A Pattern Language for Costumes in Films

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Agenda

Background About Costumes

State of the Art

Pattern and Costumes

Summary

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What does a costume do?

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Vestimentary communication

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Tasks and functions of costumes

protection
e.g. protection against: cold, heat, rain, chemicals, germs, dirt

producing personal identity

communication aspects
e.g. what do I want do say about me?

information about events
e.g. a wedding, a funeral

social aspects
e.g. group membership, social standing, religious or gender classification

sign and symbol
e.g. on a uniform, on football shirts

functional aspects
e.g. swimsuite

psychological aspects
e.g. own experience wearing clothes

information about places
e.g. indoors, outdoor

transformation
e.g. dress up, role reversal

indication about personality
e.g. to look athletic or sexy

Information about time
e.g. historical period, day or night time

signaling impact
e.g. reflective vest

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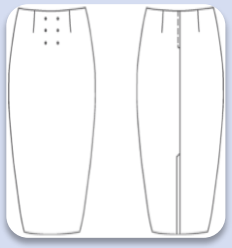
Three levels needed when talking about costumes

clothes

- Materiality of everything we wear
  e.g. a skirt, a shirt, shoes



fashion

- „intangible meaning“ (Roland Barthes)
  e.g. fashionably, out of fashion, sportive

costume conventions

- What does a recipient recognize because of his media socialization
  e.g. recognize stereotypes

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State of the Art

- Only very few scientific investigation focusing on costumes
- First serious theoretical investigation on costumes at the beginning of the 1980s
- There are three different approaches found in the literature about costumes:
  - Focusing on the aspect of costume communication based on symbolism
  - Focusing on the gender-aspect (Feministic film theory)
  - Focusing on the semiotic approach (costume as a sign)
- Current investigations are mainly based on a very small set of movies

➡ It lacks a formal concept which enables getting general information on how costumes are used in movies and which conventions have been developed (costume language)

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The term “Costume Language”

- The term “Costume Language” is usually used in a metaphorical way in the literature about costumes
- But lot of typical roles in movies can be recognized by stereotype costumes (e.g. the femme fatale or the girl next door)
- Especially when dressing the stock characters the costume designers have to use stereotype costumes to make sure these characters are well and fast understood

⇨ These ‘stereotype costumes’ can be described as patterns

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Defining patterns

- A pattern is a proven solution to a re-occurring problem
- A pattern is a concept that aims to capture the best solution in an abstract way to make this knowledge reusable
- A pattern language is a set of patterns conforming to a particular pattern format as well as cross-references between these patterns

⇨ A costume pattern is a proven solution to a re-occurring costume design problem.

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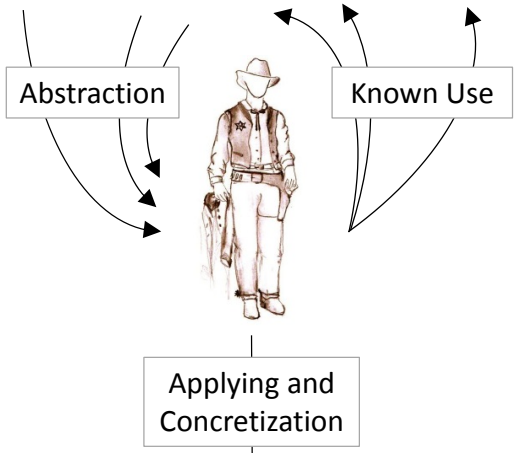
Deriving a pattern by abstraction

Concrete Costumes
(Sheriffs in Westerns)

Costume Pattern
(Wild West Sheriff)



Pattern-based
Costume Design
(New Sheriff)

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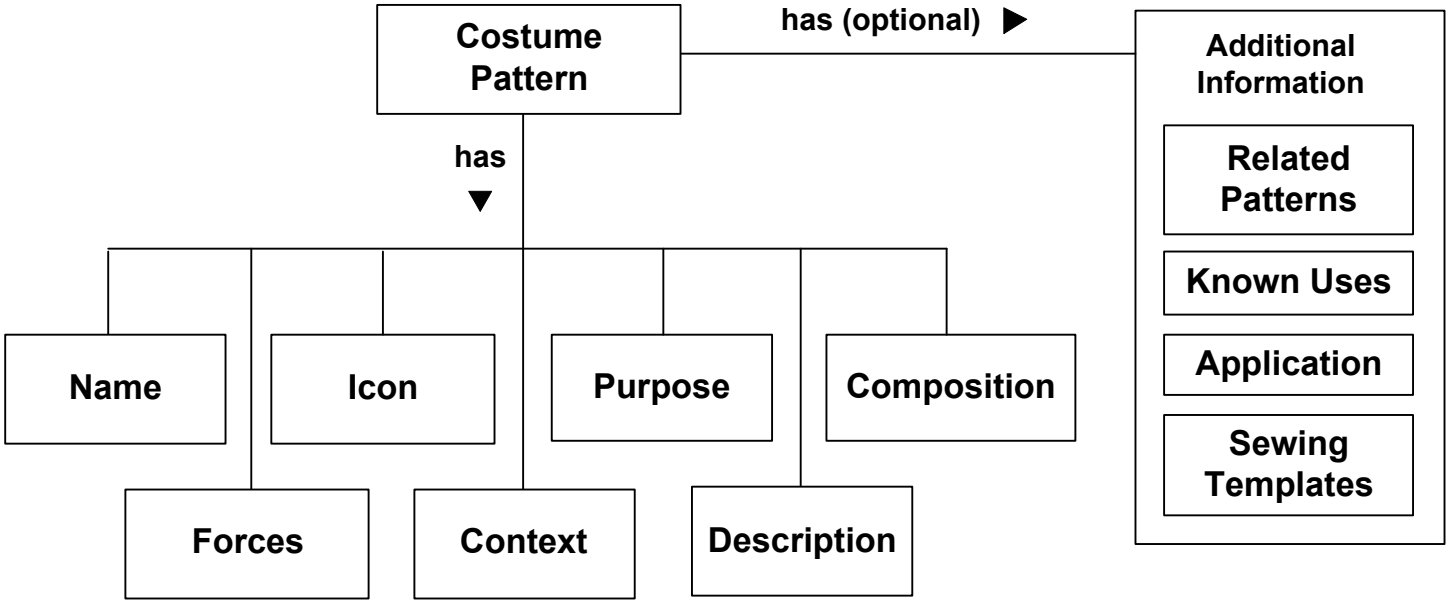
Conceptual model of costume patterns

Barzen, Johanna; Leymann, Frank; Schumm, David; Wieland, Matthias: *Ein Ansatz zur Unterstützung des Kostümmanagements im Film auf Basis einer Mustersprache*. In: Proceedings Modellierung 2012.



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The Wild-West-Sheriff Pattern

- **Icon:**
- **Purpose:** The Wild West Sheriff costume stands for a man of law working in a town in the Wild West.
- **Composition:** (see following slide)
- **Context**: The Wild West Sheriff occurs around the Pioneer era (mid to late 19th century) in Western North America; Genre: Western.
- **Description:** The role of a Wild West Sheriff represents a law enforcement officer. The Wild West Sheriff is responsible for a particular county.
- **Related Patterns**: Modern Sheriff, Fantasy Sheriff, Cowboy, Indian, Outlaw, and Rancher.
- **Additional Information:**
  - **Known Uses**: John Wayne as John Chance in Rio Bravo (1959); Gary Cooper as Will Kane in High Noon (1952); George Bancroft as Marshal Wilcox in Stagecoach (1939).
  - **Preparation instructions:** applying the belt on the trousers; setting time of the pocket watch to time in the film scene and hooking it on the vest; preparing the knot of the tie; belting spurs on the boots

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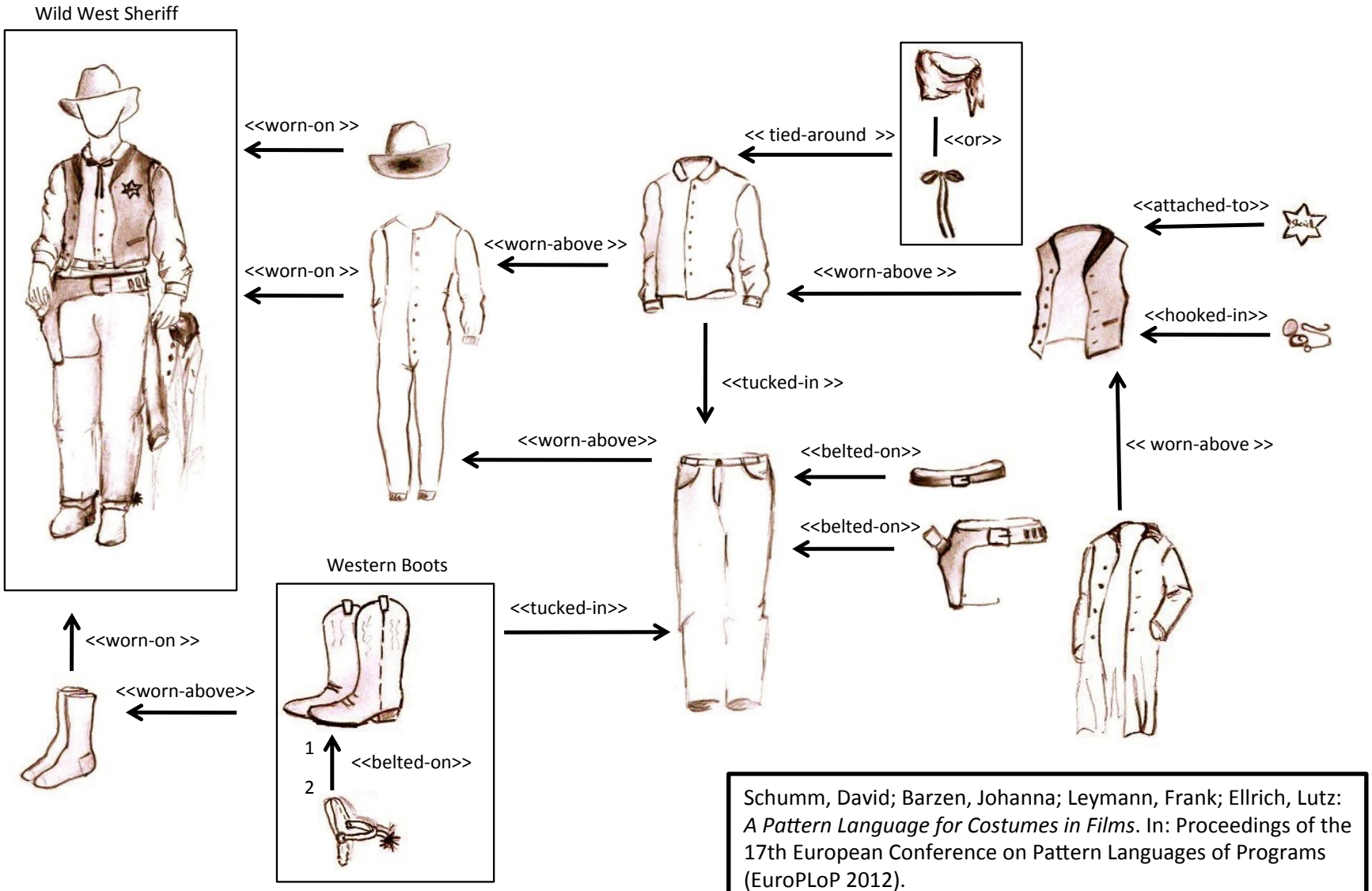
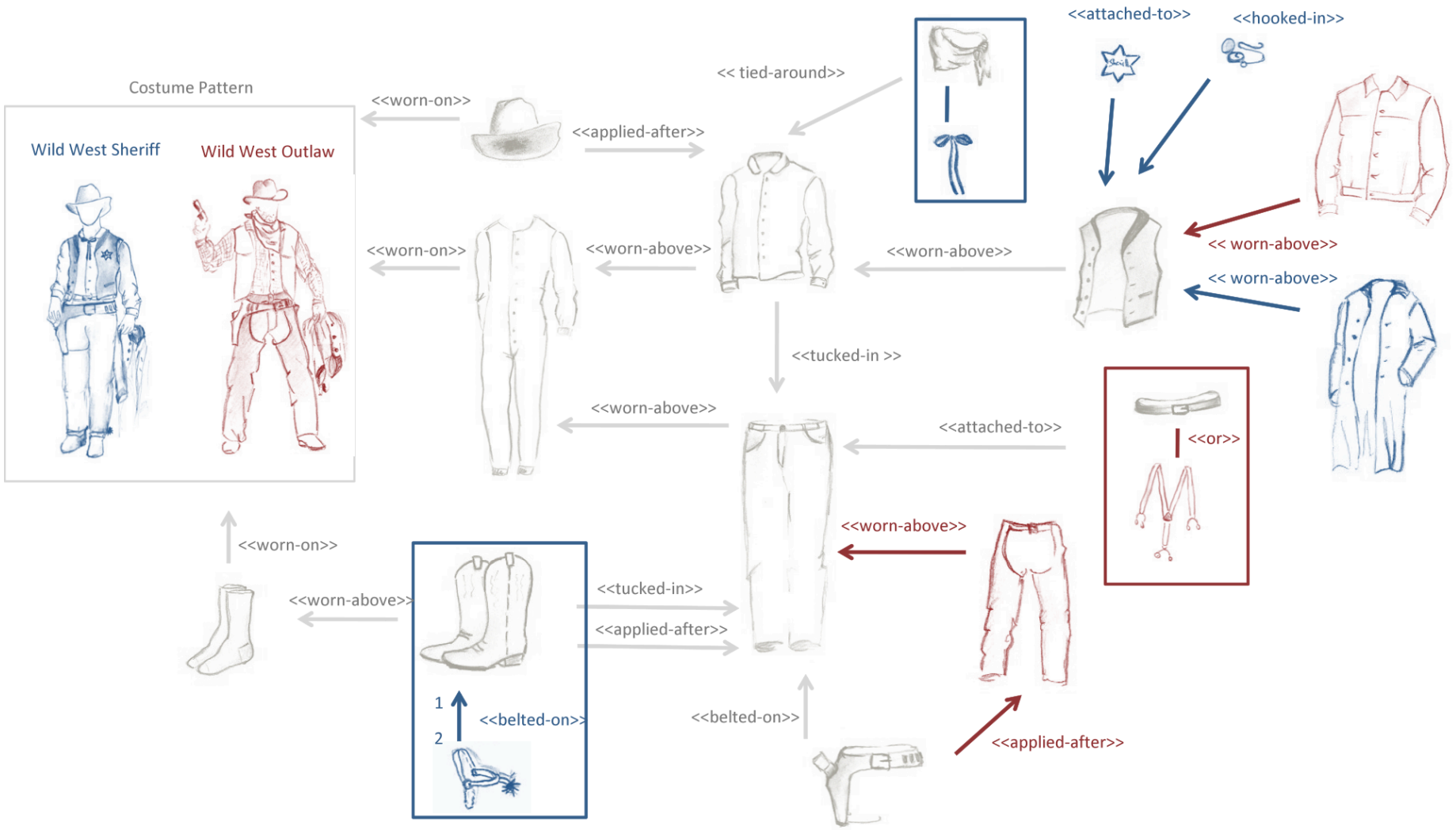
Composition graph



Schumm, David; Barzen, Johanna; Leymann, Frank; Ellrich, Lutz: *A Pattern Language for Costumes in Films*. In: Proceedings of the 17th European Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs (EuroPLoP 2012).

Comparing patterns:
the Wild West Sheriff versus the Wild West Outlaw



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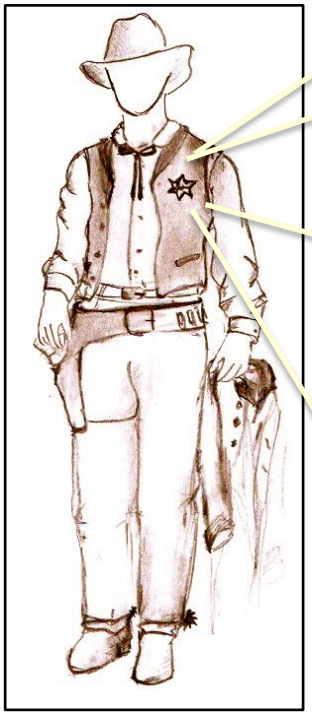
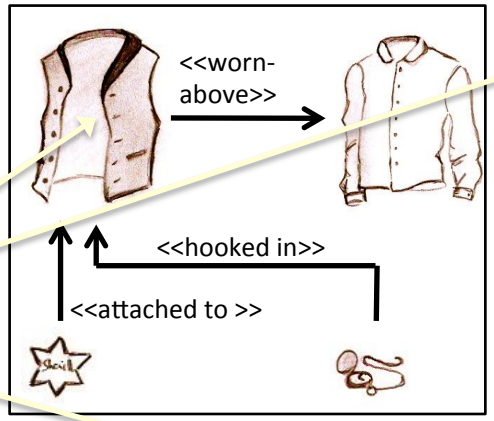
Combining the pattern concept with ontology concepts

Wild-West Sheriff

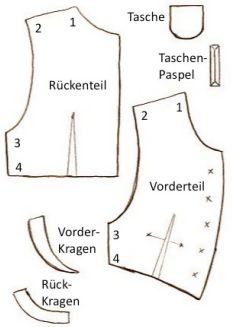


Composition graph

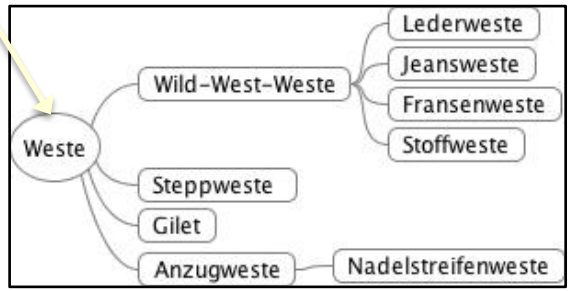


Pattern primitive

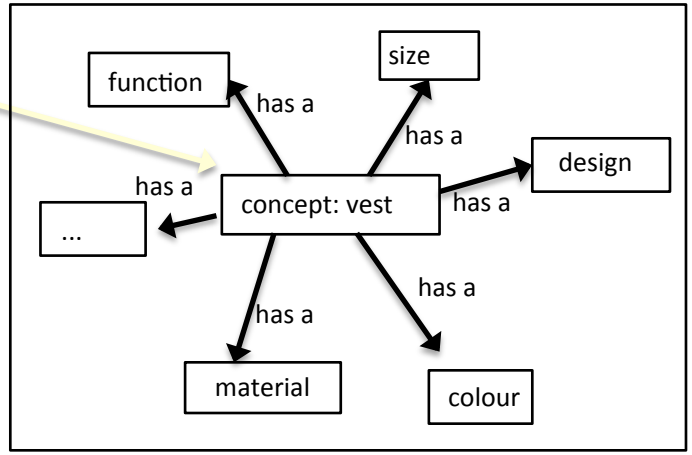
- Name...
- Icon...
- Description...
- Context...
- Preperation
- Dressing instruction



Taxonomy



Ontology



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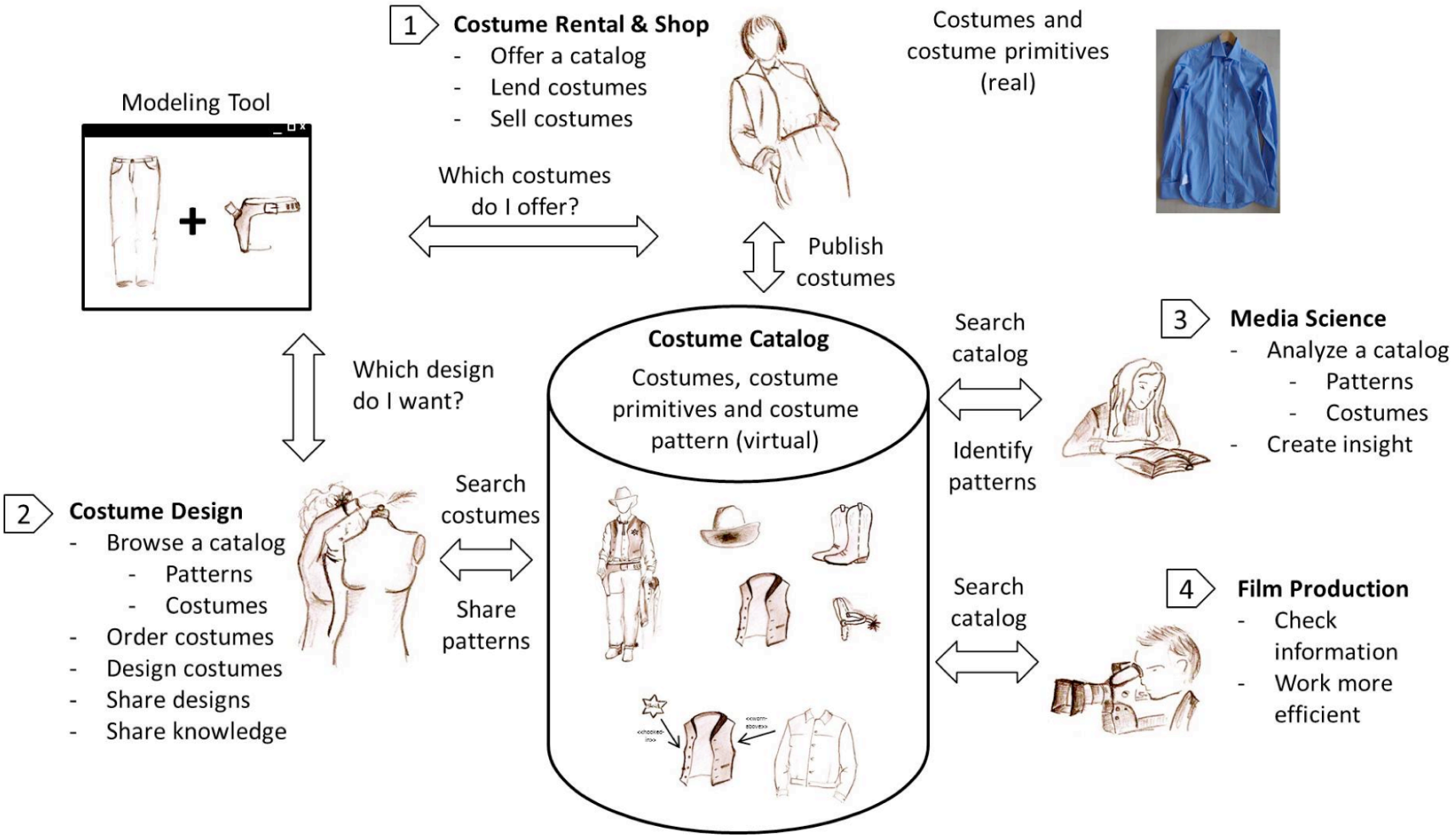
Potential application areas



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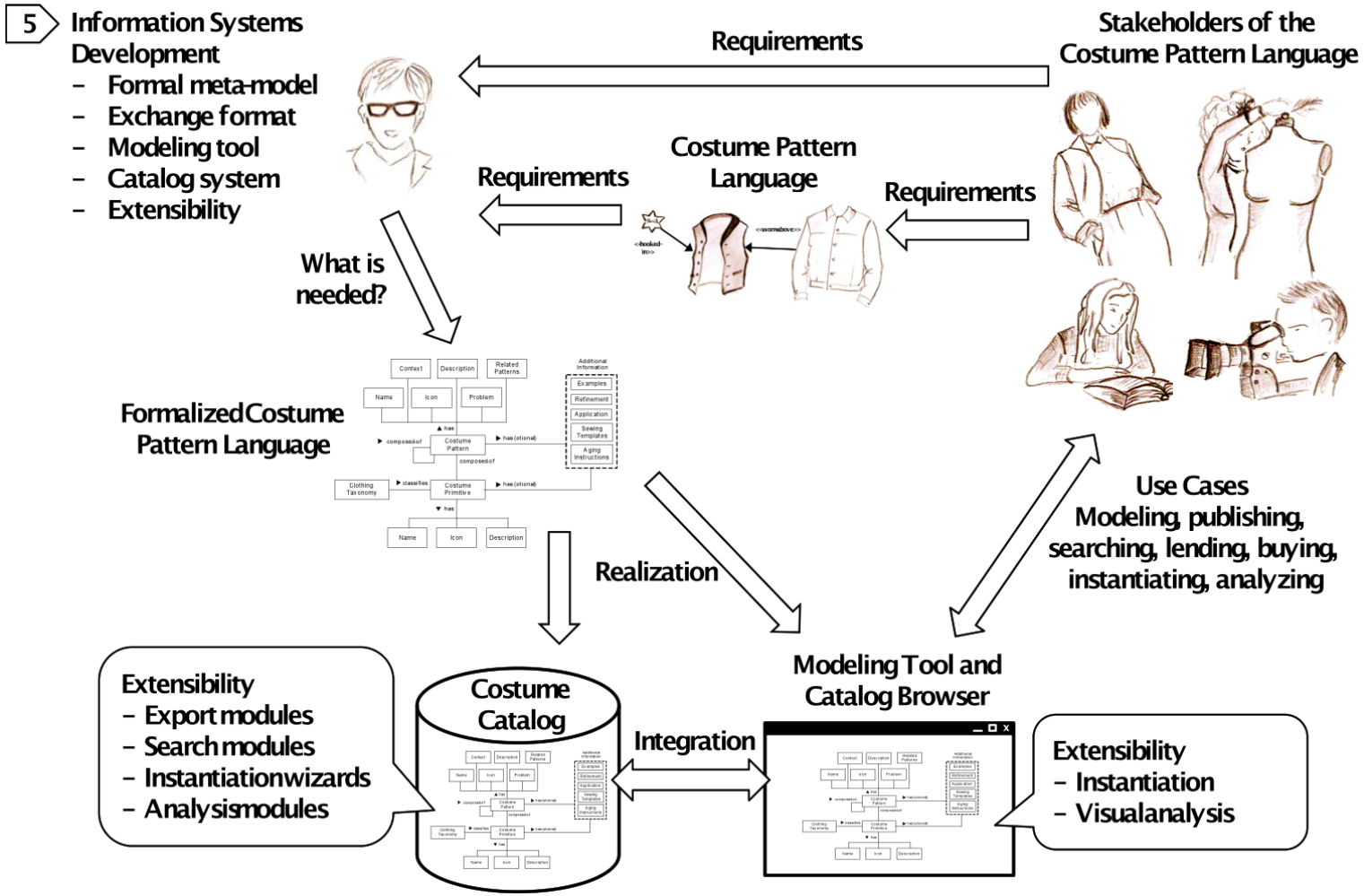
Development of information systems for costume management



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Questions being (hopefully) answered by the patterns

x,y = **(i) Stereotypes** like „ Nerd“, „Femme Fatale“, „Cowboy“
(ii) Profession like „looger“, „baker“, „binman“
(iii) character trait like „evil“, „brave“, „athletic“

- How does **x** look in a special movie?
- Which variations of **x** are found in different movies?
- How does **x** develop and change over the time/a genre?
- What differences are found between **x** and **y** (Nerd versus Cowboy)? What are their commonalities?
- How does a possible combination of **x** and **y** look like (Cowboy and Mafiaboss)?
- How is the common use of colors like green/yellow/red? Which colors do you see most? More at the main characters or the stock characters?
- Is there a link between the color and the character trait? Does this vary in the different genres? Is this connected to a special director/costume designer?
- Is there a link between the condition of a costume (wet/torn/ironed) and different character trait? Are there any conventions found using special condition of costumes to communicate special sentiments?
- Which material/design is linked with which **x**?

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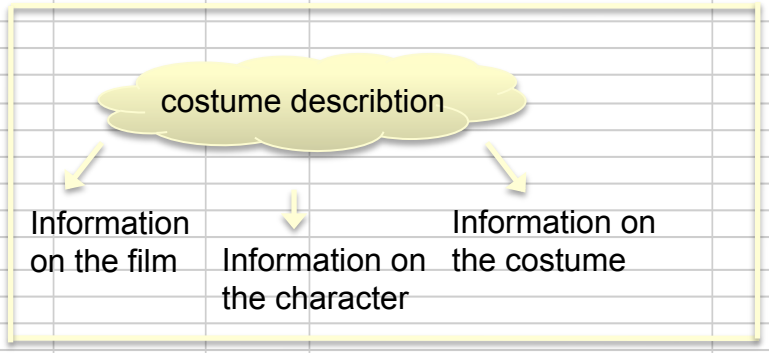
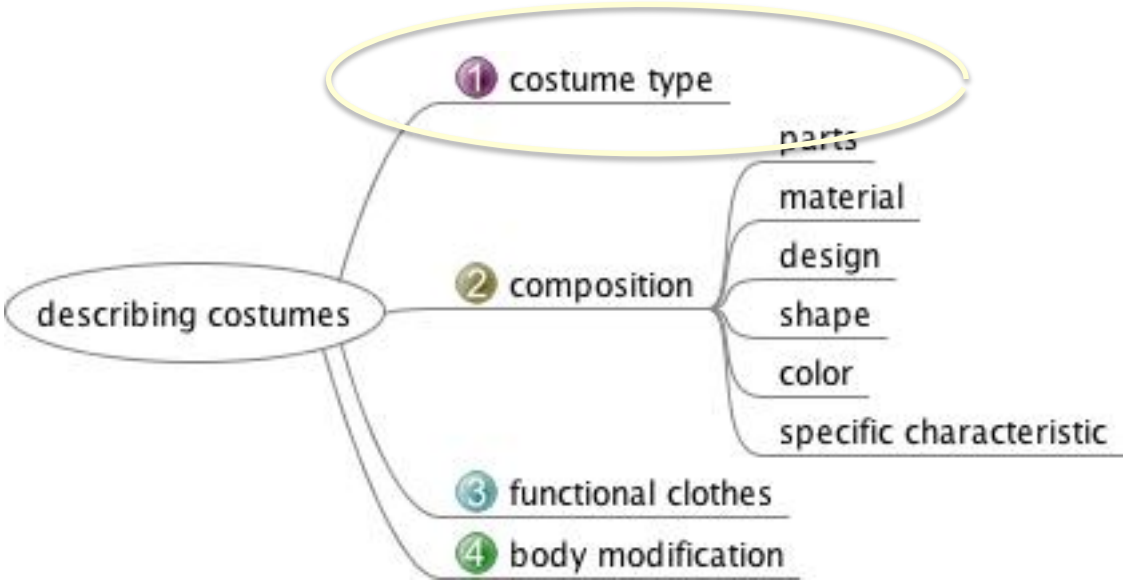
How to describe a costume?

Kostüm							
1. Film	Titel						
	Regiseur						
	Kostümbildner						
	Spielzeit						
	Drehzeit						
	Ort						
	Produktionsland						
	Genre						
	Stil (realistisch/unrealistisch)						
	Farbkonzept (schwarz/weiß, reduziert, überzeichnet, gebleicht, koloriert)						
		1. Rolle	Name	**1. Kostüm**	Szenen NR.		
			Schauspieler		Kurzbeschreibung		
			Geschlecht		Ort (Draußen/Drinnen/beides)		
			Alter		Tageszeit (Tag/Nacht/Vormittags/Mittags/Nachmittags)		
			Beruf		Dauer (TC von-bis)		
			Familienstand (ledig, verheiratet, verwitwet)		Funktionskleidung (wenn ja: siehe Taxonomie)		
			Relevanz (Hauptrolle, Nebenrolle, Statist)		Zustand (alt/neu/beides)		
			Charakter (etc. siehe Taxonomie)		Besonderheiten (siehe Taxonomie)		
			Stereotyp (keiner/welcher, Punktesystem: wie typisch?)		Körpermodifikation (siehe Taxonomie)		
					Assoziation/Charatereigenschaften (siehe Taxonomie)		
					Beschreibung	**1. Kleidungsstück**	Art der Bekleidungteile (siehe Taxonomie)
							Teilbereiche (siehe Taxonomie)
							Form/Ausmaß (Siehe Taxonomie)
							Material, Beschaffenheit (Siehe Taxonomie)
							Farbe (Siehe Taxonomie)
							Design (siehe Taxonomie)
							Fuktionskleidung (ja/nein, wenn ja: siehe Taxonomie)
							Zustand (alt/neu)
							Besonderheiten (siehe Taxonomie)
							Körpermodifikation (siehe Tabelle)
							Assoziation/Charatereigenschaften (siehe Taxonomie)
							Relevanz es einzelnen Teils (Punktesystem: wie typisch?)
						2. Kleidungsstück	s.o.
						...	
				2. Kostüm	s.o.		
				...			
		2. Rolle	s.o.				
		...					
2. Film	s.o.						
...							



Taxonomy classification



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Taxonomy of costume types

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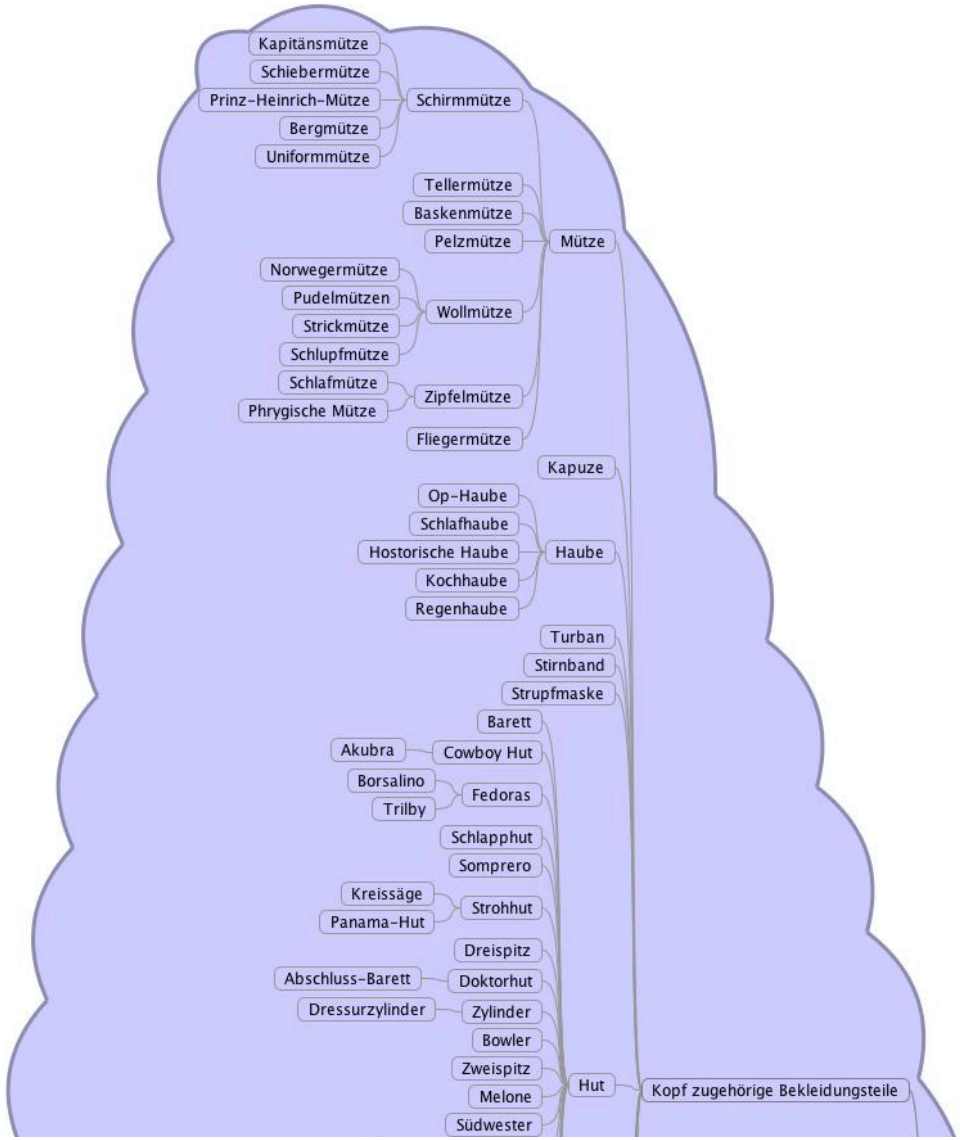
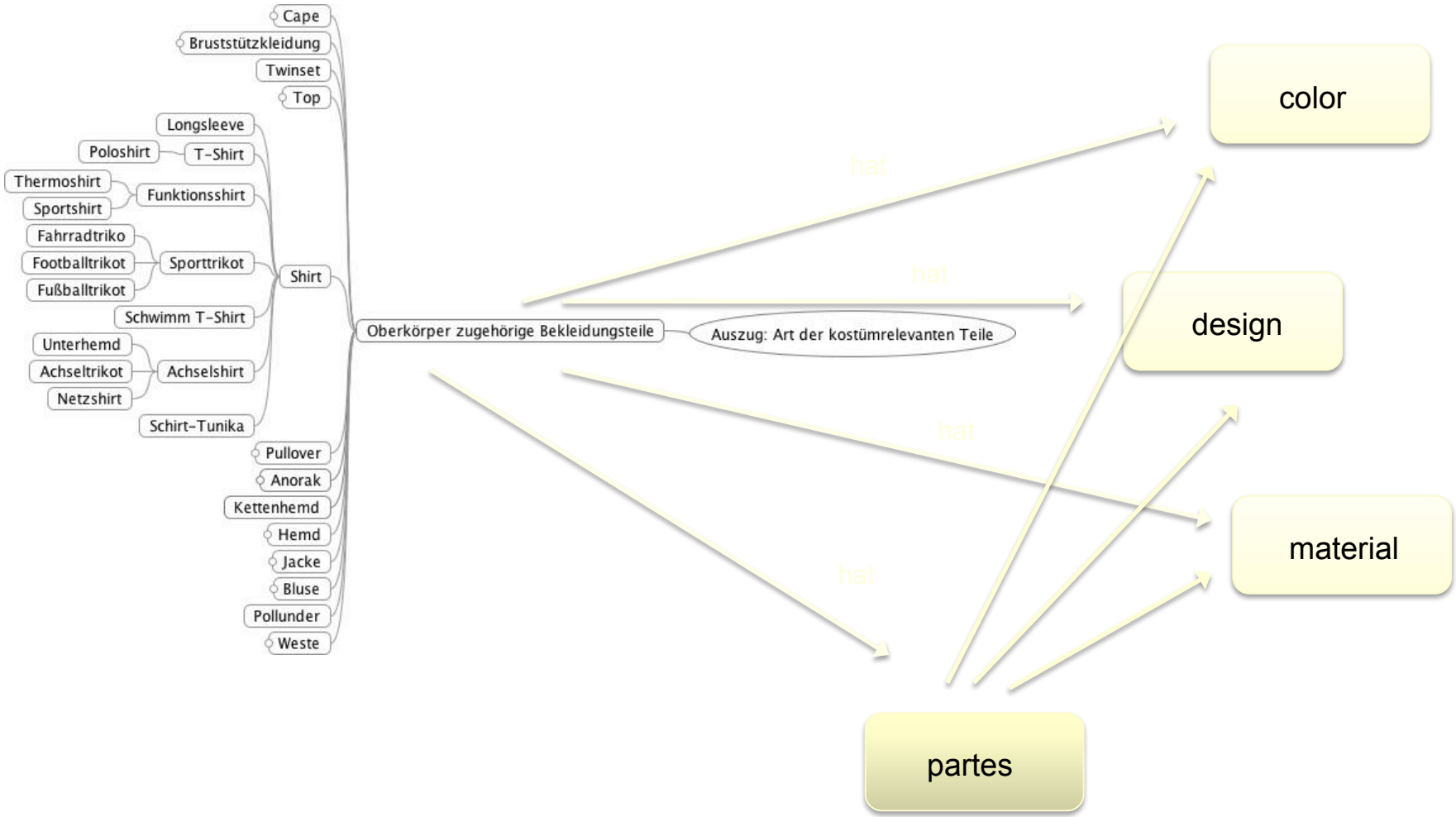
Taxonomy of costume types (3)



Approaching an ontology of clothes (4)



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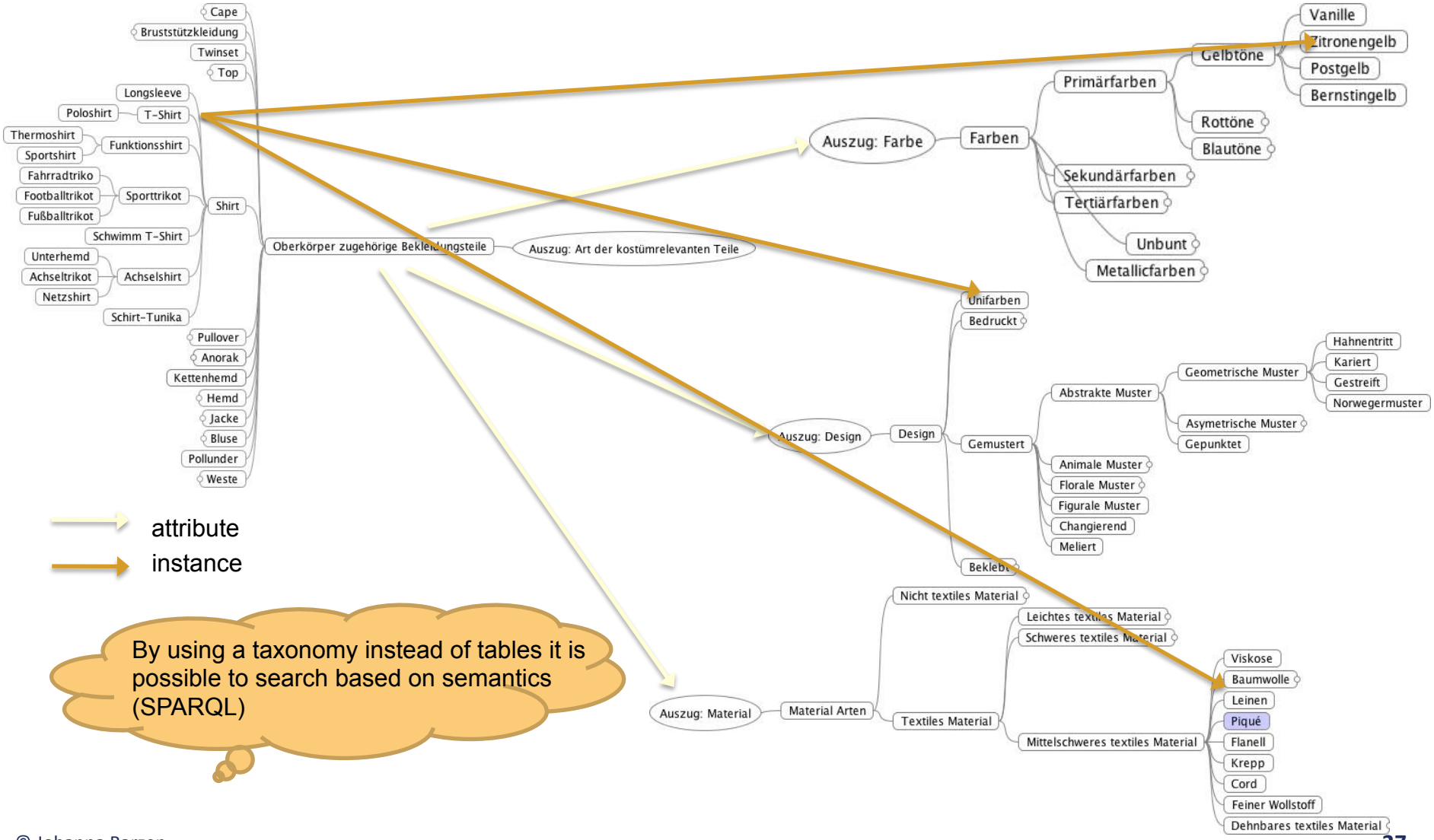
Approaching an ontology of clothes (2)



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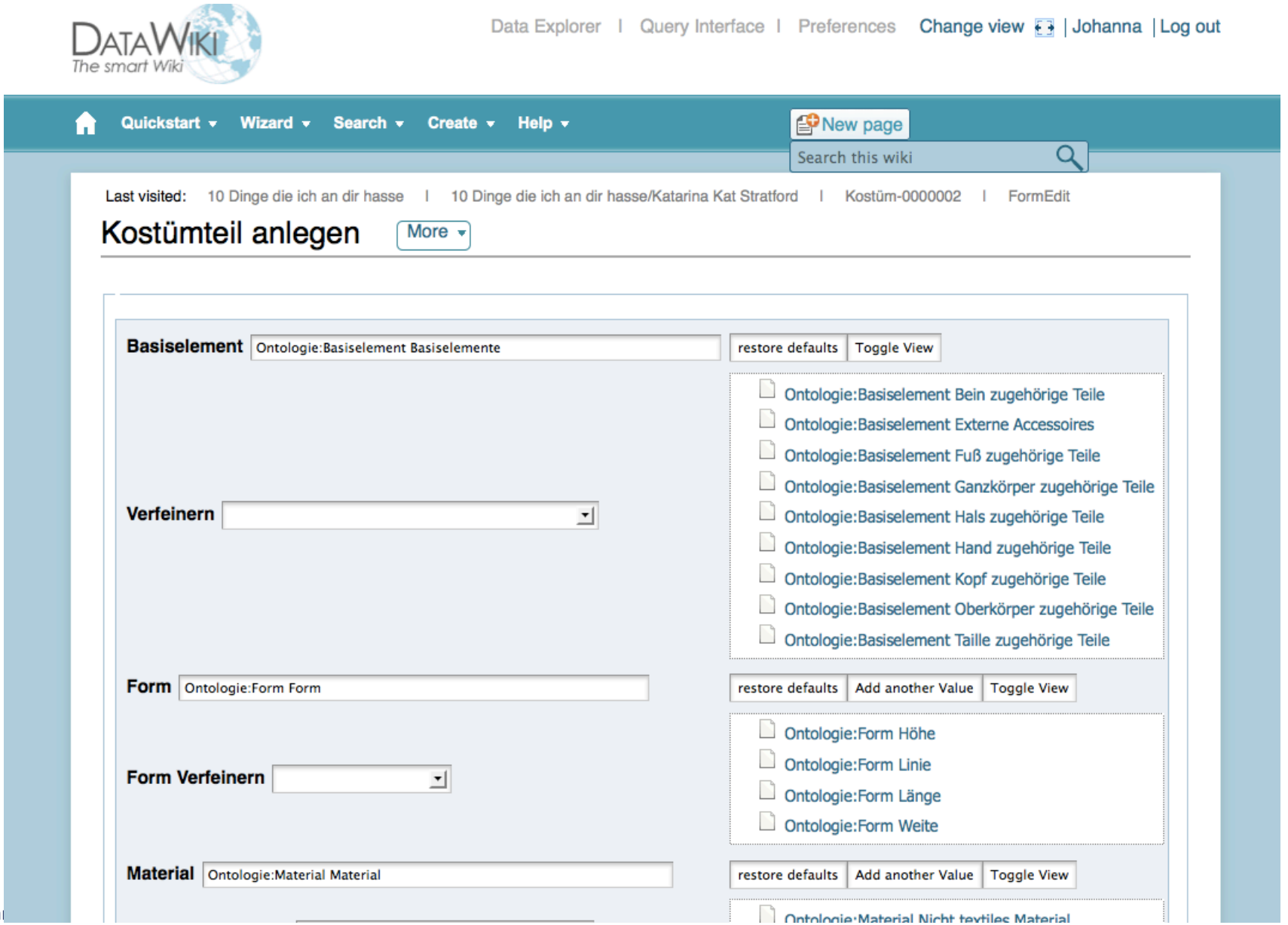
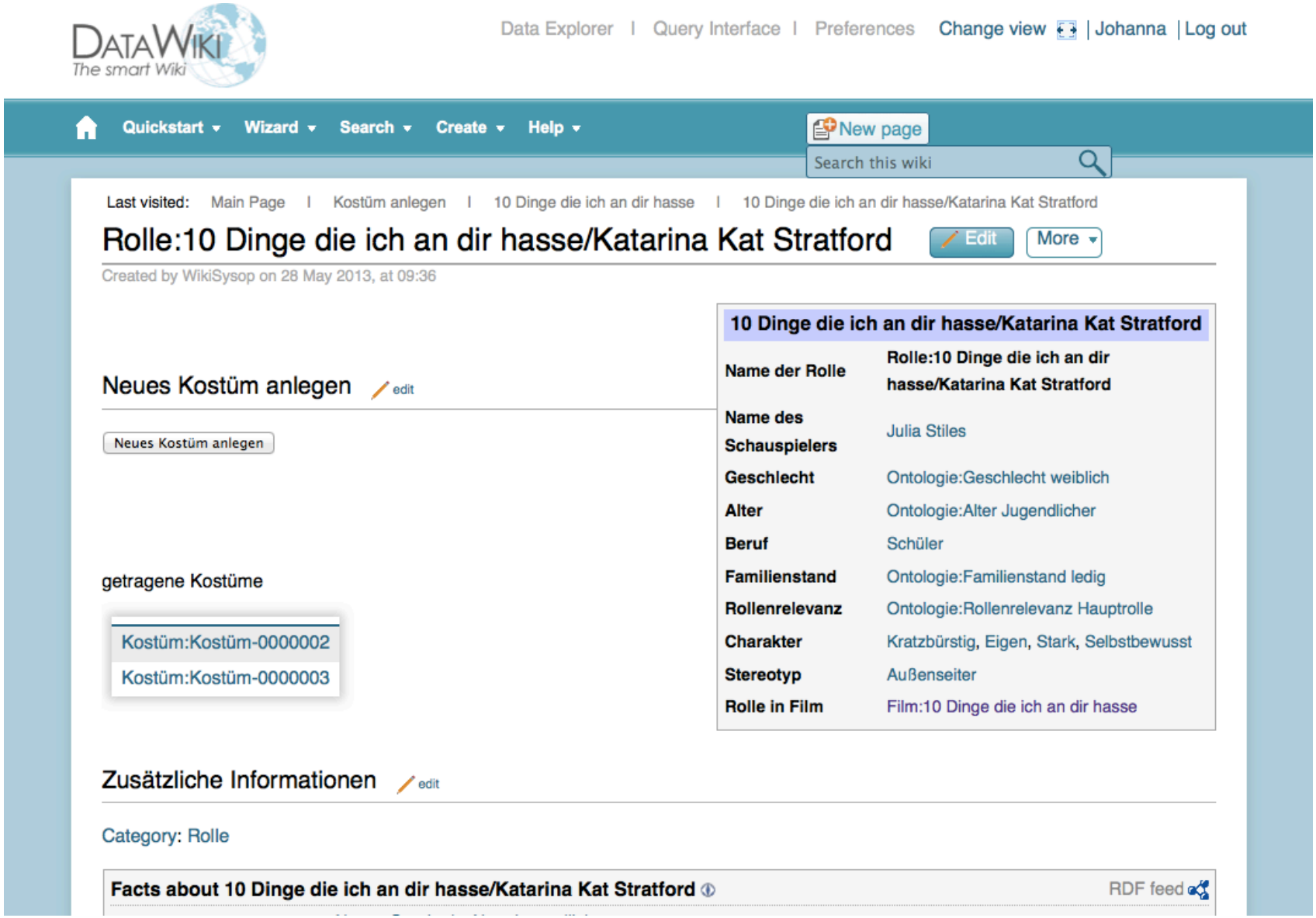
Costume Data-Wiki - Form



Costume Data-Wiki - Article



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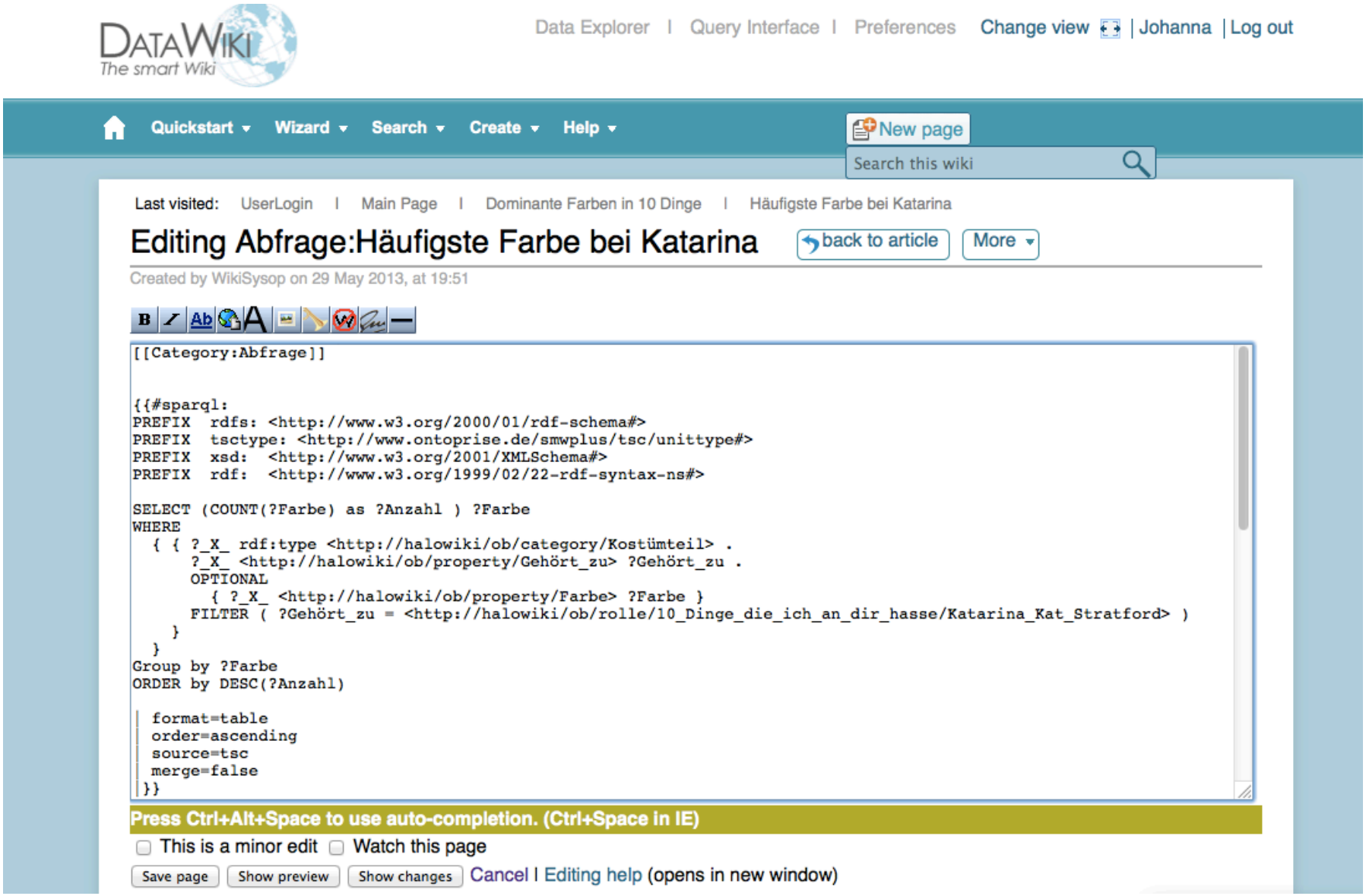
Costume Data-Wiki – SPARQL Queries



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- Methodology:
  - Opening a new application area in using IT concepts on a media science problem
  - New methodology to analyze vestimentary communication
- Content:
  - Finding a (semi) formal language for costumes
  - Finding a possibility to gain knowledge on conventions how costumes are used in the movies
- Practical work:
  - Improve investigation and design of costumes
  - Improve working with costumes on the set

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