

Kristen Stewart: The Gender Fluid Style of a Fashion Icon

Cristina Colet

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Abstract

Since the success of the *Twilight* saga (2008-2012) Kristen Stewart has become a powerful image whose status of star is permeated of many aspects that make of her also a celebrity. Her charismatic image that in few years has been associated to important fashion brands like Chanel or Balenciaga, also because of an androgynous body that condenses together female and male elements, establishes herself as a gender fluid icon. This paper aims to examine Kristen Stewart's image as an influencer and a fashion icon taking in consideration her official profiles on social network (like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter in particular), and those one created by her followers (on Tumblr and Pinterest for example), confirming her as a model for young generation, taking into account fashion pictures, her appearance during Tv programs, public events (like previews, runway shows), commercials and videoclip where her celebrity status has become predominant. In order to highlight the mechanism employed in shaping Kristen Stewart's new image, the paper is going to analyze her transformation, passing to be a dark teenager, and one of the most important sex-symbol's girlfriend, like Robert Pattinson, to a new transgressive fashion icon, appreciated for being a nonconformist and able to catalyze mass media attention. In addition to her iconic image the paper is going to highlight her as a symbol of the fluid gender process, using her celebrity status to support some social issues, like female emancipation and rights or LGBTQ cause, increasing her popularity and making of her an active celebrity.

Keywords: Fashion; Celebrity; Gender; Icon; Social media

Cristina Colet: Università degli Studi di Torino (Italia)

Corresponding Author: cristina.colet@unito.it

She is DPhil in Euroasiatic studies with a particular interest in Film Studies. She works at the University of Turin (DAMS) as Honorary Fellow in Cinema and History of Fashion Photography, she is member of CRAD (Centro ricerche attore e divismo) and works at Aiace Torino. Her fields of interest are related to actors' performance, stardom, celebrity and fashion; she is also interested in analyzing aspects related to the culture and gender identity. Her forthcoming publication for the Scientific Series: Culture, moda e società, directed by Federica Muzzarelli, is: *La Signora di Shanghai. Le icone di stile nella moda e nel cinema cinese*, Bruno Mondadori, Milano, 2018.

Introduction

A slim and androgynous body wanders through Paris like a *flâneur* of the New Millennium alternating streetwear, casual clothes and *haute couture*, showing off a “milky body” as it was defined by Roy Menarini on the website Mymovies (2016), seducing and at the same time reflecting the anxiety and bother of the metropolis, emerging as an urban icon. The “personal shopper” played by Kristen Stewart in the movie directed by Olivier Assayas (2016) is also the reflection of the concept of gender fluidity that swings between female and male gender but is neither one nor the other. Her body is not completely defined and bivalent, condensing together female and male elements in a sort of outfitting to exist in the modern society. Since the success of the *Twilight* saga (2008-2012), Kristen Stewart has become a powerful image whose star status is permeated by many aspects that also make her a celebrity. Her popularity is evident on the Internet because of her many profiles on social networks like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr where she proposes new looks and styles, like the latest lunar blonde chop cut, or powerful outfits that underline her status of influencer, determining new trends and fostering important brands to choose her as a fashion spokesmodel. For this reason, in 2014 Karl Lagerfeld chose her enigmatic charisma to represent the Chanel brand. Starting to represent Chanel for the collection “Métiers d’Art Paris-Dallas” (2014), Kristen Stewart then played Gabrielle Chanel’s role in the short biopic *Once and Forever* directed by Lagerfeld himself in 2015. In just a few years she has become the testimonial for the Chanel make-up campaign in the web series “#ChanelBeautyTalks” (2016), and for the launch of the Chanel it-bag, “Gabrielle” (2017).

Her charismatic presence that combines a sense of indolence to mass media and weightless, also because of her evanescent image, defines her like a celebrity that goes beyond her profession as an actress and that is even more related to her public presence in premieres or fashion events, producing gossip and attracting mass media, in particular after her “coming out” as a lesbian. Also her activism for LGBTQ causes and feminist declarations contributes to her image of a determined girl who well understands the mechanisms of the celebrity industry and show biz and uses them to make her followers aware of important social issues. In this sense Donald Trump (before becoming the President of the United States) also helped increase her popularity and celebrity status because of his public disapproval after her breakup with Robert Pattinson (2012), writing a series of tweets to express his displeasure. In a recent Saturday Night Live monologue she explained that Trump’s aversion for her would be increased after her coming out: “So, yeah, that’s crazy, right? The president is not a huge fan of mine. But that is *so* okay. And Donald, if you didn’t like me then you probably really aren’t going to like me now, because I’m hosting *SNL* and I’m, like, so gay, dude”. This sarcastic speech, besides underlining her sexual inclination, also gave her the chance to publicly express her aversion to Trump’s politics and to distance herself from him, like many others colleagues have done before, highlighting how she is not only a star and a celebrity but also a popular woman who freely expresses her political position.

This objective of this paper is to analyse Kristen Stewart’s image as an influencer and a fashion icon taking into consideration her profiles on social networks (like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter in particular), but also those one created by her followers (on Tumblr and Pinterest for example), confirming her status as an influencer and icon for young generations, through fashion campaigns and pictures, and also her appearances during TV programmes, public events (like premieres, fashion shows), commercials and videoclips where her celebrity status has become predominant.

In order to highlight the mechanism employed in shaping Kristen Stewart’s new image, this paper is going to analyse her transformation, passing from a dark teenager and girlfriend of an important sex symbol – Robert Pattinson – to a new transgressive fashion icon, appreciated for being a nonconformist and able to catalyse mass media attention.

Moreover the paper is going to highlight her as a symbol of the gender fluid process, and her use of being a celebrity to support social issues like female emancipation and rights and LGBTQ causes, increasing her popularity and making active use of her celebrity.

“Robsten”: being a celebrity because part of a power couple

The beginning of Kristen Stewart's popularity is strictly connected to her performance in the *Twilight Saga* (2008-2012), where she plays the teenager and outsider Bella Swan, a dark and pale girl that prefers spending hours together with vampires and wolves than her peers and who falls in love with the young vampire Edward Cullen (played by Robert Pattinson), becoming in turn one of them. During these four years of productions what made Kristen Stewart a very interesting argument for mass media was her relationship with Robert Pattinson that blossomed during the shooting. In a short period of time this new couple from modern vampire movies started to appear all around the world in trade and gossip magazines that talked about their private life, her love affair, focusing on their styles and clothes. They were often dressed in the same way, wearing black leather jackets, black clothes, comparing their images to the gothic atmosphere proposed by the “vampires saga”, or immortalised by paparazzi wearing elegant outfits during premieres or public events. In that period Kristen Stewart was not seen by mass media as an individual person but she was strictly interesting because she was with Pattinson and, in particular, because she had succeeded in seducing Robert Pattinson, one of the most influential sex symbols. With regard to her image, skimming the pages of gossip magazines it was interesting to note that her sensuality was often conceived in relation to her conquest: the impression was that her popularity was strictly connected to her being part of the duo “Pattinson-Stewart”. Just like for many other famous couples, like “Brangelina” (Brad Pitt + Angelina Jolie), “Tomkat” (Tom Cruise + Katie Holmes), or “Kimye” (Kim Kardashian + Kanye West), for example, the creation of the couple Stewart-Pattinson had sparked interest, producing rumours about their supposed love affair and private life, raising interest when they appeared together during public events. The influence and popularity of the duo “Robsten”, as they were referred to, was relevant for the success of their movies at the box office, so much so mass media started to make conjectures about their supposed relationship, wondering if it was part of the plan organised by producers and managers to promote their images (and in particular the movies of the “Twilight saga”). This process of “uni-name”, as was coined by Erin Clements for *Huffpost Celebrity* in 2012, “embodies a process of accumulation of a form of equity that exceeds the value associated with the two stars as individuals” (Pramaggiore, 2015, 78). In this sense the uni-name is more than a creation by mass media, indeed in a certain way it is encouraged by the film industry that needs to promote movies through stars and their influence on the audience, on the basis of what Dyer (2003, 5) called “structured polisemy”, the heterosexual couple that they played on the screen and in their private lives is the representation of the ideal relationship where youth, beauty and wealth are combined to make audiences dream. In this sense the heterosexual whole that Robsten represented is used by the film industry to increase the results at the box office. As it has happened in the past when stardom was the main tool to fascinate and attract an audience, even proposing a fake relationship to sell more tickets, in the case of the *Twilight Saga* it seems that Robsten certainly enhanced the final result. For viewers first watching this gothic love affair on the screen and then continuing to read about their supposed relationship in magazines it really seemed like a happy ending.

What is certain is that from 2008 to 2010, when the duo Robsten declared publicly their love affair, their participation at public events was closely followed and analysed by magazines to verify the authenticity of their relationship. It is evident that this mechanism is part of the construction of celebrity status reinforced by the idea of “portmanteau”, that as Maria Pramaggiore (2015, 78) noticed, “thoroughly endorses heterosexual hegemony” and that indeed Robsten embodies a heterosexual whole.¹

In this period Kristen Stewart was seen as the vampire's girlfriend, with high visibility in the media and on social networks, her popular image thus also becoming attractive for promoting some brands.

Fashion magazines also spotlighted Kristen Stewart as a mass fashion icon, yet always tied to her relationship with Pattinson. If as an individual in her private life she wore shabby outfits of oversized sweatshirts and warped pants or sneakers, very comfortable but not really attractive for being a star, she was more appreciated by media when as Robsten she participated in public events and premieres of the *Twilight Saga*, showing an elegant style that reveals her sensual and female image, always depicted in the context of the

¹ As Pramaggiore (2015) noted, lesbian couples aren't attributed conjoined names, this is a particular process that concerns only heterosexual couples.

power couple. Playing “Robsten’s female character” meant being the new American girlfriend, a girl that combined appeal, freshness and sensuality maintaining a kind of aversion to mass media that is part of the impertinent character of the teenager 2.0. It was not by chance that her popularity as part of Robsten led to her being chosen by Balenciaga as spokesmodel for the launch of the new fragrance, “Florabotanica” (2012).

In those years (2008-2012) Stewart was a teenager and was still shaping her identity and public image, a “green girl” that was rumoured to be on the verge of becoming Pattinson’s bride before events went in another direction.

Becoming a fashion icon. The Balenciaga campaign: defining her new look

Stewart’s choice as a spokesmodel for the Balenciaga campaign is related to her image: a young girl who symbolises freshness, representing the phase in which a girl becomes a woman. In this sense her performance in the *Twilight Saga* is useful to define her target and consumers. Taking into account the concept of the structured polysemy proposed by Richard Dyer we can affirm that Kristen Stewart’s image reflected the idea of the outsider, a pale and bashful girl who emanates a baffling allure, and this becomes particularly interesting because of the audience that she engages with. Indeed, Bella Swan is the introverted teenager, not very popular at school, who doesn’t like parties and prefers to keep to herself. Like her character, Stewart became a model for this kind of teenager, not particularly accustomed to being a socialite, who refused etiquette and avoided the media.

For the Balenciaga campaign Stewart wore a structured floral print dress from Nicolas Ghesquière’s spring/summer 2008 collection and black leather boots, bringing together transgression, wildness and freshness, representing an evolving and sensual beauty. In the image shot by Steven Meisel, Kristen Stewart showed her usual moody glare combined with the comfortable gesture of her hands hidden in her pockets, underlining her attitude of being different, typical of a teenager trying to find her way. Her natural expression and comfortable look was counterbalanced by the energetic and bold dress with a full-length zip on the front. The spicy notes of the perfume made with vetiver, amber, rose carnation and mint targeted a fresh girl who has an intense relationship with nature. The audacity here is highlighted by Stewart’s moody glance but her body doesn’t get involved, as it would for the next launch by Balenciaga to promote the new fragrance “Rosabotanica” in 2014. Stewart’s choice in this case was different from before. After her breakup with Pattinson, because of her betrayal, Kristen Stewart has become a completely new girl who has challenged show biz after some rumours about her supposed wedding with Robert Pattinson, choosing to show her sensual nature. Her second campaign by Balenciaga indeed reflects this change. Nicolas Ghesquière, the brand’s creative director, explained that they chose her because of her unique personality and her great sense of beauty. “Rosabotanica” is a perfume that combines classicism with experimentation, where her image becomes part of “a strange garden where nasty notes are combined with a dangerous flower” as Nicolas Ghesquière explained in the commercial’s “making of”.² In this new campaign Stewart appears naked and covered only with flowers made of cloth that climb up her back.³ Turned away with her face looking at the camera, Stewart reveals that she is a girl who can dare, shot with a sensual glance that combines a sense of romance with wildness. Also evident is her intention to give up the previous look of the “introverted vampire” to repurpose herself as a spicy and natural girl. The nude look is useful to define her new image, no more a gentle teenager, but a woman that can express her sensuality and “bodyness”, distancing herself from the previous model proposed by Robsten to establish herself as an individual celebrity. The minimalist *mise en place* of the shoot by the photographer Craig McDean seeks to make Stewart the viewer’s focal point. As asserted by Barthes (1970, 306) in fashion

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJLoh5JHVXk>

³ There are two versions of the snapshot, one with Stewart shot from behind and the second from the front. In both cases Stewart is nude with decorative flowers made of cloth that climb up her shoulder to symbolise “the flower Stewart” immersed in the garden of Rosabotanica.

images the world is always reproduced inside a particular and recreated scenario, a kind of theatrical decor to create an atmosphere that contributes to the production of analogies. In this case the background is removed and replaced by a white/porcelain back that highlights Stewart's milky and slim naked body, which, along with her magnetic eyes and glance, capture the viewer's attention. The analogy created here is the combination of the climbing flowers with herself, the representation of the spicy flower in Rosabotanica. Concerning the idea of the individual as a celebrity it is interesting to remember Rojek's definition: "to be a celebrity is to be recognised as different" (2001: 177). In this sense he talks about being transgressive, appearing as somebody different from ordinary social life. Indeed, after her breakup with Pattison, Stewart tried to emerge as an individual star who doesn't need to be part of Robsten to be appreciated as an icon, undertaking the process of affirming herself as an individual celebrity.

The feminist star as an individual celebrity

The use of transgression in this case is not related to a dissolute lifestyle – taking drugs or being alcoholic like many negative examples of celebrities (i.e., Amy Winehouse, Kate Moss, Lindsay Lohan) – but rather promoting her unconventional image and manners that underline her aversion to the system that produces celebrities and stars. To create her new and incisive image shaping a nonconventional body, fashion has had a great role. As asserted by Entwistle (2015, 31), "fashion is about body", and this is the key not only to promoting her as an individual celebrity but above all her lifestyle that, being a popular icon, becomes a model to be imitated by others. She started to appear in public or private occasions combining a look that condenses different comfortable styles (from punk to streetwear), with no worry about appearing sensual and good-looking, where smoky make-up and extreme haircuts play a very important role (in particular during premieres or similar events), walking hand in hand with her various girlfriends, a fact that provoked many rumours, not only about being lesbian but above all about the frequent change in partners. To counterbalance her transgression she associated herself with an important fashion brand, like Chanel, not only participating in some public events and fashion shows for this important brand of haute couture, but also becoming its most influential spokesmodel, not to mention Karl Lagerfeld's muse.

In defining her status as a celebrity, Kristen Stewart has revealed her position as a feminist activist, which contributes to strengthening her alternative and provocative looks. For this purpose she lets her nonconformist position emerge. Furthermore, with regard to the strict etiquette of the red carpet that imposes that only female stars wear heels or elegant clothes, Stewart indeed declares that this request is a kind of discrimination against women that are forced to appear sensual and glamorous, while men are not obligated to comply with this rule (*Elle*, 22 May 2017). Building on the tradition of feminist theories, Stewart revised it adapting the concept of "femininity as something unnatural for women" (Edwards, [translated by the author] 2011, 103), denouncing in many different occasions the persistence of a form of discrimination against women in show business that she sought to contrast. Like Cate Blanchett's position about female discrimination in Hollywood (*Vice I-D*, 09/11/2015), Stewart also denounces the inequality between male and female stars. Blanchett also proposed a gender fluid image, in her career swinging between female and male roles, playing the lesbian or the different face of activism (identified with no gender in particular), but Stewart goes further, using social networks to communicate her feminist and fluid gender message to young generations, using their own favourite channels to hit the mark.⁴

In the past other female colleagues have also fought for the feminist cause, for example Jane Fonda and her anti-war activism during the 1970s. Even if she was defined as an ordinary feminist (Dyer, 2003, 102) because she didn't completely support the homosexual cause, she succeeded in redefining the female image by combining sensual and a tomboy look to embrace a kind of "embodied feminism" with the aim of surpassing the patriarchal society during the crucial years of the youth revolution. Stewart's body, which represents gender fluid, applies Fonda's lesson and redefines the female star's image. Taking the sentence

⁴ As asserted by Butler (1990) gender is shapeless and characterized by a fluidity shifting and changing in different contexts, conceiving the idea of a performative identity that Stewart has embodied many times both on the screen and on social networks, identifying as a queer icon. This contributes to foster her transgressive image in particular by mass media. As a gender fluid individual Stewart has also supported the feminist struggle.

that “to be loved, a female has to be perfect” (Fonda, Huffington Post, 22/03/2016), she imposes her idea of a non-perfect woman who first has to feel comfortable, and she translates it in fashion and her style.

In fact, popular social networks like Pinterest or Tumblr offer many pictures published by her followers who see her as an easy-going icon, a model for both young men and women. Dishevelled, with no make-up, pictures of Stewart posted by fans and users represent a non-conventional star, reinforcing the concept of a gender fluid celebrity that goes beyond gender.

Stewart indeed established herself even more as a popular and social activist-star that wants to prove that a woman can be naturally beautiful only if she is at ease, her position contrasting with the etiquette of public events and premieres in particular.

Moreover, she takes advantage of her celebrity status to help the public become aware of social problems, supporting some association planned parenthood (for whom she directed a videoclip) or organisations that fight for the victims of sex trafficking (autographing her pair of shoes that was then sold for charity). Also in this case social networks are useful to divulge her message and make it viral to help young generations become aware of these problems.

Being transgressive: an androgynous muse for cinema, music and fashion

Her transgressive manners also include not being friendly with journalists, being unpleasant or answering their insistent questions regarding her private life and love affairs with evocative gestures, preferring only to talk about her profession as an actress rather than fostering gossip about her lifestyle (Kathleen, 2013, 31). Paradoxically this reserved attitude helps increase her popularity by affirming her role as a famous woman who wants to show that she is special for what she does and not only for what she represents in show business. This new aggressive and rebellious behaviour highlights her change, appearing as a girl who is not scared to freely express her thoughts and who is not afraid to alter the image that film industry and media created during the Twilight Saga.

Further proof of her insolence, on the Internet there are many memes where she is showing a middle finger to someone (journalists or harassing followers) or while she is saying “fuck you” to somebody, becoming a viral refrain on social networks that strengthens her image as a moody celebrity. This mix of audacity and intransigent behaviour is incisive for becoming an icon also for music, thinking for example of the Rolling Stones who chose her as the star of their video *Ride'Em on Down* (2016). Here she was filmed driving a fearless Mustang, speeding through the streets of Los Angeles, licking a blue lollipop that makes her tongue turn the same colour, (recalling the provocative opened and sexy mouth, symbol of the rock band). She goes wild in an improvised sensual dance at the gas station where her nude breast emerged from her short top, and putting an undercover cop in his place when he bothers her. Here Stewart is a symbol of independence and freedom, a girl who is not worried about authorities and who follows her natural instinct symbolised by the zebra that crosses the street in front of her. Like in the Rolling Stones video, Stewart adopts a very minimal look that evidences her natural beauty but in the meantime highlights a body that combines both female and male elements that make her a symbol of “gender fluid”, defined by the artist Mim Weisburd as “to identify not as a man or a woman, or both, and rejecting the concept of the existence of the two genders” (Momigliano, 14 August 2011).

She tries to promote it through her androgynous look that evokes a sexual fluidity and by smashing prejudices that exist also in show business (*Elle Uk*, 13 March 2017). Her thin and pale chest conveys a beauty that doesn't need any artifice to be admired but that is sensual because of her androgynous appearance, which becomes more intense when it is supported by her declaration about gender and sexual orientation that she has expressed in many interviews and on social networks like Twitter. White T-shirts or white socks that she commonly wears with sneakers are the principal outfits with which she is portrayed on the “walls” of social networks, in particular those created by followers on Pinterest and Tumblr, highlighting

her androgynous and comfortable look that is often inspired by trends of the past, revising them and producing new meaning and trends. This is the case of the white socks, very popular in the fashion model background during the 1980s and immortalised by fashion photos, which she wears in a revised way putting together casual outfits where a men's style prevails. Other men's outfits that she wears include brown leather flight jackets, Nordic or navy athletic sweaters, slim jeans, defining her tomboy and androgynous style to the point of becoming a fashion icon and model for *GQ*, a famous magazine for men, where her image was not proposed with a scopophilic aim but rather to present and analyse her different outfits in a way that promotes a new trendy and elegant style for men (Berlinger, 20 May 2016). Or the lunar blonde buzz inspired by the punk and lesbian subculture as a style element and a symbol of feminism – part of the so-called “feminist equipment of the 1970s” [Edwards, 2011, 104] – that she unveiled in the spring of 2017 at the premiere of her last movie *Personal Shopper* in Los Angeles (De Biasi, 9 March 2017), and then also re-proposed at the premiere of her own movie presented at Cannes, combined with a cropped black top by A.L.C and black high-waisted trousers by Sally La Pointe to create new attention on her person, evidencing an aggressive and strong personality able to define new styles, not only as an icon and an influencer.

Being a social celebrity: her role as an influencer on social Networks

Ms Stewart's profiles on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are very useful for strengthening her status of celebrity and fashion icon. Indeed, on social networks by combining trendy looks that denote her emancipation and ability to dare with some sentences that underline her resolute nature she defines her image of nonconformist celebrity and influencer. When she talks about her homosexuality through tweets – for example, one published on 15 February 2017, “I am gay, so what?”, or the next one on 27 June 2017, “no matter if boy-girl, boy-boy or girl-girl. RESPECT” (Twitter, #teamkristen) – these statements and her unisex style become particularly relevant in highlighting Stewart's position about total freedom with regard to sexual experience, and leisure with regard to lifestyle that she reflects in her everyday look distinguished by androgynous and easygoing outfits as demonstrated by the many pictures posted on Twitter and Instagram. In fact, one could say that her nonconformist and gender fluid lifestyle is also reflected in her closet. As asserted by Calefato (1999, 36): “The periodic infatuation with the disguise of sexual roles through fashion has found some confirmation in the behaviour related to how clothes are worn, and this confirmation is summarised in what is universally recognised as unisex”. Looking at images posted in the various accounts of Instagram, Twitter and many others created by followers on Tumblr and Pinterest, Stewart's look is always shaped by an androgynous foundation, a style that can be imitated and assimilated by young generations (both boys and girls) becoming a mass fashion icon (Muzzarelli, 2013, 4), a model that represents an easygoing way of life where the gender fluid and unisex culture become her emblem. “Casual” brands like Vans, Adidas, Converse combined with unbranded T-shirts or sweatshirts are proposed in a virtual gallery that seems to create a kind of fashion show where each time Stewart exhibits her unisex style in a very appealing way, where her gender fluid body is highlighted by fashion and transformed into a “dressed body”, seems to reproduce a map of social and gender tendency and trends. As asserted by Calefato (2007, 13), “When we talk about fashion, we talk also about the body and in particular about the one that fashion dresses. ‘The dressed body’ is a subject ‘in process’ that is created through its visible look, its being in the world, its style of appearances. In this sense, the body is conceived in relation to the performance that means a construction always oriented to the material identity, as social dimension of subjectivity”. We can indeed affirm that Stewart's dressed body promotes on social networks the idea of fluid gender in a virtual and idealised world where the expression of sexual orientation is boundless. The dressed body indeed becomes a kind of map for living the gender fluid lifestyle through trends and fashion.⁵ As an influencer Stewart imposes her personal style, revising genders and going beyond them, as testified by many tributes posted by followers where her easygoing style is predominant. It was on the Internet that her passage from power

⁵ In a article published in the magazine *Panorama*, Barbara Massano defines her as “...the best demonstration of the gender fluid, an example of a star that rejects this status, free from the classical dogmas of the Hollywood star system. A good example of female emancipation for everybody” (Massano, 9 March 2017).

couple to an individual celebrity was noticed. In particular, her coming out contributes to strengthening her feminist and independent image that social networks have demonstrated to be her way of maintaining distance from the show biz system and celebrity manipulation. In just a few years the image of Stewart as an introverted girl has been transformed on social networks, becoming a determined woman who is not afraid to express herself and risk compromising her career. In fact, recently her profiles (supervised by her staff or followers) on the Internet have expanded, proof of her followers' approval.

We can consider the celebrity Stewart as a text where the mix between her controversial look and declarations promoted by mass media and social networks and supported by her fashion pictures have the pivotal role of endorsing her popularity. As Turner asserted, a celebrity is someone who tries to appear in a different way than common people do, and in this case her way of breaking the mould and proposing her behaviour that is moody and always above the line is to "try to differentiate her own personality from her competitors in the public arena" (Turner, 2014, 6). Even if Stewart rejects popularity and what it is produced by it (like gossip) she tries to stand out from ordinary people like a different object of desire that uses the effect of her "well-knownness" (Boorstin, 1971, 58), that mass media and film industry contribute to produce and promote, leveraging her famous name to support some social campaign or cause (the most incisive and persuasive being LGBTQ causes that have become her main battle after her coming out). In this way she creates a text that is more elevated than mere celebrity, where the combination of an aggressive look with nonconformist thoughts contribute to portray her not only as a fetishised object to admire but also as a model to emulate because of her dedication to important causes. While in the beginning her popularity was strictly related to her profession as an actress and some pivotal roles that she played, later her status of celebrity began to be linked to her non-conformist look and rebellious attitude, something that doesn't depend on the mechanisms of the film industry but rather on the viral processes connected with social networks and mass media. It is therefore possible to say that Stewart's status stands between that of a celebrity and a star. As remembered by P. David Marshall (1997, 4), "[t]he term celebrity has come to embody the ambiguity of the public forms of subjectivity under capitalism", while a "star is the usual identification of some persona that has transcended the films that he or she has performed in and created an aura" (Marshall, 1997, 12). In both cases fashion is the recurring element that with gossip contribute to creating attention. Both the celebrity and the star are subjected to the process of massification of the identity and the creation of a mask "created by show business and the powerful means for realising the imaginary, like cinema and photography" (Muzzarelli, translated by the author, 2010, p. 109). In this sense Stewart condenses the logic of consumerism that produces celebrities, highlighted by her virtual fashion shows on social networks where she presents alternative styles and behaviours, allowing the subjectivism of the celebrity to emerge and promoting "wannabe fashion", where fashion is the keystone that persuades people to desire both the wares and to imitate the celebrity (Edwards, 2011, 222), to the star's aura recently increased by some changes that she provides about her career.

While before Stewart's popularity was related to her roles in the *Twilight Saga*, associating her name with many commercial movies, later she decided to being involved in some sophisticated projects, being directed by important figures like Woody Allen or Olivier Assayas, that helped change her image and in some cases transformed her into a muse (like for Olivier Assayas and the recent success in *Personal Shopper*), wearing an androgynous and reticent mask, her stylistic hallmark.

The fetishised body: fashion photography to create a fashion icon

To convey the star's aura social networks and the Internet are crucial, allowing the start to become an influencer. Being an influencer in the New Millennium means utilising the virtual channels that the Internet creates and develops, reaching younger generations through their favourite channel of communication. Offering her image on social networks in different settings, poses and proposing different looks is the new way to impose the body as a fetishized object and fashion product through pictures, one of the most useful tools for this purpose. As Benjamin (1986, 124) asserted, fashion is the celebration of fetishism that transforms the body, in particular the female body, dividing it in different parts, each one of which considerable as a kind of object of desire that in the case of the celebrity is overexposed by fashion photography, mass

media and, as noted before, by social networks. In this sense the Internet is useful for virally disseminating these fetishised parts of the body that fashion photography dissects and manipulates, recombining them in a sort of mashup where the result is a new and appealing creature. This process of objectivisation of one or more parts of the human body, in particular the female body, contributes to making an image of the celebrity to be admired and desired, and as asserted by Gamman and Makinen (1994, 61) it contributes to establishing a fetish relation between women and fashion that becomes the object of sexual attachment (Lunning, 2013, 15). In this sense the photographic shoot by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel's campaign "Paris in Rome" *Metier d'Arts* (2015/2016) is particularly relevant, combining both the idea of fetishised and dressed body where fashion is the main vehicle for emphasising it. Covered by a black outfit consisting in a transparent black blouse, black lace, black leather tight skirt, black fishnet stocking and high heels, Stewart's body is plumbed by the lens of the device that brings out her female corporeity intensified by the black colour of the outfit, "...this colour not colour acquires the task of marking the body with leather bands, crochets, textiles where the preferred are satin, velvet and silk. The black colour 'dresses' the body sculpting the skin" (Calefato, 1999, 104). The combination of her milky body with the "non-colour" black is a way to redefine her profile and gender, confirming her as a celebrity with a sensuality that can swing through genders, highlighting their passage in the new definition of gender fluid. In this sense photography is useful for shaping her identity – "To photograph a body...means to attest to an identity" (Muzzarelli, 2007, 9). – letting her transgressive and provocative nature emerge. While on social networks Stewart appears as a tomboy, hostile to etiquette and reluctant to appear as a sexy woman, in fashion photo shoots her incisive look is captured, capable of transforming her into a domesticated traditional fashion icon representing transgression, shifting her image from androgynous to that of a sexy woman where fetish objects contribute to redefine her. Even if Stewart is not completely suitable for this role, Karl Lagerfeld emphasises his muse's appeal by using black and white photography, positioning mirrors to highlight some details of her body, in the same picture proposing a kind of mashup and fragmentation of the body that help fetishise her iconic depiction and permeate her allure. The contrast between the white walls of the bathroom and the white of the tub with her black silhouette makes her image stand out, marking her and iconising her. As noted by Marra (2004, 26), "The photographed fashion becomes icon, becomes image, it tends to be assimilated to what is considered the artistic object, the painting" and in this case in particular, thanks to Lagerfeld's touch, her image is distinguished by the aim of producing gauzy pictures reminiscent of a 1960s style, conferring the idea of a timeless image: "Photographed fashion is a stabilised fashion that becomes an object to be published in magazines, catalogues, books, then as a successful completion of this new condition of a potentially timeless existence to be exhibited in a gallery or in a museum" (Marra, 2004, 26). Here "the museum dimension" is underlined by her status of muse that Lagerfeld highlights by drawing inspiration from an atmosphere of the past and transforming her into an attraction, amplified by the mass media that have dedicated many articles from 2014 up to now about Stewart portrayed as Lagerfeld's muse. Even if she is not known for having a shapely body her seduction is conveyed through some details of her leg covered by black lace that the mirror reframes and portrays.

A double fashion icon: becoming Chanel to celebrate fashion and stardom

The fact of becoming Karl Lagerfeld's muse underlines Stewart's connection with fashion and contributes to becoming a fashion icon. Even if her non-conformist image is often associated with the bad girl, Lagerfeld has found in her face and body the expression of a woman that represents "a rebellious spirit" and for this reason is particularly suited to playing the young Gabrielle Chanel in his short biopic about her, *Once and Forever*.

As asserted by Muzzarelli (2009, 91) the association a celebrity's body and face with a brand is a way to set new trends and styles, in particular, "stars give something more to fashion photography that top models can't give: the memory that the audience has about them thanks to the silver screen or TV". In this sense celebrating Gabrielle Chanel with a performance where Stewart plays this important fashion icon, "the symbol and creator in fashion of female emancipation" as she was defined by Calefato (1999, 45) means to

come full circle. This short biopic is organised like some snapshots portraying crucial moments in Chanel's life assembled in the making of the commercial where Stewart is shown like a current star. The short movie brings together the younger and the older Gabrielle Chanel respectively played by Kristen Stewart and Geraldine Chaplin. Paradoxically the non-famous Gabrielle Chanel is played by Stewart who shows off her status of star and celebrity, counterbalanced by the more famous and older Chanel played by Ms Chaplin whose performance is characterised by a sober attitude. The result is a kind of specular performance where the young Chanel is supported by Stewart's popularity and the already famous and older Chanel is lightened by Miss Chaplin's performance. What is evident is that Karl Lagerfeld takes advantage of Stewart's celebrity status to celebrate the icon Gabrielle Chanel. Inspired by her rebellious nature he portrays a capricious Stewart who is the real star in the commercial, who rejects pictures, who makes fun of the director who imposes upon her an actor that she doesn't approve of. Stewart has the occasion to repurpose the idea of a star that like herself refuses the rules of show biz and detests the spotlight or being chased by mass media. The fashion icon acquires a double meaning, the past and present condense together and are personified by the celebrity Stewart who plays Gabrielle Chanel, who is not dominated by the system but rather imposes her own rules and etiquette, adhering to the rebellious spirit that has characterised both.

While at the beginning of her career Kristen Stewart presented herself through media and the film industry as the new American vampire-girlfriend as part of Robsten, today her image has significantly changed. With the aid of social networks and fashion she has succeeded in presenting herself as an individual celebrity, an icon of the gender fluid style using her public image to raise her followers' awareness of social problems and causes. The increasing numbers of followers on Instagram and Twitter that imitate her androgynous look make her a fashion Influencer, a model for both men and women who are free to express themselves by rejecting conventions and rules, consecrating Stewart as a gender fluid icon and influencer.

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