2.

**Celebrity**

Pamela Church Gibson

“Latching onto a star in celebrity culture is to voluntarily submit to a kind of modern serfdom…. the serfdom in question is the bondage to celebrity culture”[[1]](#endnote-1)

The new cultural landscape

Although it is a truism, if not a complete cliché, that the Internet and the immense, extraordinary power of social media have, between them, altered the world almost beyond recognition, there is nevertheless no consensus that these radical changes have altered things for the better. Among other things, they have in fact facilitated and now shore up the new, all- pervasive power of contemporary celebrity culture, which has radically changed “fashion” and has arguably divided it**s** historyin two.[[2]](#endnote-2) At the same time, it has reconfigured traditional patterns of stardom in the film industry[[3]](#endnote-3) and altered many aspects of the “art world”.[[4]](#endnote-4)

“Celebrities” are a centuries-old phenomenon, as Braudy has convincingly argued.[[5]](#endnote-5) However, in the past, public interest was invariably related either to the political power or social status the celebrities possessed, or to their demonstrable and recognised talent. Until recently, a focus on their physical attributes and their private lives was secondary to what Rojek has called their “ascription” or their “achievement”. He identifies three types of celebrity; the first category is that “ascribed”or created by birth and his second, that “achieved” through unusual talent. But today there is a predominance of celebrities in Rojek’s third and final category, that of “attributed” celebrity, which describes those who become famous by attracting media attention in some way, and indeed are colloquially described as “famous for being famous”.[[6]](#endnote-6) The work of other media theorists and cultural historians, of course, provides a backdrop to this same phenomenon.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The new mediascape has also created our so-called “post-truth” era, in which “alternative facts” can now be publicly cited and a reality television star, on becoming the most powerful politician in the western world, can choose not to communicate through conventional means but through Twitter “feeds” and widely advertised public appearances. Ironically, in the past some cultural theorists firmly believed not only that drastic changes to the traditional media were necessary, but that these would, when implemented, radically improve our quality of life. The most notable example is, perhaps, Hans Magnus Enzen**s**berger’s essay *Constituents of a Theory of the* *Media*. This often-quoted and highly optimistic text, published at the close of the 1960s[[8]](#endnote-8) was a conscious updating of Walter Benjamin’s famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.*[[9]](#endnote-9) Half a century ago, in that period of great political and cultural upheaval when there was still a sense that scientific, political and culturalprogress were inevitable and interlinked, Enzensberger carefully set out his egalitarian ideals. He was firmly convinced that, very soon, we would be able to create and to use our own media, so replacing our dependence on a mediascape rigidly controlled by those with political and social power. The participatory model that he proposed was part of an overall socialist strategy to develop the potentialities of communication media. He advocated collective production and general participation, and interestingly in a pre-digital era, effectively predicted what Henry Jenkins would later christen “convergence culture”.[[10]](#endnote-10)

 Arguing that contemporary capitalism depends completely on the exploitation of unreal and ‘false’ needs, he suggested that a truly socialist movement ought not simply to denounce these needs but rather to take them seriously, investigate them carefully and then make them politically productive.[[11]](#endnote-11) Using Lefebvre’s concept of mass consumption as “spectacle, exhibition and show”[[12]](#endnote-12) he developed this further into his own notion of “a totality, a permanent theatre” in which “the fetishistic nature of the commodities triumphs completely over their use value”.[[13]](#endnote-13) This, he argued, was actually based on a real and undeniable “mass need”, a need with “physiological roots”, which could “no longer be suppressed”. It was not necessarily one restricted by the “internalised rules of the game as played by the capitalist system”.[[14]](#endnote-14) He concluded with his belief that “consumption as spectacle is—in parody form—the anticipation of a Utopian situation”.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Sadly, the new media landscape of the second millennium is simply a nightmarish parody, even an inversion of, his Utopian dream. We are still enslaved by ‘false needs’, albeit now presented to us in a profoundly different way; global capitalism is more entrenched and all-powerful than ever. And while Enzensberger lamented the fact that fashion design was a “largely unexplored” sector of industry’,[[16]](#endnote-16) it is now of course part of a massive world-wide phenomenon employing millions; however, they work within fashion production rather than fashion design, and very often so under appalling conditions for derisory wages.[[17]](#endnote-17) Interestingly, with a very few exceptions, the academic discipline of fashion theory has not given its attention nor analyses over to the exploration of fashion production, with a minute number of exceptions.[[18]](#endnote-18) How many on the left, liberals and *bien-pensants*, so many feminists, are now deeply compromised in this respect? We should be talking and writing here from a point of complicity**.**

The new media have assisted in, if not created, the proliferation of a celebrity culture based in the main on physical attributes, at a time when there is an ever-growing, seemingly insatiable interest in fashion. This has led, inevitably, to the careful, highly profitable mining of the new “celebrification” by the fashion industry in general and by the luxury brands in particular. It is this particular combination of factors that is conceivably responsible for any announcements of the “end of fashion”. For although “fashion” itself is undeniably flourishing under these new conditions, it is the “*fashion system*” as we understood it which has, if not ended, then undergone radical reconfigurations in order to survive, to function and arguably to triumph under these changed conditions. It is not that the traditional system with its patterns of creating, communicating and disseminating changes has broken down; it continues to operate. The combination of “high-fashion” trickle-down[[19]](#endnote-19) and street-style “bubble-up”[[20]](#endnote-20) is working as before; however, as this article will show, it now has a rival “celebrity”-based system working busily alongside it. And possibly this rival system is now as powerful as its predecessor—perhaps more so.

For the new competing system combines the endless possibilities of the digital era with the extraordinary commercial potency of our celebrity-dominated culture. Agins[[21]](#endnote-21) and Edelkoort[[22]](#endnote-22), who both announced “the end of fashion”, were writing from a marketing perspective and so did not seek to locate their insights within a wider social and cultural context. The rival system now spans the entire spectrum of industry activities, from the marketing of luxury brands to the creation of cheap clothes mimicking celebrity choices.

The divided system

Thirty-three years ago, Elizabeth Wilson famously defined fashion as “dress, in which the key feature is rapid and continual changing of styles”;[[23]](#endnote-23) today, that “change” is more “rapid” than ever. In 2014, I described the way in which the system of fashion seemed to have split in two, creating separate systems with very different ideals and images.[[24]](#endnote-24) However, the intervening years have brought further changes; not only is there now significant overlap between these divergent and competing forms of “fashion”, but the traditional system has seemingly capitulated in certain important ways to its rival. However, in an attempt to defend itself, it is simultaneously encouraging forms of resistance and rear-guard action.

 As I have previously argued,[[25]](#endnote-25) developments within and around celebrity culture have offered women an apparently new image, a highly sexualised, curvaceous body template which, combined with a very different way of making-up and dressing, challenges the traditional silhouette of high fashion. This style of self-presentation I called “pornostyle”[[26]](#endnote-26) since it deploys the longstanding and recognisable tropes of “glamour modelling” and soft-core pornography, bringing them firmly into the mainstream. Significantly, both the magazines and newspapers of traditional print culture and the new forms of social media much prefer this “glamorous” ideal to the slender body and restrained make-up associated with catwalk shows and ultra-fashionable magazines. The make-up and clothes of the “celebrity look” are no doubt familiar to those reading this: fake fingernails, nude “wet look” lips, liberal use of facial “contouring” techniques, eyelash “extensions”, plunging necklines, skirts slit to mid-thigh, high heels and tight boots. But this style does not mean a lack of “labels” or designer clothes, now perhaps more desirable than ever; in this mode, they are worn and accessorised in a different way. There is currently a penchant for “nude” and “sheer” fabrics, deployed rather differently from their use within “high fashion”, here used to reveal whatever parts of the body might have to be covered outside a domestic setting. The “celebrity” body should possess pronounced breasts, which can be the result of artifice or intervention, a tiny waist and lightly-tanned limbs—here “fake tan” seems *de rigueur*.

The epitome of this look, at the time of writing, is, of course, the ubiquitous Kim Kardashian, who has added very prominent, deliberately accentuated, occasionally bared and frequently-photographed buttocks to what is already a hard-to-achieve “celebrity” ideal (Plate 12). These buttocks of course are presented, it seems, as a deliberate provocation, flouting the fashionable ideal and even triumphing over it. Her body, its constant display and indeed some of her behaviour are all**,** quite deliberately, “transgressive” in a perhaps unprecedented way and she appears to be happily complicit in the public construction of her physique as that of a new-millennial “Hottentot Venus”, as has been suggested elsewhere[[27]](#endnote-27). In the 19th century, the original of the title, Sarah Baartman, whose body was exhibited in “freak shows” across Europe, was, in fact, a prisoner whose captors reaped the profits. But in a new millennium, it is of course Kardashian herself who both parades and profits from her own unusual physique. It is she and her family who will be the epicentre of this essay, forming both reference point and case study.

They are of course perfect examples of Rojek’s “attributed celebrity”.[[28]](#endnote-28) In 2007, Kardashian achieved her first moment of fame through a leaked “sex tape”, her partner in crime being rap star Derek J. Throughout the film, she constantly pouts at, and poses for, the camera. There were suggestions that the “leak” was deliberate in some way, but it seemed that she had no part in it so, after much legal wrangling, she accepted a payment and then conceded ownership of the footage to a company, Vivid, who made it widely available. In the same year, her entire family—Kim herself, her mother and stepfather, her sisters, stepsisters, brother and assorted partners—became the stars of their own reality television show, screened on cable network E!. Despite consistently adverse criticism, the show became extremely popular; a thirteenth season began in March 2017. The family’s tendency to be “transgressive”, to flout whatever convention might still be at stakeand their pride in their perceived “otherness” has been on display throughout their rise to worldwide fame. Her stepfather, a former Olympic athlete, underwent highly publicised gender realignment in 2015, appearing in her changed identity as Caitlyn Jenner on the cover of *Vanity Fair.[[29]](#endnote-29)* Since then, Kardashian and her various siblings have exploited the full potential of every form of social media, gainingin the processextraordinary popularity, immense wealth, a global reach—and making “celebrity style” something desired by millions. She has also, as this essay will show, managed—after frequent attempts—to make successful inroads into the diametrically opposed world of high fashion. Her stepsister Kendall Jenner, whose body is the antithesis of hers, conforming perfectly to catwalk standards, has become a leading fashion model. But Kim’s own relationship with the historic fashion system, to which her constantly proffered, pneumatic body constitutes a permanent challenge, is rather complex. She was originally regarded with some hauteur by many in the industry; things changed considerably when she became first the girlfriend and later the wife of rapper Kanye West, himself already embedded within this system in a number of ways.

Social media: the dissemination and consumption of “celebrity fashion”

If what many want or need from cyberspace is simply some form of reassurance through virtual contact with perceived “friends”, significantly for “celebrity fashion”, a vast number seek further instruction in the art of self-presentation. So for this—and other complex reasons—they assiduously “follow” the posts and the videos of established celebrities, together with lesser known fashion and beauty “bloggers”. Those, like the Kardashian sisters, who are already public personalities, have the chance massively to increase their incomes through various forms of product placement; others who were previously anonymous figures have used these new digital platforms to create careers and achieve “celebrity” online, if not elsewhere. Of course, many of the most successful “fashion bloggers” are involved in the traditional world of “high fashion”. The most popular online posts, however, display the rival “celebrity look”.

Endless instruction in how to create this very different ideal of “beauty” can be found in cyberspace. While there are indeed “beauty tutorials” created, as well as consumed, by young women in modest suburban bedrooms, some reach a far wider audience. Interestingly, the “teen Instagram star”[[30]](#endnote-30) Essena O’Neill left the platform and deleted her posts; she announced that “I just want young girls to know this isn’t candid life; it’s contrived perfection made to get attention”.[[31]](#endnote-31) But it doesn’t seem as if many young women paid attentionto her example; a recent estimate put the number of Kardashian “followers” across the entire digital spectrum at “half a billion between them – twice the size of the US population”.[[32]](#endnote-32) Among these online exemplars of style, the various Kardashian sisters, Kim is well to the fore - it is she who today would be recognised anywhere in the world. Of her sisters and stepsisters, it is Kylie, small in height and generous in curves, who comes second in popularity. The tall, slim Kendall, with her highly visible modelling career at the heart of high fashion, comes third.[[33]](#endnote-33)

The three sisters I have just mentioned are among the “top ten” most-followed figureson social media, and in fact they are the only “celebrities by attribution” on these lists across the various manifestations of social media. For the other young women followed are successful young singers. Significantly, corroborating the growing concerns about young girls enslaved to their smartphones, there are only three men currently in the running and, while one is singer Justin Bieber and another the well-dressed footballer Christiano Ronaldo, the third is the uncompromisingly unstylish wrestler-turned-film star, Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, star of the critically ignored and massively-successful franchise, *The Fast and the Furious.[[34]](#endnote-34)* Kim Kardashian’s overwhelming online presence means that she is currently offered up to half a million dollars each time she promotes a product on social media:[[35]](#endnote-35) her sisters and half-sisters are offered slightly less. The actual nature of the products they promote are rather worrying: while new Apple phones are expensive but harmless, “weight loss teas”, meal substitutes created to facilitate weight loss and “waist whittlers” are more disturbing. A “waist whittler” looks like a brightly dyed piece of period underwear and constricts the waist as fiercely as its name implies; however, unlike its historical predecessors, it is designed to be worn during vigorous exercise, supposedly in order to enhance its effects. Kim directs her followers not only towards innocuous products such as nail polish and make-up, but also**,** perhaps more questionably, towards home laser treatments for the total eradication of every trace of body hair demanded by “pornostyle”, and “morning sickness” pills. Of course, these women have a vast variety of their own branded products. These include Kylie’s “lip kits” for those anxious to emulate her trademark pout, and the “Kardashian Kollection” of clothes at Sears. There was even, albeit briefly, a “Kardashian Mastercard”.

However, Kendall may have diminished her earning potential here, after a massive controversy, across print media and online, around her commercial for Pepsi-Cola in April 2017, which had to be “pulled” after twenty-four hours. She was paid 40 million dollars for this advertisement, in which she was seen posing for a fashion shoot as an unspecified “protest march” comes past, made up of good-looking young people from different ethnic backgrounds—came past. She removes her fashionable accoutrements, joins them and when the march is halted, walks alone up to the line of waiting policemen, offering one a can of the relevant soft drink and so resolving any tension.[[36]](#endnote-36)

Shifts, changes and academic responses.

Riccardo Tisci, head designer at Givenchy from 2009 to March 2017, proclaimed in an interview given just after he left this post: “Four or five years ago, no fashion house would touch her. But Kim represents the woman of today—she defines society today”.[[37]](#endnote-37) Kardashian and her sisters used to shop on the American high streets; now their stratospheric incomes mean that they can patronise Parisian couture houses. This is not done so that they may conform to the rules of traditional “high fashion”, however**,** but rather as a demonstration of their extraordinary power. Significantly, there are new young designers in some old, established houses who like Tisci are aware of changes in supply and demand; consequently, they now produce the kind of clothes that embody the “celebrity look”. Olivier Rousteng, for example, who took over at Balmain in 2009, is a friend of Kanye West’s and creates glitzy clothes for celebrities; the ethos of the design house has changed drastically. Journalist Jess Cartner-Morley called his clothes “colourful, tight, and bright”.[[38]](#endnote-38) Tisci, the former designer at Givenchy, is also a friend of West. He invited Kardashian to her first “Met Ball” in 2013 when he was helping to host this annual event, usually referred to as the Oscars of fashion, and designed her dress for the occasion. He also created the clothes for her spectacular two-day wedding to West, making both her dress and his tuxedo; the ceremonies involved a formal dinner hosted at Versailles, to which the couple were driven in a coach formerly used by royalty or state visitors. He was also responsible for Madonna’s bondage bustier and her bared, black-lace-covered buttocks at another Met Ball in 2016. She herself defended the outfit as a “feminist statement” made to combat ageism.

 If the clothes created by other designers are not sufficiently form-fitting or revealing, they can always be adapted to fit the rules of “celebrity style”. A judicious rearrangement of couture garments can ensure the maximum exposure of flesh, while there is always scope for celebrity “accessorising” of a kind that could be anathema to devotees of the designers. Kardashian was photographed at the Balenciaga shows in October 2016 wearing a trench coat pulled so far off her shoulders as to constitute a parody of the Vogue-endorsed trend for “shoulder-robing”. Hardly a figure associated with the more minimal aesthetic of Céline, she was nonetheless photographed in March 2017 wearing one of the house’s long knitted dresses, but pulled so far down that it hovered just above and sharply defined her breasts. On her feet—in sharp contrast to the sneakers favoured by the Céline designer Phoebe Philo—she wore very high-heeled snakeskin boots. It is worth noting that, by contrast**,** those in charge of Céline had in fact already carried out a certain form of resistance to contemporary celebrity; in 2016 they employed the venerated writer Joan Didion, then in her eighties, to model in the advertising campaign for their sunglasses, thus declaring a preference for cultural over ‘erotic’ capital.

At first the two co-existing systems were locked in a kind of “Mexican standoff” whereby the traditional fashion world saw itself as working to protect the notion of “good taste”. Although celebrity covers were already widely used in order to sell fashion magazines, only those celebrities who sought to follow the “fashion look” rather than the “pornostyle” template were featured, invited to high-fashion events and given front-row seats at shows. “Glamour girls**”** were not offered these privileges, nor were they asked to be “brand ambassadors” for fashion houses, or to feature in exclusive “fragrance” campaigns. Certain couture houses declined offers to design for them, and refused to lend them clothes for publicity shoots. But in 2017, much of this has changed: the industry increasingly obeys purely economic imperatives and “celebrity fashion” is in the ascendant. Alas, these changes within fashion, which surely constitute a paradigm shift, do not seem thus farto have been fully acknowledged within fashion *theory*, just as fashion-related issues have not been properly addressed within the new and expanding area of “celebrity studies”. This latter discipline, newly-created and with a variety of differentaspects, is curiously averse to exploring its extraordinarily strong links not only with the “fashion system” but also with the field of “fashion studies”, itself of course another late and sometimes unwelcome arrival in the groves of academe.[[39]](#endnote-39)

Although Rojek argued that “we will not understand the peculiar hold that celebrities exert over us today unless we recognise that celebrity culture is irrevocably bound up with commodity culture”,[[40]](#endnote-40) he did not specify precise, susceptible *forms* of commodity culture. Marshall, one of the earliest writers on the phenomenon of modern celebrity culture, has consistently suggested that it is a means within consumer capitalism whereby the dominant classes can ensure social control.[[41]](#endnote-41) This could suggest, perhaps, a ‘bread-and-circuses’ model worryingly appropriate for the contemporary cultural and political landscape.

Fashion, art and celebrity culture

Whatever lines of demarcation still remain between “high art”, popular culture, fashion, celebrity and commerce, these by noware increasingly blurred, given the modus operandi of the fashion industry and the “celebrification” of the art world.[[42]](#endnote-42) Today, not only does Kim Kardashian have a marked presence right across the current landscape of popular culture and increasingly within both “fashion systems”, she has also crossed other significant boundaries. Over the last few years, she has acquired a presence within the “art world”, if only as “subject” rather than producer of art. Her image has moved from magazine covers to gallery walls, and she is seen at private views and art fairs**.**

 Her marriage to musician Kanye West, who is himself adept at self-promotion, has collaborated with designers in different ways for several years and is now finally enjoying a coveted success as a fashion designer has increased her visibility and her access to “high end” fashion. Significantly, for a tour in 2013, West was dressed by Martin Margiela, hardly a publicity-seeking fashion house. The year before, in a 2012 episode of her reality show, he had publicly cleared out Kim’s wardrobe and restocked it with “high fashion” garments and accessories. Acting together, they have managed successfully to infiltrate the inner citadel of “high fashion”, which had until recently worked hard to keep Kim and her family at bay. West’s move from rap artist to fashion designer has helped them here.

Their wedding showcased not merely Tisci’s Givenchy outfits, but matching leather jackets for the couple especially decorated with slogans and images by the Los Angeles artist Wes Lang; he has also designed tour merchandise for West in the past. West’s design career started with footwear; his collaborations—with Nike and later Adidas—have been enormously successful. The 2016 music video for his song “Wolves” also turned out to be a promotional fashion film for Balmain, which West directed. It starred his wife and her fashion-model sister Kendall alongside assorted supermodels and some Victoria’s Secret underwear models. Still images released to accompany the film were the workof leading “high fashion” photographer Steven Klein. Throughout, West and his wife both wore the futuristic Balmain outfits made for the Met ball in May of that year.

West’s own Yeezy fashion range, featuring both menswear and womenswear, gradually began to win approval, with the acknowledged arbiter of American fashion taste, Vogue editor Anna Wintour, attending his shows and happily publicising them. West has employed the artist Vanessa Beecroft to choreograph these shows; she did the same for the various events that took place as part of his wedding. Beecroftis herself a part of the new art-fashion-celebrification process, while transgression—seemingly integral to Kardashian success—is central to her work, and indeed led to her self–imposed exile from the art world. She became especially famous through the installations that she created for Louis Vuitton. For the opening of the large shop on the Champs-Élysées, she created an installation made up of semi-naked models, all women of colour, displayed fetishistically and provocatively on the shelves of the store, adorned with carefully arranged Vuitton belts and bags. As the belts were entwined around their legs and arms in a way suggestive both of Bondage and Sado-Masochism (BDSM) and of prison shackles, the work received an enormous amount of publicity, a good deal of it negative. Beecroft claimed that the installation was a reflection on gender and ethnicity; her critics saw it as a disturbing reminder of slavery.[[43]](#endnote-43)

When she became the subject of a documentary film screened at the Sundance Festival in 2008, about her attempted adoption, two years earlier, of two orphaned Sudanese babies, she was deemed to have gone too far, and there were calls to ban her work.[[44]](#endnote-44) This film included footage of the distressed nuns who ran the Darfur orphanage trying to stop her stripping the babies naked in a chapel, before having herself photographedattempting to “breastfeed” them in a white Prada dress with specially cut out nipple zones. Copies of this image, entitled “White Madonna”, were sold for fifty thousand dollars apiece. This unsurprisingly caused outrage in the black community, despite Beecroft’s insistence that she self-identifies as black. Beecroft removed herself precipitately from the art world and later resurfaced working for West.

 It seems as if West and Kardashian now have a public presence and economic power reminiscent of that wielded by the powerful dynasties of Renaissance Italy (without the taste many of these family members possessed). West in fact likened his wife’s semi-naked “selfies” to Renaissance paintings when they were collected together for her book, *Selfie,* published by the respected art publisher, Rizzoli.[[45]](#endnote-45) Her very first foray into the art world in November 2010 had seen her naked, but for Barbara Kruger’s blocks of text, on the cover of W magazine’s *Art Issue.*[[46]](#endnote-46) But she has since moved on and up. Jeff Koons became her friend, featuring in one of her Instagram photos in 2013. In the following year, it was the art-fashion-magazine *Paper[[47]](#endnote-47)* that published a very revealing photograph on its cover, advertised as her attempt to “Break the Internet”. The picture was taken by the respected photographer Jean-Paul Goude, and Kardashian was invited to the promotional dinner held at “Art Basel Miami”, a very important annual event that has, of course, become thoroughly “celebrified”.[[48]](#endnote-48) In April 2016, she and Kourtney Kardashian were photographed for the “Yeezy 3” campaign by Juergen Teller; in one of these deliberately controversial images, the pair seem to be wrestling in mud and Kourtney is clawing at her sister’s naked buttocks. Another photograph, showing Kardashian crawling up a stony slope wearing only a fur jacket and knee-high boots, was blown up and exhibited at another significant annual event, Art Cologne. In August of the same year, she helped to sculpt her own naked body for the life-size sculptures of sleeping celebrities created for West’s music video, *Famous*. Here she and Kanye are depicted in bed with a group that includes Donald Trump and Anna Wintour. The sculptures were exhibited soon afterwards at the Blum and Poe art gallery in Los Angeles. It may well be that Kardashian now **s**ees herself as an “artist” and not simply as an “attributed celebrity”; for International Women’s Day in 2017, she posted a selfie ofherself made up and accessorised to look like Frieda Kahlo.

Fashion’s factions: Infiltration and resistance

 If the walls of high fashion were first breached by the use of “celebrities” on magazine covers, the “celebrities” chosen always fitted the “fashion-model” template. Actress Kiera Knightley, an early favourite for fashion titles and later for prestigious advertising campaigns, became and remains a “brand ambassador” for Chanel. In fact, she played the designer herself in one of Karl Lagerfeld’s digital productions.[[49]](#endnote-49) The actress Kristen Stewart has moved away from Hollywood and found success in European art-house cinema, so that she brings cultural capital to her own role as a current Chanel ambassador.

However, US *Vogue* capitulated some time ago; in March 2014 it featured Kardashian and West on the cover.[[50]](#endnote-50) The resultproduced horrified readers, a “twitter storm” and cancelled subscriptions. But in December 2016, UK *Vogue* seemed to be claiming back lost ground, asking hopefully in its pages, “Whatever Happened to the Cleavage?”.[[51]](#endnote-51) It featured and championed demure red-carpet appearances by Alicia Vikander and other successful, slender actresses.

Another form of fightback against what might otherwise seem to be theunstoppable force of “celebrity style” has garnered a good deal of publicity—and generated enormous sales. Some designers in “high fashion” are producing designs that are radically different from the form-fitting, curve enhancing designs, which appeal to celebrities; they are often semi-androgynous and deliberately not glamorized. The most notable and commercially successful designer of clothes that is the complete antithesis of the tight, glitzy garments that characterise, say, Rousteng’s designs for Balmain is Demna Gvasalia, whose work for the newly-established Vêtements made that label inordinately successful (fig.5.2). The catwalk models in his womenswear shows were devoid of make-up and sometimes crop-headed; the first dresses he showed were very loose and overlong, and he created outsize ‘hoodies’ for both sexes. The well-known and very influential blogger Leandra Medine, whose professional soubriquet is “Man Repeller” champions a “fashion aesthetic” that resists overt sexuality in dress (Fig. 5.1). Her strapline is “Seeking Love, Finding Overalls,” so it would seem that she might respond positively from the first to Gvasalia's work.

But initially this was not the case. “Confession—I don’t get Vêtements”, she wrote, in 2016. She went on to explain: “You want to lose your shirt over clothes that make you feel like 18th century royalty while you’re washing the dishes—I totally get that. But to wear clothes that make you *feel* like you’re about to wash dishes? Where’s the grand illusion there?”.[[52]](#endnote-52) Four months later, however, she was converted, writing that the brand was “becoming an ongoing art installation, which is what I really like about it”.[[53]](#endnote-53) She has continued to support Gvasalia’s aesthetic, praising his use of older, unconventional models in his catwalk shows. She has also noted with pleasure across the past few months such features of his work as “secretary suits”, police mackintoshes, “punk” bath towels covered with emojis, plastic macs, camouflage battle dress and a parody of the classic Chanel suit.

[IMAGE HERE]

Fig. 5.1. The Fashion Selfie. Blogger Leandra Medine in Celine coat and shoes. Public domain.

However, a certain kind of celebrity—young musicians in particular—liked and wore some of the clothes, particularly the hooded sweatshirts and slouchy track suit trousers: Rihanna, Justin Bieber and, inevitably, the label-aware West. Inevitably, Kardashian herself was finally seen in a Vêtements hoodie, although it was worn with thigh-high fetish boots designed by West for Yeezy and little else (fig. 5.2). Eventually, Gvasalia succumbed, as a favour, it seemed**,** to Kardashian, and temporarily abandoned his anti-bling aesthetic. Kim and her daughter, North, were then photographed in October 2016 in matching tight, sequined dresses he created especially for them.

[IMAGE HERE]

Fig. 5.2. Celebrity Proof. Fashion at Vetements. Fall/Winter 2017. Public domain.

Gvasalia has also had an extraordinary effect on “high street” fashion. While his original “reconstructed” Levis cost over a thousand British pounds, copies of these jeans, with their distinctive stepped hems, swiftly appeared on the high street—at every “price point”. Gvasalia went on to be creative director of Balenciaga, one of the most revered ateliers, previously known for its elegance. Other young designers have produced desirable clothes that do not emphasise or display the body. Simon Porte Jacquemus’s designs for his eponymous company garnered much “high fashion” enthusiasm, and were displayed in glossy magazines across the globe. In a different kind of “anti-celebrity” style and statement, Louis Vuitton, the creator of the instantly recognisable luggage carried by so many celebrities, made a deal in March 2017 with *Supreme*, designers of skateboarding and streetwear coveted by young people across the world.

The resistance, however, may seem to have only a rather tenuous purchase. Indeed, for one English fashion journalist Kardashian seems to be an arbiter of fashion change on a grand scale. Writing about “fashion’s return to technicolour” after “decades when it was essentially a bit naff to wear anything that wasn’t black,” Jess Cartner-Morley outlined the gradual shift:

The erosion of the status of black began when it started to be outranked by navy, and went mass when Kim Kardashian underwent a style make-under which involved wearing grey or beige head to toe.[[54]](#endnote-54)

So it seems that, whereas in the past leading designers—first Poiret, then Chanel, later Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo—dictated radical changes in the colour palette, today that task is carried out by whoever is the current leading arbiter of celebrity style.

Seeking explanations

This new-millennial, all-conquering media spectacle is largely constructed around photogenic young women with spectacular bodies. Some journalists—able to publish far more speedily than academics in this rapidly-changing landscape—and celebrities themselves have claimed that the current display of the female body is in fact a form of “female empowerment” and should be championed as “postfeminist”. Yet, rightly, Susan Bordo argued back in the 1990s that the female body is increasingly over-disciplined[[55]](#endnote-55) in the Foucauldiansense, over-determined by the “commodified body”[[56]](#endnote-56) and the entrepreneurship of the self-prevailing within the contemporary scene**.** Her ideas have found wideacceptance among scholars. The new, opulent bodies, insistently presented as amode of self-advertisement, are likewise “disciplined”[[57]](#endnote-57) and surely feed on the more and more obsessive self-scrutiny of young women and their increased fear of imperfection, of gaining weight, of ageing.

In a recent feature in *Harpers Bazaar* online, quoted earlier in this essay,[[58]](#endnote-58) it was mooted that “the Kardashians are to blame for the rise of millennial women getting cosmetic procedures”. Ironically the Kardashian-Wests always feature heavily in both the print and the online versions of this magazine. Here, cosmetic surgeon Dr Simon Ourien, whose patients are getting ever-younger—some are in their teens—has claimed that “the reason for this shift is because of social media, selfies and the Kardashians”.[[59]](#endnote-59) Another well-known cosmetic surgeon also interviewed for this *Harpers* feature, one Dr. Sebagh, called the phenomenon “damaging” and “absolutely mad”. He argued that these new young patients “have such insecurity and such image perfection issues” because they are “constantly on their smartphones”.[[60]](#endnote-60) “High fashion” has of course traditionally been blamed for the obsession with slenderness, for causing young women to starve themselves in order to achieve fashion-model slimness, so risking anorexia. Now these surgeons are suggesting that the ubiquitous images of “celebrity style” are equally damaging, in a different way. Though displayed online as selfies, many of these pictures involve and even acknowledge the work of make-up artists in their achievement of glossy perfection. There seems, here, to be a covert insinuation that celebrity style could cause emotional distress and even mental health problems[[61]](#endnote-61) rather than the debilitating physical conditions and even illnesses that can be the result of a preoccupation with high fashion. In this respect, both forms of fashion seem equally open to being problematized or interrogated.

In defence of “celebrity style”, it has been claimed that the semi-naked celebrity selfies are an instance of women taking total control of their “own sexuality”. Feminist writer Naomi Wolf seemed convinced by this particular argument when she interviewed celebrity Emily Ratajowski, herself possessed of a spectacular body, for, once again, *Harpers Bazaar.[[62]](#endnote-62)* Ratajkowski herself is another example of “attributed celebrity”. She is regularly photographed at premières and award ceremonies, her designer dresses the subject of fascinated fashion copy. She was in fact an “erotic model”, until she appeared in a music video for *Blurred Lines* in 2013, described by one journalist as “the most controversial song of the decade” for its seeming defence of non-consensual sex.[[63]](#endnote-63) The video created a “separate but overlapping controversy”[[64]](#endnote-64) since it featured Ratajowski and two other models dancing topless with, and around, three fully-dressed male musicians. This brought Ratajowski to public attention and to a small part in the equally successful film *Gone Gir*l.[[65]](#endnote-65) The highly photogenic Ratajowski—slender-bodied but full-breasted, so combining both “celebrity” and “high fashion” attributes—has worked as a fashion model for Miu Miu and Marc Jacobs, together with her “glamour” covers for *Sports Illustrated*.

The Naomi Wolf interview was illustrated by a full-page image of Ratajowski rather than of Wolf and she together, and showed her sitting naked astride a white without a bridle or saddle. When she explained to Wolf her claims to be a “new kind of feminist,” the writer of *The* *Beauty Myth[[66]](#endnote-66)* surprisingly seemed to accept them. The naked selfie that Ratajowski had shot together with Kardashian—which attracted optimum publicity—was, she explained, a gesture of sisterly solidarity after the latter had been vilified for posting a previous “selfie” in which she herself was for the first time completely naked. She managed to persuade Wolf that this was indeed empowering, at a time when government reports in the UK have shown that young women have lower self−esteem than ever before.[[67]](#endnote-67)

How can we begin to think about, let alone theorise, this bizarre narrative? Those of us who have worked—however briefly—within the new field of celebrity studies, coming from whatever academic discipline or practitioner perspective, have surely all wanted to find the Holy Grail of a single ur-methodology—which while providing us with a truly political perspective, will finally allow us to bring together what seems at times to be a very disparate and diffuse subject area. What we need, in fact, is a near-magical way of making proper sense of the endless diverse and constantly developing activities around celebrities, which we could bring together and fully understand. It is difficult to know which previous scholarship might be best employed in our efforts to understand the continual changes around us and the new, frenetic consumption of both goods and images. Fifty years after *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord might find it difficult to comprehend the way in which “spectacle functions and dominates society now,” so far does it exceed everything he described.[[68]](#endnote-68) Before this age of consumption that is not only “conspicuous,” but continuous, and which in its insidious way crosses every social strata and income level, Veblen might retreat, baffled.[[69]](#endnote-69) The melancholy if not bewilderment of the various different members of the Frankfurt School would be understandable enough.[[70]](#endnote-70)

It is tempting to read off one specific site of study, the Kardashian celebrity narrative depicted here, against the model of the “historical stages” in the relationships between symbols and reality as outlined by Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation.[[71]](#endnote-71)* He was of course linking these “stages” to different historical moments in the development of capitalism across two centuries, rather than as stages in a personal saga across a single decade. But just as there are four stages in Baudrillard’s historical model, spanning the period from before the Industrial Revolution to the advanced stages of late capitalism, so the Kardashian career, central within the narrative unfolded above, has gone through four perceived stages of development. The “faithful “image” of stage one would be the ‘sex tape that began this story. The years during which the “reality show” became so extraordinarily popular might constitute Baudrillard’s “breakdown of reality”, the “second stage”. The “signs and images” of the stage that he calls “the order of sorcery” would involve the stepfather's change of gender, the lavish wedding to West, motherhood, art gallery openings and the bare-buttocked shoot for Teller. The fourth and final stage is characterised by a complete *lack* of reality. And there is no sense of reality in this family saga any more, only insatiable public interest in bizarre dramatic stories: robbery at gunpoint, breakdown and madness, incarceration.

But, neat and ingenious as this correspondence of four-phase narratives might be, it does not take us quite far enough. Enzensberger’s “theatre” has become a dizzying circus.[[72]](#endnote-72) So profound a shift in the culture is perhaps best accounted by means of the new and varied forms of radical political critique—Naomi Klein, Wolfgang Streeck, Franco “Bifo” Berardi, David Graeber, Nick Srnicek and many others[[73]](#endnote-73)— that has been notably emerging or consolidating itself since the crisis of 2008, and its understanding of what has been happening to us since (approximately) the early 1990s. One might fasten in particular on Berardi,[[74]](#endnote-74) not least for his resituation of Baudrillard in this context. For Berardi, Baudrillard was a prophet of what is by now a catastrophic age (catastrophe, here, should not be read as betokening more or less imminent apocalypse; the catastrophe is, perhaps, more than anything else, ethical, or incipiently ethical). For understandable reasons, the modern promise to which the twentieth century so ardently subscribed, if with often disastrous results, has broken down. In effect, says Berardi, the future is over. In our “postfuturist” culture, the new is no longer just the eternal return of the same which Benjamin thought constituted modernity in its satanic aspect. By now, the new is as likely to spell regress as it is progress, to the point where the terms themselves seem nugatory. So, too, we are witnessing a wholesale shift from what Berardi calls the “conjunctive” to the “connective”, from community and solidarity, for example, to aleatory and disparate relations between “infospheric individuals”[[75]](#endnote-75) as monadic entities, above all, as a result of the growth of the digital web, the development being so pronounced as to breed and proliferate new psychopathologies. Postfuturism is eradicating the cultural, juridical and psychic conventions of modernity. The ironical manner in which I have used the word “transgression” throughout this essay underlines the point. For Berardi, these days, “transgression” is embodied by the likes of Berlusconi and smoothly reconcilable with media-populism. It was Baudrillard who heralded this psychic mutation and the implosion of thought and value implicit in what he took to be the “logic of simulation,” and foresaw the contemporary reversal of the “energetic subjectivation” characteristic of modernity[[76]](#endnote-76). We might think that, with what is represented in the Kardashians and their remarkable and increasing influence, fashion culture has reached its 'postfuturist’ phase, revealing itself as both “stimulated hyperexpression” and, at the same time, a form of “exhaustion”.[[77]](#endnote-77)

1. Chis Rojek, *Fame Attack: The Inflation of Celebrity and Its* *Consequences* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 185. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. See Pamela Church Gibson, *Fashion and Celebrity Culture* (London: Berg, 2012) and Pamela Church Gibson, “Pornostyle: Sexualised Dressand the Fracturing of Feminism” in *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress*, *Body, and Culture* vol.18 no. 2 (2014), 186-206. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See for example Christine Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (London: Psychology Press, 1991). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See Nicky Ryan, “Patronage”in *Fashion and Art,* ed. Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas (London and New York: Berg 2012), 155-169, and eds. Mona Schieren and Andrea Sich, *Look at Me: Celebrity Culture* *at the Venice Art Biennale* (Nuremberg: Verlag fűr Moderne Kǖnst, 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. See Leo Braudy, *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. See Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion, 2011). The entire first section of this book is essential for a full understanding of his categorisation of celebrities. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. See, for example, Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: Sage, 2004): David Marshall *Celebrity and Power*: *Fame in Contemporary* *Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) and Ellis Cashmore *Celebrity Culture* (London: Routledge 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Constituents of a Theory of the Media” in *New Left Review*, 1/64 November-December 1970, 13-36. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical* *Reproduction*, ed. Michael Jennings et al., (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935/2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media* *Collide* (New York: NYU Press, 2006). [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Enzensberger, “Theory of Media,” 25. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Lefebvre quoted in Enzensberger, ibid., 25. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Ibid., 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid., 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid., 16. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Louise Crewe *The Geographies of Fashion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 37-65, see also Tansy Hoskins *Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist* *Book of Fashion* (London: Pluto Press, 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Among the few fashion theorists who have discussed production are Joanne Entwistle in *The Aesthetic Economy of Fashion: Markets and Value in Clothing and Modelling* Oxford: Berg 2009 and Tim Edwards, *Fashion in Focus: Concepts and Practices* (London Routledge: 2011). For a clear account of the relevant issue, see the essay by Adam Briggs, “Capitalism’s Favourite Child” in *Fashion Cultures Revisited*: *Theories, Explorations and Analysis,* eds. Stella Bruzzi and Pamela Church Gibson (London: Routledge, 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. The “trickle-down” theory of fashion was originally proposed by Thorstein Veblen, whose influential work *The Theory of the Leisure Class* was first published in 1899 and which has been reprinted constantly. It is also linked to an influential essay “Fashion” by Georg Simmel, republished long after Simmel’s death, in *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol.62, no.6 (May 1957) 541-558. In fact, Simmel himself was drawing heavily on earlier work by continental theorists working in other disciplines, including the sociologist Emil Durkheim. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. The term “bubble-up” was arguably first used by anthropologist Ted Polhemus, whose book was first published by Thames and Hudson to coincide with the 1994 exhibition, *Streetstyle: from* *Sidewalk to Catwalk* at the V & A Museum in London. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. See, for what seems to be the first published use of the term, Terry Agins, *The End of Fashion* (London: Harper Collins, 1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Lidewij Edelkoort, an influential fashion forecaster, released her tract *Anti-Fashion: A Manifesto* *for the Next Decade* in July 2015; it was published by her Paris-based forecasting agency, Trend Union. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: Virago, 1984), 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. See Church Gibson, “Pornostyle.” [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Alexandra Sastre “Hottentot in the Age of Reality TV: Sexuality, Race and Kim Kardashian’s Visible Body” in *Celebrity Studies*, vol. 5:1-2 (August 2013): 123-137. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. see Rojek, *Celebrity*. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. *Vanity Fair* (US) for July 2015 featured Jenner’s “reveal” as Caitlyn, both on the cover and in an extended feature written by Buzz Bissinger. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. See article by Elle Hunt, “Essena O’Neill Quits Instagram” in *The Guardian,* November 3, 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See article by Amy de Klerk, “Kardashians to Blame” in *Harpers’ Bazaar* (UK),March 31, 2017, May 26, 2017, <http://www.harpersbazaar.co.uk/beauty/news/a40729/kardashians-to-blame-for-the-number-of-millennial-women-getting-cosmetic-procedures/>. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. See article by *Harpers’ Bazaar* online, item by Sarah Kamali, March 17, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. *The Fast and the Furious* is an action film franchise, one of the most successful ever to be created for the cinema. Dwayne Johnson has been part of the cast since 2011. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Kamali, *Harpers’ Bazaar*, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. The Pepsi-Cola advertisement, withdrawn after twenty-four hours, was quite rightly criticised for trivialising protest movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Women’s Marches against Trump through its use of particular images. The furore only increased when Pepsi-Cola apologised to Kendall Jenner for having “involved her”. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. See interview with Riccardo Tisci by Merle Ginsberg for *Prêt–a–Reporter*, The Hollywood Reporter, March 18, 2015, June 26, 2017, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/givenchys-riccardo-tisci-why-he-782524>. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Jess Cartner-Morley, “Oliver Rousteing on Rhianna, Kim Kardashian and the Balmain army,” *The Guardian*, September 15, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. The best account of the relationship between fashion theory and more traditional academic disciplines is that provided by Valerie Steele in “The F Word,” an essay in *Lingua Franca*, April, 1991, 17-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Rojek, *Fame Attack*, 185. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Marshall, *Celebrity and Power*, [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Sich and Sieren, *Look at Me*, [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. See, among others, Nick Johnstone, “Dare to Bare,” a profile on Beecroft in *The* *Observer,* March 13, 2005. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. The documentary film, *The Art Star and the Sudanese Twins*, was directed by Pietra Bretkelly and received its first screening at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. The book of photographs*, Selfish*, is written by Kim Kardashian West, and published by Rizzoli (New York) in May, 2015. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. W Magazine, *The Art Issue*, November, 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *Paper* magazine, Winter 2014: cover and feature, “Break the Internet”. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. See for example Sarah Thornton, *Seven Days in the Art World*

 (London: Granta, 2008). [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. The film is *Once Upon A Time*, directed for Chanel by Karl Lagerfeld in 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. US *Vogue*, April 2014, cover photograph by Annie Liebowitz of West and Kardashian. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Kathleen Baird-Murray, “Whatever Happened to the Cleavage?” *Vogue*, UK, December, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Leandra Medine, “Confession: I don’t get Vetements,” writing for her blog *Man Repeller*, March 30, 2016, <http://www.manrepeller.com/2016/03/confession-i-dont-get-vetements.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., January 27, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Jess Cartner-Morley “What I Wore This Week,” *The Guardian*, March 24, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Susan Bordo *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the* *Body* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 1993). [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Michael Foucault *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison System* (London: Penguin Books, 1977/1991). [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. De Klerk, “Kardashians to Blame”. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Naomi Wolf “Emily Romanowski's Naked Ambition”in *Harper’s Bazaar*, July 7, 2016. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Dorian Lynskey “Blurred Lines:The Most Controversial Song of the Decade,” in *The Guardian*, November 14, 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Aaron Milchan et al., *Gone Girl*. Film. Directed by David Fincher. (US: 20th Century Fox, 2014). [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. See, for example, “Growing number of girls suffer low self-esteem, says report” by James Meikle, *The Guardian*, November 29, 2013 and also, *NYC Girls* *Project*, online 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* trans., Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2004). [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. See Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. The work of the Frankfurt School has been extraordinarily influential within the contemporary discipline of Cultural Studies. Originally dating back to Germany in the 1930s, the best-known members are arguably Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse. [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1981/1994). [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Enzensberger, “Theory of the Media”. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. See, for example, Naomi Klein *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (London: Penguin, 2015): Wolfgang Stree *How Will Capitalism End?: Essay on a Failing* *System* (London, Verso: 2016) and Franco “Bifo” Berardi *After the Future* (Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press, 2011). [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Berardi, *After the Future*. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid., 137. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., 136 [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)