



## IDENTITY, FREEDOM AND FASHION COMMUNICATION CODES IN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

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### ABSTRACT

This dissertation will explore the role of fashion and dress as differential values that separate groups by class, colour and gender in three different films: *Divergent*, *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover* and *Boys don't cry*. Then it would show how artistic and main stream films have common similarities representing separation through dress. In relation to what Patrizia Calefato (2004) says on her book *The Clothed Body*, Film and Fashion construct a world in which social subjects are depicted in relation to one other. "The cinema is a sense-making machine that produces feelings, sensations and desire. Often clothes are mediators in this "sense-making" as signs charged with social significance" (Calefato.P, 2004, p.92).

Choosing these three films this study will have the opportunity to show several ways of making troops and subsequently banned individuals. Exclusion by class, colour and gender as many others are nowadays a more subliminal way of separation by groups, it is more hidden than before but still exists. Freedom as a sign of identity gains recognition with fashion. This study will discuss the relationship between fashion and freedom and how society forces the individual to be part of the established group following certain rules. Those individuals can be excluded, as mentioned previously, by class (*Divergent* and *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover*), by color (*The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover*) and by gender (*Boys don't cry*). The aim is to query the actual system by analyzing these three films.

The three of them treat an exclusion point of the actual society and the film directors have the help of fashion and the body to express it. "Fashion embraces not only the desire to imitate others and to express commonality, but to express individuality" (Entwistle.J, 2000, p 114). Dress will also be seen as a protection layer used by these individuals to become part of an established group.

These three examples of films produce an image of society in different areas and times. *Divergent* (2014) is the future and the metropolis. The film presents how the society will be developed and separated by groups and factions. *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover* (1989) shows an unequal class society in a more artistic portrayal of the world using color to split feelings and class. And finally *The Boys Don't Cry* (1999) offers a cruel story of how a transgender individual is excluded from the big "understandable" group by gender and stereotypes.

With different times, spaces and differential elements these films are studying the same problems of exclusion, identity and freedom in contemporary society.

**KEY WORDS:** Exclusion, Transgender, Homosexual, Disease, Identity, Social Classes, Colour, Freedom, Cinema.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Fashion, the body and identity

Nowadays as a society full of rules, people are reacting to sharp fixed codes through their bodies in a very smooth way. People dress themselves differently by adding decoration to the body itself. "Practices such as tattooing and piercing, once confined to marginal and deviant sections of society, have become widespread." (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001, p.3). Tattoos and piercings can be covered by those strict suits and androgynous fashion and these "free" individuals can still be part of both troops, the "correct" one as the system is defining and the excluded one, the one that gives freedom and in some aspect insecurity and exclusion.

Fashion and the body are understood as tools for the individual to find the way not to be excluded and to be part of one of the established groups. The tattoos and piercing that Entwistle and Wilson mention are just a symbolic element to represent the vehicle used by those individuals looking for freedom and acceptance.

With this help the individual can be part of the big group without any risk. However, is it what the society and specially these free spirits are looking for? Are we looking for double faced individuals or for a free and thoughtful community?

Virginia Woolf (1992) mentions that dress in its immense elaboration has obviously another function. It not only cover nakedness, gratifies vanity, and creates pleasure for the eyes, but also is a tool to advertise the social, professional, or intellectual standing of the wearer. Dress covers all the insecurities and makes the individual feel safe in his/her skin and comfortable in front of those judging situations. Dress as a cultural phenomenon has several essential attributes, according to what Kim K.P. Johnson and Sharron J. Lennon mention in their book *Appearance and Power*. First, a person's identity is defined geographically and historically, and the individual is linked to a specific community. Dress serves as a sign that the individual belongs to a certain group, but simultaneously differentiates the same individual from all others: it includes and excludes (1991, p.1).

Fashion theory has been always situating dress as a differentiating factor inside the rules and paths of a society. "The development of cultural studies in the late 1960s, was a move to the opposite end of the spectrum as authors interested themselves in sub-cultural style. This was part of a commitment to the study of youth culture and radical groups. Their dissidence forcefully in their modes of dress,

which provided fruitful opportunities for the semiotic analysis of both overt and hidden meanings" (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001, p.2). Subculture groups are part of these excluded communities that represent the divergent individuals that do not fit in the organized and fixed system of rules. "They use dress along with other popular artefacts to mark out differences of taste, lifestyle and identity" (Entwistle.J, 2000, pag 115).

The sad aspect of the separation is that these vast society troops are excluding the individuality from their big structured and straight groups because the small difference of being different in gender, color and class.

The excluded individuals are looking for freedom and to escape from those tight rules, they have to follow hidden cultural codes. "Bodies which flout the conventions of their culture and go without the appropriate clothes are subversive of the most basic social codes and risk exclusion, scorn or ridicule" (Entwistle.J, 2000, p. 7).

Freedom has been for a significant amount of society members the main goal of their lives. Why is freedom that relevant for us? Society sees freedom as an idea of being able to live with no pressures, no stops, no directions. It is a risky idea of life and how you translate it into society and how assemble those free people together it is the issue. As Erich Fromm is questioning in his book *The Fear of Freedom*: "Is freedom only the absence of external pressure? Why is that freedom for many cherished goal and for others a threat?" (Fromm, 1942, p.4).

Human nature is based on the idea of being free, of being capable to do things as one likes as a thoughtful person. Free means individuality and identity and it is relevant to point out what Joanne Entwistle (2000) mentions of how identities are socially meaningful. The individual may want to "stand out" but she or he also wants to "fit in" a within a group just because, as *The Fear of Freedom* discussed by Erich Fromm (1942), people have that called "fear of freedom" or "fear of exclusion".

Part of this intricate view of life is depending on the troop, as hermetic groups following a path, following an idea, following a person. Nowadays even if those troops feel they are part of a free society, they are inside of a system with rules to follow. Scape from this system can be scaring and something quite dangerous. "The separation from these communities creates a feeling of powerlessness and

anxiety” (Fromm, 1942, p.24).

Society gives an excluding treat to those brave individuals who challenge the system and in some ways feel different from the overall troop. As Vivienne Forrester mentions in her book *The Economic Horror* (in her case about economic situation and job emptiness) “the jobless, victims of its disappearance, are treated and judged by same criteria as when Jobs were abundant. They are therefore made to feel guilty for being jobless” (Forrester, 1999, p.5).

Fashion, the body and identity play a defining role in the society. Fashion and dress have the strength and power to find identities without other means, just by physical appearance. According to Wilson (1985), dress is a “technique of survival” in a metropolis that brings one into contact with strangers.

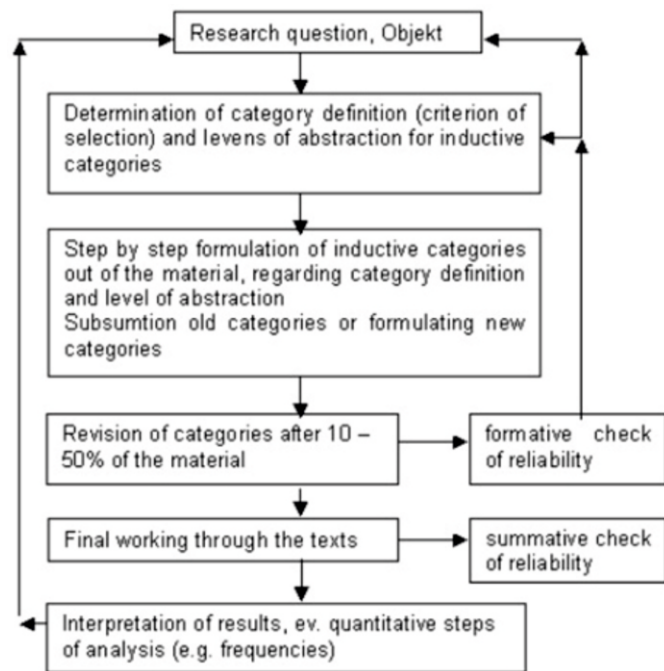
With this scientific article we will see how Cinema as a model means of mass communication, according to what Barthes said (Barthes, 1998 in Calefato.P, 2004, p.91), play also a distinctive role next to costume and how they function as linguistic units that are often more important that script or sound track (Calefato.P, 2004).

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to answer our main hypothesis and the five research questions, we have applied the content analysis. This methodological tool let us analyze the content of the communicative content with the aim of producing inferences (Krippendorff, 1990). Content analysis can only be applied on manifest content; that is, the words, sentences, or texts themselves, rather than their meanings. Yet, through mixed methodologies often common in content analysis, a research is able to analysis data, as well as its meaning.

**Tables and Graphs**

But within the framework of qualitative approaches it would be of central interest, to develop the aspects of interpretation, the categories, as near as possible to the material, to formulate them in terms of the material. For that scope qualitative content analysis has developed procedures of inductive category development, which are oriented to the reductive processes formulated within the psychology of text processing (cf. Ballstaedt, Mandl, Schnotz & Tergan 1981; van Dijk 1980). [10]



Choosing these three films this dissertation will have the opportunity to show several ways of making troops and subsequently banned individuals. This dissertation will explore the role of fashion and dress as differential values that separate groups by class, colour and gender in three different films: *Divergent*, *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover* and *Boys don't cry*.

**Variables Sheet**

FILM
TÍTULO
DIRECTOR
THEMA
URBAN TRIBES/ SOCIAL CLASSES
CHARACTERS
GENDER

ROLES
CULTURAL CODES
FASHION
DRESS COLORS
DRESS SHAPE
SIGNS/TATOOS
FREEDOM AND IDENTITY MARCS

Source: *Self Made*

Then it would show how artistic and main stream films have common similarities representing separation through dress.

**Research Sample**

**Unit 1**

**DIVERGENT (2014)**

*Divergent* is the first novel in Veronica Roth's debut trilogy of the same name, followed by *Insurgent* and *Allegiant*.

*Divergent* tells us the story of a girl trying to escape and find her way, her dreams, her freedom. The entire story takes place in a futuristic Chicago, the society is organized into five different groups or troops, in the novel called Factions. Each faction is known for a specific virtue. They are: Abnegation (selflessness), Erudite (knowledge), Amity (peace), Candor (honesty) and Dauntless (bravery).

Each individual of the society is member of one of the factions when they are born, the same one as their parents, and once they turn sixteen they have the option to choose for themselves which faction is the most similar to their behaviour.

Beatrice plays the main role of the novel. She and her family are part of Abnegation. Beatrice must take the aptitude test on her sixteen birthday and on the test she shows aptitude for three different factions, Abnegation, Erudite and Dauntless, which means she is suitable for many of the values each group has. She will be then called Divergent. Being Divergent in a society where everything is structured, organized, and really strict is really a dangerous obstacle, so she will be warned to never say the truth.

From the early years of her life she is really impressed by Dauntless members, who do not have any fears, are brave, strong and “free”. Next to her family Beatrice has never seen a mirror, so she does not know what she looks like but deep inside she is completely sure who she is. She is Trice, the name she will choose when she switches to Dauntless.

Dauntless is about to pass stages before becoming a real Dauntless member. They must complete all the objectives in order not to be excluded and become factionless, forced to live on the streets of the city in poverty.

Trice fights to become the first one and she will have the help of “Four”, whose real name is Tobias Eaton, the son of abusive Abnegation council representative. Thanks to him Trice will discover the realness of everything. Erudite is planning to fight against Abnegation, where her parents are. Everything is going wrong in the eyes of Trice, when she discovers that the Dauntless leaders are injecting a serum to all Dauntless members to force them to fight against Abnegation, which is called tracking device. This serum does not work on Trice, since she can resist the simulation because she is Divergent. Tobias and Trice are both Divergent.

They will fight together to save Abnegation.

**The Analysis of the Results**

Behind the story there is a strong message of freedom, fears, societal classes, secrets and lies, values and power. All these topics are connected through the costumes, each faction wearing several kinds of clothes that make the difference between troops and give them an identity (see Fig 1). The factions have differences in colors, signs (tatoos) (see Fig 2) and shapes. According to Joanne Entwistle (2000), fashion and dress have a complex relationship to identity; on the one hand the clothes we choose to wear can be expressive of identity, and on the other hand, our clothes cannot always be “read”, since they do not straightforwardly “speak” and can therefore be open to misinterpretation.

Even though the novel is telling the story of a futuristic story, the separation through dress (see Fig.3) is even more accentuated than nowadays and still this futuristic society is having the same problems of fears, confidence and freedom. Each group is separated by a value and the individual can be excluded and sent into the poverty just because they are factionless or in Trice's case Divergent. As in our system, those “free” individuals are banned for being jobless, homeless or even cultureless. Vivianne Forrester in her book *The Economic Horror* she mentions the idea of the jobless person, where victims of the disappearance of jobs are treated and judged by the same criteria as when jobs were abundant. They are made to feel guilty for being jobless. They accuse themselves of what they are victims of. (Forrester, 1999)

In relation to dress, this divergent character can be linked to the way society dresses nowadays for the principal task of our life, dress for others and for not to be removed from the big mass. "A body that does not conform, that transgresses such cultural codes, is likely to cause offence and outrage and be met with scorn of incredulity" (Entwistle, J., 2000, p.8). As Joanne Entwistle mentions also the clothes we choose to wear represent a compromise between the demands of the social world and our individual desires.

Those troops represents the different cultural ideas or the several structured groups existing in our society and they force that fixed system for their own safety and harmonious life. In the film Trice is given advice about how to hidden his Divergent character just for her safety and future life. Dress will help Trice to be invisible. "Dress signals our membership to particular communities and expresses shared values, at the same time we do not want to be "clones" dressed in identical fashion to our friends"(Entwistle, J., 2000, p 114).

Through dress the novel also studies the societal classes, depending on which faction you were born in you are dressed in some way or another. Factions like Erudite (as the intellectual ones) are wearing dark, sharp and clean suits, while Abnegation (the selflessness ones) are wearing pale, wrinkly and grey pieces representing the careless vision of the body and clothes their members are representing. However, these to a certain point are part of a faction, but the faction less people are translated into our world as the homeless people.

The novel is the best example to see how our society is organized and how it will be developed shortly if we do not break those boundaries of fears, confidence and freedom. What the government sells is a free society but the reality of it is that the society is controlled by their rules (how to dress, how to work, how to talk, how to live) and Is it really where we are going to end up? Is society going to be safe thanks to those rules or is the government the only one who is going to be safe and comfortable watching people following their laws?

## Unit 2

### THE COOK, THE THIEF, HIS WIFE AND HER LOVER (1989)

This chapter analyses the film *The Cook, The Thief, his Wife and her Lover* (Greenaway, 1989). The film is a great illustration of the division of classes. The main characters of the films are an English gangster called Albert Spica, owner of one of the high-class restaurants in London and his wife Georgina, characterized as the dominated wife who is secretly in love with Michael, an usual client of the restaurant. The story dramatizes the actual hidden social separation of classes. The scenes make clear messages about classes through fashion and colour. It is a complex film divergent on its themes. The film explores the idea of power, social classes, masculinity and femininity, sexuality and the seven deadly sins all of them through colour and represented by Albert, his wife and her lover.

### The Analysis of the Results

#### Colour

The characters are moving from one room to another where the colour is different. Each room represents something in particular, the colour is quite symbolic on each segment. The author has found through colour the possibility to influence directly the characters and the story.

Kenneth. R Fehrman and Cherie Fehrman (2004) made a point about what colour represents for us. According to them, colour is an illusion. Our environment only appears coloured to us. The world is completely colourless.

Taking this quote as a reference we can analyze colour with our eyes and see how colour affects our lives and all the meanings and sociological aspects that are in it.

The colour Red in the film is the strongest one. "Red derives primarily from blood and fire. In Chinese the word for blood-red is older than the word for red. Red has strong associations with lust, murder, rage". (Fehrman, K.R. & Fehrman, C., 2004, p.66).

The atmosphere of each area informs us what it is going to happen, the scene at the restaurant is heavy and the scenography and the costumes will inform the viewer where all the intense passions are going to take place: love, hate and revenge. The restaurant is the colour Red. "The red of blood is an integral part of the human being, but whenever it appears it is a sign of trauma: a wound, birth, an intense event. Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, people were urged to witness torture and capital punishment to see with their own eyes the effect of spurting blood" (Zuffi, S., 2001, p.55). On the restaurant stage we will see all fights and radical scenes generally done by the owner of the restaurant, the figure who represents the torture and the punishment, Albert Spica.

The author plays with the change of colour also with clothes and the characters will be blended with their environment. Outside the restaurant the colour is Blue, where all the cruelty is happening and the lack of feelings. Green is the color of the kitchen, the colour of hope, where the lovers are dreaming to escape and have their sexual encounters. It is a colour associated also with fertility (Garnett, O., 2000). And finally White, with a pure and biblical view. "White has been always been a symbol of wealth, because white clothes show the dirt quickest and so need cleaning most often". (Garnett, O., 2000, p.22). The toilet represented as a

white area where the characters filter and clean their acts and a peace illusion of freedom from the red room.

Through colour the film represents the feelings the individuals have when they are inside one group or another and how they feel in each of them. From red to white they have several meanings. These colours represents the differences the individuals suffer in our society when they try to escape from the stereotypes and fixed norms. Colour works as a protection layer for the characters and translated into the individuals in the big city, colour is also a layer of individuality or membership to a community. Coloured hair, coloured skins, coloured clothes are used to articulate a clear identity to members within the groups as well as to those outside.

### Social Classes

Greenaway is an artist and his films reflect all his education in art at the beginning of his career. The film can be related to the Medieval art on its sceneography, the act of the characters, and how all the set is made to be the focus on the center of the scene.

Albert Spica is an abusive, rude, male supremacist, a horrible nightmare to all of his staff and even to his thugs.

His character represents the Medieval power concentrated on the courts, which sought to tame and co-ordinate territorial domination (Entwistle, 2000). In our case the restaurant is his territory where he finds himself comfortable and able to execute his actions. He is representing the Coercive power, based on threats of punishment, rejection, or disapproval. (Eicher, J.B., 1999, p.104). Karl Marx's ([1867] 1990) seminal argument that class was at the heart of a relationship made of the material or economic exploitation of one group by another ([1867] 1990 in Sullivan, 2015, p 182) it is perfectly the illustration of class Greenaway is presenting in his film. The higher class is abusive and gives a derogatory treatment to its servants.

The costumes remind us of some of the great art of the s XVII, *The Banquet of the Officers of the St George Militia Company* (see Fig 7) is one of the main references for the author and is also the big painting hanging on the principal wall of the big red room. The scene is a reunion of members of the army wearing red bands having a conversation and eating seated around a table, exactly the same situation the viewer will discover in the film. Red in Christian art is considered the color of Lust, one of the Seven Deadly Sins (Zuffi, S., 2012). This army uniform, the same as Spica's group is wearing represents the coercive power, as they have the force to humiliate their workers and make them feel as a lower class. The uniforms in Red and Black show the two main two colours of elegance, class and style until the 15th century (Zuffi, S., 2012). As well the imperial power was identified as well with red on the peak of the social pyramid (Zuffi, S., 2012).

In relation to fashion it is necessary to mention that fashion was not understood during the s XVII as how we know it today because the key to the emergence and development of fashion seems to be related to social change: fashion emerges in societies which have some social mobility rather than a fixed and stable class structure (Entwistle, 2000, p.82). The society was immersed in an hierarchical order and the lower class group of the society (the waiters and cooks in the film) were not able to express themselves through fashion. All the change of color is happening to the main characters of the film: the owner, his wife and his thugs. The high class.

It is a point of study the red bands the owner and his group of thugs are wearing. These bands symbolize the membership of a power group, as the coat of arms soldiers wore in battle during the S VII, compared today with the logos footballers have on their equipment because of their sponsors (Garnett, O., 2000). This band gives them the power of being part of the high class.

Colours and costumes give the characters the separation of classes and power. The power the owner is using to give an abusive treatment to his workers.

By the mid-twentieth century, developments in the mass production of fashion, along with the increasing affluence of the working class, had led to fashion being extended to a greater number of people than before, blurring the boundary between the classes in terms of style (Entwistle, 2000).

Nowadays Fashion is just used to differentiate groups by the quality of the fabrics used. However, these quality sign need to be known in order to be meaningful. (Entwistle, 2000).

Different ways of separation by class but still an exclusive way of making groups. Several times and places but still same system of classes.

## Unit 3

### BOYS DON'T CRY (1999)

This chapter is focusing on gender and specifically on transgender through the film *Boys Don't Cry* (Pierce, K. 1999. United States) and how fashion is helping those gender dysphoria people to express who they really are. As Entwistle and Wilson suggest on *Body Dressing* that fashion is always obsessed with gender and how fashion can help to push, define and redefine the gender boundary. Fashion

ion and the body are able to help people to change their image and fight what the society expects men or women to “look like” men and women as Entwistle mentions. They can fight to become individuals and not part of a group.

A quite recent “Voice article” in *The Independent* by Katie Glove (2016) reflects perfectly the not yet acceptable idea of individual identity by a vast group of the society. The article is based on the last Louis Vuitton campaign and how Jaden Smith, son of the American actor Will Smith, takes part in the campaign wearing “womens” clothes. Glover mentions that “people like Jaden are starting to wear the trans uniform without actually stating that they are transgender”. For the author “Jade is on the transgender territory”. Glover’s idea of a male or female uniform to “tell the world what your gender is” questions the neutral-fashion concept saying that now “the danger for trans women is that if wearing what are traditionally women’s clothes becomes the norm for men too, then trans women will no longer be able to rely on these props to help them display a female gender identity, and that could be a serious problem”.

This article written in one of the main newspapers in the United Kingdom shows the incomprehensible point by our society of how the gender-neutral fashion can help people to become themselves and to be individuals.

Returning back to the film, the real-life story of Brandon Teena born as Teena Renae Brandon, an American trans man is questioning gender in an hermetic society and structured mind members.

The main scenes of the film take place in Falls City, Nebraska, where all the action and troubles began. A rural North America is portrayed and its drawn the hidden codes of the small towns in the Midwest. Judith Halberstam (2005) in her book *In a Queer Time and Place* gives several ideas of how geographical decisions can make the life of a transgender individual easier. Halberstam pointed out the topic of life in a small, mostly white, midwestern towns, and suggested that many of these places where the breeding grounds for cultures of hate and meanness and had both homophobic and racist dimensions. Angela R. Wilson observes in an essay about “Gay and Lesbian Life in Rural America” that “unknown outsiders are never wellcomed in small towns” (Wilson, 2000, p 208).

### The Analysis of the Results

In connection to the main argument of this investigation the society is divided into groups and these groups are ruled by established codes of culture, trust or traditions. Transgender individuals suffer critical and violent reactions in those small towns like Fall City in Nebraska mainly because of these tight codes. Halberstam mentions the necessity of these individuals to be placed in a specific category as a particular form of recognition. “Transgender may indeed be considered a term of relationality; it describes not simply an identity but a relation between people, within a community, or simply within intimate bonds” (Halberstam, J., 2005, p.28). At the end even these individual are looking for their own groups to be part of something and not be excluded.

Fashion and dress gives the principal character of the film the hope to be free and be right from birth he was, a boy. However, It also include sociological and cultural extensions and problems with the surrounding environment. “If dress says something about our personal identities, surely it also expresses aspects of our identities as men and women” (Brush, C & Steele, V., 1989, p.8).

The lead role of the film, Brandon, is experiencing all the difficulties he has to encounter and all the boundaries he has to fight with essentially because of the hermetic and tight society he lives in. In one of the scenes of the movie Brandon is forced to show his vagina to his two male friends to prove that Brandon was a woman. Carol Siegel (2005) mentions this scene in her book *Goth’s Dark Empire* and points out that these two male figures were just looking to reaffirm themselves as men and motivated by their desire to restore a biologically determined coding of gender they find comfortable they must abuse Brandon sexually. The scene shows how it is necessary to undress Brandon to see his biological area and how dress is protecting the individual in this situation. (see fig. 8)

The stereotypes of gender are conditioned by what society has been thinking and understanding through the years, aspects like rounded women and rectangular men, small waists and rounded hips are more feminine and broad shoulders and narrow hips more masculine (Brush, C & Steele, V., 1989, p 7).

As a transexual individual Brandon has to dress up in a way to cover all those rounded shapes women are known for and use masculine stereotypes like trousers and wide shirts. “It would be difficult for a woman to achieve a totally male look. A few years ago, a female journalist deliberately tried to pass as a man. She had to bind her breast, cut her hair, wear a false mustache, lower her voice, and change her body language, as well as put on a complete male clothing ensemble”. (Brush, C & Steele, V., 1989, p.9). (see fig. 9)

The film gives us information about the process of becoming the other sex and the difficulties the individual has to pass through this way. Society was excluding the person when the truth came out and that is why the individual was using dress as a protection to be included.

### CONCLUSION

This investigation has been concentrated on the meaning and power of Fashion and Dress in our recent society and how they are used by graphic media to question the separation and exclusion of the individuals who suffer in contemporary societies.

It has studied the role of dress in three extremely different movies, from several times and places: *Divergent* (2014), *The Cook, the Thief, his wife and her Lover* (1989) and *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999). The main argument was to prove that artistic and main stream films have common similarities treating the exclusion process individuals experience nowadays and how fashion and dress save them from that separation.

Three different topics have been studied and through research on elements of class, gender and colour this dissertation makes an overview of how contemporary society divides people in relation to these three topics.

Firstly, a differentiated class based society is shown in the first film, *Divergent*. Here it is proved how a recent film from 2014 is still separating people in groups and how divergent individuals are treated as danger elements in a structured society. Fashion and dress, specifically tattoos, are used as elements of identity and community membership. People, according to Veronica Roth (2014), in the future will be marked as a sing of membership to an established group and we will be under the abuse of political power of a hidden free system.

Secondly, in Greenaway’s (1989) film *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover* it is shown how truthful the quotation of Karl Marx (1867) is when he pointed out about economic exploitation marked the separation of classes. From Albert Spica, the owner, to his servants and thugs there is a vast pyramidal segmentation of power. In our recent society this segmentation is represented in a more hidden way because according to the industrialization of the class system, there has been more equality, however, it still exists. Nowadays the split exists in the quality or the way clothes are worn by the wearer. Dress is playing a hidden function of separation. In Greenaway’s film, a film from 1989 it exists the fragmentation of people determined by class and also by colour, where the author finds a way to express that exclusion through feelings.

Finally, a gender question is asked in *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999). According to *The Independent* (2016) article mentioned before it is remarkable that society is not prepared yet to accept the gender fluid and the individualities. The film is a great example of how hard is for a transexual individual the process and how fashion is helping on the way to freedom. Stereotypes can be established tough codes that society follow without even know it, it can be understood as a cultural reaction.

To sum up, these three films are aiming to open our current society about those principal topics: gender, color and class, and make the society members see how fashion and body can modify what the structured and fitted rules are judging.

Fashion is a strong force to fight against stereotypes. Freedom is what the individuals are looking for and dress assists in the job of making them feel part of the society and not feel excluded.

### FIGURES



Fig.1. *Divergent* (2014). [film] USA: Neil Burger.



Fig.2. *Divergent* (2014). [film] USA: Neil Burger.



Fig. 3. Divergent (2014). [film] USA: Neil Burger.



Fig 4, 5, 6. Several screenshots of The Cook, The Thief, his Wife and her Lover (1989)



Fig. 7. Frans Hals. The Banquet of the Officers of the St George Militia Company ©. 1616)



Fig 8. Boys Don't Cry (1999). [film] USA: Kimberley Peirce.



Fig.9. Boys Don't Cry (1999). [film] USA: Kimberley Peirce.

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