

"It" girl identity in American culture: A case of Kendall Jenner

"It" girl identity trong bối cảnh văn hóa nước Mỹ : Câu chuyện của Kendall Jenner

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a humanities-oriented research that explores a cultural phenomenon called "It" girl identity that emerged in the American youth scene and the particular case of Kendall Jenner, a young, influential celebrity, whose performance of this identity visibly manifests and contributes to the development of the phenomenon. It sets out to construct the networks of meanings that constitute the sensibility of this identity in American culture, by describing and investigating the participation of three prominent "It" girls in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who are Clara Bow (1920s), Edie Sedgwick (1960s), Chloë Sevigny (1990s). The participation of each "It" girl is governed by the historical context and networks of meanings and events in which she resides and emerges, thus, necessitates careful examination. The participation is also determined and characterised by the particularities of each "It" girl. The study reveals that, the narrative of "It" girl identity is dictated by the media, as this identity is born by the media and its participants are all chosen by the media. It comes to argue that the following networks of meanings make sense of "It" girl identity: the changing modes of femininity as constructed and propagated in the media, the social, economic, political changes in the youth scene, particularly concerning young women, the changes in fashion or fashion-related scene, and how each "It" girl, with their particularities, participates in that identity. It comes to generate a consistent set of codes that constitutes the identity. Then, it proceeds to investigate how Kendall Jenner, as an "It" girl of the current globalised, post-feminist and technologically-reigned world manifests and contributes to the sensible construction of the identity. It concludes that Kendall Jenner is a successful presentation of the identity and that the new networks of meanings associating with "It" girl are the manifestation of "new" and successful femininities, the embodiment of female success and an implication of women exploitation.

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