with narrativity, but in this chapter King and Lewis provide a new perspective on this view. I do agree with King, but think the more nuanced statement Lewis made is a better way to describe how spectacle can reinforce the narrative in some cases, not most of the cases.

In this thesis I did not attempt to prove that a function is solely narrati
-ve or non-narrative. I believe different interpretations which were provided are valid in some cases and it all depends on the particular case. In my opinion, the functions of fashion can be both narrative and non-narrative, in which one is always more apparent than the other - but not non-existing. I came to this outcome after analyzing three different case studies: Game of Thrones, The Divergent Series and The Hunger Games. The intense analysis of these cases has resulted in several conclusions which correct possible prior misunderstandings of their content and open new routes of research concerning fashion in film.

1. **Fashion can express/represent the concepts of time and space.** This function is primarily narrative, since costumes serve time and space in a very clear way which are inseparable and together form the foundation of a story line. Fashion is the mirror of a particular civilization, as costume designer Landis stated. Representing an unknown civilization in a fictional time and space is also made possible by costume design, which becomes clear in the case study Game of Thrones. GoT shows how fashion contributes to transporting the viewer to other worlds and times, in this case a fictional one which includes some aspects of the Middle Ages. The symbolic meanings hidden in the costumes can both express characteristics and refer to a certain time and space. Fashion has the power to provide a certain perspective on a time period.
2. **Fashion has the ability to define a character and has an expressive function.** The expressive function is related to narrativity, because fashion has the ability to express power, social status and certain typical features of a character as became apparent in the case study *The Divergent Series* where Tris’ character is defined through fashion. Not only is her character defined through fashion, also the transformation of her character is expressed through fashion. However, this function can be interpreted as non-narrative in exceptional cases, when fashion expresses visual spectacle rather than the story. I would like to argue that this function is more narrative than non-narrative, but one does not necessarily exclude the other.

3. **Fashion can function as a special effect and create spectacle.** This function is mainly perceived as a non-narrative function, since entertaining the viewer does not correlate with serving the story. Nonetheless, it is argued it can also be interpreted as narrative. Both Lewis and King argue that spectacle has a narrative function. I agree with this statement and tried to show this through examining the case study *The Hunger Games* in which costume is very prompt and very spectacular - but at the same time tells the viewer an important aspect of the story. The spectacular clothing did not only amaze the spectator, it also symbolized the characteristics of entire groups of their society.

These concluding points answer the questions what the narrative and non-narrative functions of fashion are and if those functions are solely narrative, non-narrative or both. The remaining question is how important fashion is for representing/expressing time and space, defining character and the function of fashion as a special effect. The importance of fashion in relation to time and space is most recognized and apparent. Especially representing time in film is hard to accomplish without fashion. Defining character is less related to fashion in existing research, which surprises me since fashion has a clear capability to define a character and especially show the transformation of a character through time. A lot of elements of costume design, such as the choice of colors and ornaments relate to symbolism. Clothing symbolizes certain characteristics, statuses, professions, ideas or relationships and in this way is able to define and give an import impression of a character in films. Since fashion defines a character and also is able to depict the transformation of a character, I think the importance of fashion to the narrative is underestimated. Fashion as a special effect, usually connected to non-narrativity, is in my opinion also underestimated since non-narrativity is in my opinion not unfavorable (even though is sometimes portrayed so), particularly in this digital era. The narration changes in time, which should not be seen as a negative development but as a challenge. Now that these results are recorded, it is possible to think of follow-up research. New narrative opportunities appear with emerging technologies, just as the functions of fashion also changes through time as seen in digital contemporary films where fashion becomes part of the spectacle more and more. Since the digital (film) world develops rapidly, the research of fashion, narrativity and technology in film should be examined continually to see how storytelling and fashion evolve through time.
Appendix

Figure 1. Costumes Pride and Prejudice.

Figure 2. The Red Woman, GoT.

Figure 3. Expressive Effects of King Henry VIII’s Costumes in Films.
Figure 4. Poggioli costume sketches: Dauntless.

Figure 5. Poggioli costume sketches: Erudite.

Figure 6. Poggioli costume sketches: Amity.

Figure 7. Poggioli costume sketches: Candor.
Figure 8: Poggioli costume design: the factions.

Figure 9. Poggioli costume sketches: Beatrice prior.  
Figure 10. Poggioli sketches: Tris after.
Figure 11. Collage Capitol Couture.

Figure 12. Capitol Couture.

Figure 13. Katniss wedding dress.

Figure 14. Katniss transformation dress.
References


https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/colleen_atwood_676185


https://www.etymonline.com/word/drama

https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/expressive


Pierson, Michele. (2002). *Special effects: Still in search of wonder* (Film and culture Special effects).


