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The Girls That Get It, Get It: Girlish Play and Post-Feminist Humour on TikTok

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Introduction

This dissertation challenges criticisms of post-feminist humour which claim that gender difference humour online reproduces sexist stereotypes. It examines the functions and uses of post-feminist humour through ‘girlification’ trends on TikTok focusing in particular on ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m Just a Girl’. In analysing these trends, this dissertation contends that ‘girlification’ trends on TikTok function as a form of girlish play, operating as rebellious humour, capable of subverting gender norms while also revealing the limits and dangers of post-feminist expression in contemporary digital culture.

Kanai defines girlish play as ‘the offering up to readers of what might otherwise be deemed as a fault, but not a serious one, as it is redeemed through self-deprecating humour’ (2019:72). This dissertation adopts this framework to interpret ‘girlification’ trends as a form of girlish play, situating them alongside broader theories of rebellious and subversive humour. Therefore, case studies of ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m Just a Girl’ are used to explore how girlish play operates online and where its boundaries lie. This approach aids the analysis of the subversive and collectivising capacities of this rebellious humour (Drakett, 2018:111), as well as the extent to which they risk reproducing gender hierarchies.

Despite there being a wealth of literature regarding feminist humour and digital media, TikTok and ‘girlification’ trends have received limited scholarly attention. As one of the largest digital social media platforms, with over 1.59 billion global users (Slotta, 2026), TikTok has evolved beyond entertainment, becoming ‘the platform for political activism’ (Field and Pomerantz 2022:63). Field and Pomerantz argue that ‘TikTok comprises a form of feminist theory because it is where a feminist life may be born, cultivated, and protected vis-à-vis short videos and comments that inspire feminist practice both on- and offline’ (2022:68). This gap warrants further attention in order to gain an appreciation for how digital feminist communities and cultures are created and maintained.

This dissertation conducts a case study of ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m Just a Girl’ trends. These trends were selected due to their widespread popularity, with some videos reaching over 25 million views, as well as the controversies they have provoked within online discourse surrounding ‘girlification’ trends. While both trends often receive similar criticisms, they differ significantly in their use of humour. This contrast enables a more precise imagining of the boundaries of girlish play, as well as the differing functions of such humour. By analysing these trends alongside one another, the subversive potential of girlish play is examined, as are its limits, highlighting points where the trends risk reproducing the stereotypes that they seek to challenge.

This dissertation employs a thematic discourse analysis to identify recurring features and themes expressed by each trend and examine the functions of these elements within digital humour, drawing on Skyes’ analysis of the #stayathomegirlfriend on TikTok trend (Skye,2025) as well as Jayathilke et al (2026). These findings were then interpreted through Kanai’s framework, to distinguish between features which align with, or diverge from girlish play. Particular attention was then paid to audience responses, to assess how this self-effacing humour is received, interpreted and in some cases, appropriated. This analysis enabled the examination of the afterlives of girlish play, including its co-option and commercialisation, to further explore the limits and risks of this contemporary digital culture.

This dissertation is structured as follows. The first chapter situates its research within existing scholarly literature, surrounding digital culture and online feminism. This helps establish a theoretical framework, through which girlish play can be understood as a form of rebellious humour. The second chapter outlines and justifies why a thematic discourse was employed to analyse girlification discourses on TikTok as examples of girlish play. The discussion chapter then illustrates the tensions present in these discourses and applies Girl Math and ‘I’m just a girl’ to Kanai’s theoretical framework to establish the functions, boundaries, limits and risks of the production of girlification content and girlish play. This dissertation concludes that girlish play is subversive and collectivising as opposed to reproductive of sexist stereotypes and gender norms. This conclusion extends the argument made that linguistic policing and censorship functions to divide digital feminist communities rather than having a material impact on reshaping gender hierarchies. As a result, the preservation of girlish play is encouraged, as its rebellious, subversive and resistant capacities are effective in creating community and challenging gendered hierarchy.

Literature review

Function and Uses of Humour

Sociological scholars have studied the social functions and forms of humour extensively. Michael Billig identifies three key forms of humour: superiority, incongruity and release (2005:39). Superiority theory explores the idea that 'humour is derived from seeing the misfortune of suffering of another, and the pleasant feeling of superiority evoked is then expressed as laughter' (Drakett, 2018:111). This concept can be traced back to thinkers such as Plato, who claims that humour is inherently tied to mockery and social hierarchy (Billig,2005:40). Other traditional perspectives offer alternative forms and uses of humour. Sigmund Freud discusses humour as forming from deceit and naiveté (2002:193-194), whereas Aristotle draws connections between humour, in the form of ridicule, and the reinforcement of social hierarchies (Billig, 2005:45). Across these conceptualisations, humour is presented not only as a form of entertainment, but as a process which maintains unequal power dynamics.

Contemporary scholars build on these ideas to illustrate additional functions of humour. Bing argues that 'humour has multiple potential functions beyond mere entertainment, including the maintenance and subversion of hierarchies, the creation of solidarity within groups, or the reinforcement of boundaries and stereotypes' (in Drakket,2018:11). This theory is pertinent to this paper's discussions of digital girlish play, where post-feminist humour functions to subvert sexist stereotypes.

Although, these traditional perspectives provide a useful foundation, they pay limited attention to how gender shapes both the construction and interpretation of humour, particularly within digital contexts. Addressing these gaps is central to understanding the inner workings of girlish play.

Feminism and Humour

Much of the feminist scholarship regarding humour has focused through sexist jokes made at the expense of women (Mallet et al, 2016, Woodzicka et al, 2020,Li et al 2023, Rodriguez-

Sanchez et al, 2020, Attenborough,2014, Greenwood and Isbell, 2002). Research by Kirstin Bemiller and Rachel Schneider identifies five prominent themes within disparaging humour these include: 'devaluation of personal characteristics', 'women's place in private sphere', 'backlash against feminism', 'sexual objectification of women' and violence against women' (2010:467). These forms of humour function to maintain structural inequalities and naturalise and make light of them.

While this study is useful at highlighting the harms of disparaging humour, and the presence of stereotyping in such jokes, it predominantly focuses on women as the objects of humour rather than the creators of it. However, recent scholarship instead addresses humour as a site of feminist resistance and subversion. Jenny Sunden and Susanna Passonen argue that 'humor and laughter are possibly not the first qualities or tactics to be associated with feminist activism' (2020:2) potentially due to the stereotype of the 'feminist killjoy' (Ahmed,2015:7) and the sensitivity associated with feminist discourse. These stereotypes may disguise humour used to challenge and resist, rather than reinforce gender norms. However, the subversive capacity of feminist humour should not be undermined. Charles Case and Cameron Lippard argue that 'humor can be a subversive and an empowering tool for women and feminists in the ideological battle to symbolically redefine gender roles, attitudes, and stereotypes' (2009:240). They claim this occurs through ridiculing 'traditional patriarchal ideologies' and 'the shared experiences of women'. Here, humour is used 'as a way to build awareness and to challenge male domination and patriarchal social organization, as well as a response to the oppression and exploitation of women in patriarchal societies [...]' (Case and Lippard, 2009: 240-241).

In contrast to this, Limor Shifman and Dafna Lemish examine digital humour with reference to women, organising them into three key forms: sexist, feminist and post-feminist (2010:885). They claim that post-feminist humour operates through the 'intertwining of feminist and anti-feminist ideas' (2010:874). However, they contest the idea that this performs subversive functions. Instead, they argue that the post-feminist emphasis on gender difference and 'women as consumers' (2010:875) function to reproduce gender stereotypes rather than resist them.

Shifman and Lemish's analysis of humour, focusing on women's consumption, provides a valuable foundation for this dissertation's examination of how girification trends have been commercialised: it is also addressed through its discussion of 'Girl Math' and the legitimacy of gendered consumption, highlighting both the subversive capacities and risks of such jokes.

This interpretation is useful as it highlights the potential risks of engaging in post-feminist humour. However, it overlooks how factors such as irony, self-effacement and satire influence the connotations attached to this type of humour. This dissertation builds on this foundation, arguing that post-feminist humour of this kind should be considered a form of girlish play rather than solely reproductive of gender stereotypes.

Despite extensive research on feminist humour and the internet, little attention has been paid to where the two intersect on TikTok. A focus on the different and emerging forms of humour being used by women, as well as the motivations and implications of them, is needed. Although there is depth of literature about influencers and online marketing on TikTok, and how beauty standards are imposed to promote buying, there is a gap whereby humour facilitates this same thing.

As old stereotypes find new forms, and are exposed to new audiences of all genders, the question of who is making the jokes and their afterlives should be explored. Is it productive, harmful, ironic, based in truth? Who is allowed to make jokes at the expense of women? How does TikTok differ from other platforms, in its internalisation, dissemination and normalisation of new and old cultural beliefs about women? And are users to be blamed for becoming 'agents of the hegemonic structure through the sharing of such forms of humour' (Shifman and Lemish, 2010:887)? To answer these questions, this dissertation examines girlification trends as examples of girlish play, as well as the afterlives and interpretations of them.

Girlish Play

Shifman and Lemish frame post-feminist humour as complicit in the reproduction of gender hierarchies; however, recent scholarship from Akane Kanai introduces the concept of 'girlish play' which centres around self-effacement, complicating this assertion. Kanai's theory of girlish play describes a form of self-deprecating humour which female bloggers use to present minor 'faults', such as laziness, disorganisation or lack of productivity (Kanai, 2019,72). She claims that 'the offering up to readers of what might be otherwise deemed as a fault, but not a serious one, as it is redeemed through self-deprecating humour' (2019:72).

A key aspect of girlish play is pre-emption; Kanai explains that ‘the blogger beats others to the pronouncement of judgment’ (2019:72) in being self-deprecating. Also central to girlish play is the idea of celebration; Kanai highlights that blog posts adopt a celebratory tone when positioning themselves in opposition to ‘the feminist feeling rule related to productivity’ (2019:72). This playful or celebratory tone is mirrored by many of the girlification trends that this dissertation analyses, notably ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m just a girl’. Building on Kanai’s framework, this dissertation analyses girlification trends through a lens of girlish play to examine their subversive and reclamatory capacities and limits.

This theory challenges the perspectives proposed by Shifman and Lemish, which positioned post-feminist humour as primarily reproductive. Despite its relevance to this dissertation, Kanai’s framework is moulded around blog posts uploaded to Tumblr, leaving its operation within contemporary platforms with more significant levels of user participation unexplored. Therefore, this dissertation builds on Kanai’s framework with application to TikTok and girlification trends. Attention to concepts such as girlish play as well as specific rhetorical features of the girlification trends analysed, such as irony, satire and self-deprecation, forms the basis of this dissertations analysis.

How is Humour Constructed Online?

As previously established humour has featured substantially in sociological scholarship. However, much of the traditional literature cannot fully account for the new forms humour has taken on with the rise of the internet. The shift to digital platforms has introduced new dynamics and languages through which humour is shaped and interpreted. It has also increased the reach and reproduction of humour.

Online humour is characterised by the development of shared languages and cultural references, often in the form of memes. Online, interactions are fast moving and platform-specific, producing distinct forms of humour shaped by cultural references, often in the form of memes. To better understand how humour is shared, Hemsley and Mason analysed virality. They define virality as:

‘a [word of mouth] diffusion process wherein a message is actively forwarded from person to person, within and between multiple weakly linked personal networks, and marked by a period of geometric growth in the number of people who are exposed to the message’.

(Hemsley and Mason,2012:3)

Much as these concepts allow us to better understand internet culture, they are not specific to TikTok. Memes may be used on TikTok, and TikToks may ‘go viral’ however, TikTok specific features and cultures should be further explored in the pursuit of understanding how humour manifests on the app. Drakett illustrates the different forms of internet memes, ‘including but not limited to YouTube videos, Twitter hashtags and, of interest in this paper, image macros.

Drakett defines an image macro as ‘an image featuring a textual overlay’ (2018:113). TikTok builds on image macros and meme culture, with the use of added audios. Often the tone of a TikTok, the seriousness of the joke etc... is delivered and made clear through the use of added audios. Where in meme culture; often all there is to decipher is the relation of the added text/caption to the image/ short clip, TikToks have an added layer to consider. Additionally, though it is difficult to talk about humour online without addressing the usage of memes, they are not the only way in which humour is conveyed, and so a focus on other types of humour being used online is necessary.

Although Hemsley and Mason’s study focuses on Facebook, their insights remain applicable to other platforms. Their commentary on the ‘key aspects ‘of social software, being that ‘they allow for ‘users to self-organize into social networks’ and ‘support conversational interaction and social feedback that facilitates building trust and signalling reputation within a community’ (2012:2) are particularly relevant, as the same is true of TikTok. These features facilitate the rapid spread of humour whilst building communities based on users’ shared interpretations of cultural references. However, their emphasis on the ‘weak’ personal networks requires development in the context of TikTok, which has a greater capacity for community building.

Shifman also speaks of community creation, this time with a focus on YouTube. She claims that on YouTube community is built because of the sense that users are ‘communicating with peers’ (2013:76). A potential effect of this is, content produced by users who are not established celebrities, might make their content, jokes and beliefs more easily digested and less critically

evaluated. However, this also provides insight into the everyday perspectives and humour of online communities.

However, Shifman's observations are made based on YouTube and commerce, and so are not so easily applied to my research question. The concept of 'community' online and peer to peer communication On TikTok should be explored further, not only as a means of promoting consumption, but also transmitting ideas. Humour as a vessel for the informal dissemination of such ideas is something that the existing literature on online discourse has not yet developed fully.

TikTok: Humour and Community construction

The idea that humour might be used to ridicule, resist, reclaim or even reproduce harmful stereotypes is well established in feminist scholarship. However, the platforms facilitating this political or patriarchal resistance, and the audiences that inhabit them have evolved. TikTok categorises content based on a variety of factors. One section of the app allows for users to engage with content posted by their 'friends' – meaning people that they both follow and are followed by, although in this section suggested content is also shown with a caption of 'people you may know'. There is a section displaying the content of people users have chosen to follow.

Additionally, there is the 'for you' section, where content is shown to users often based on their viewing and liking habits, and or the engagement habits of their 'friends', 'people they may know' and people they follow. Aside from the content made by people the user knows personally, most content that is shared and pushed out across the platform will be from people the user has no 'personal network' with. Through rapid and continuous interaction and engagement with TikTok's algorithm and content streams, users connect with each other, build communities and develop shared understandings and cultural references.

New terminologies specific to this space arise and are understood by its users, Foster explains how 'from popularising common catchphrases to creating niche jargon, TikTok has become a linguistic playground where users can connect and explore through language' (Foster,2024). This process creates community as jokes that rest on this TikTok jargon and memetic references can only be accurately shared and understood by users of the app they originate from. This

internal, exclusive mechanism is referenced colloquially on the app through the recurring assertion ‘If you know you know’ (IYKYK).

These processes are reflected the emergence of what are colloquially referred to as ‘girlification’ trends. ‘Girlification’ is understood as the gendering or feminisation of concepts or practices, often through humour and aesthetics. Examples of these trend include ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m just a girl’, which reframe everyday experiences through a gendered lens. In these cases, IYKYK humour transforms into another popular assertion ‘the girls that get it get it’ (Venn,2024). It is this reliance on shared cultural knowledge and references, which positions users as either in or out of the joke, as ‘the girls that get it’ and those who don’t.

Broadly, TikTok offers a valuable insight into how ideals of femininity are constructed, reproduced and contested in contemporary digital discourse. Although, existing literature explores themes of humour, gender and online discourse, less attention has been paid to their reliance on platform specific dynamics. Building on this literature, particularly girlish play, through the examination of girlification trends allows for a more nuanced understanding of how contemporary post-feminist humour functions to resist and, in some cases, reproduce gender hierarchies.

Investigating ‘Girlification’ Trends:

This paper explores a variety of girlification trends, as they are presented on TikTok. ‘Girl Math’ and ‘I’m just a girl’ were specifically selected for analysis as they have been subject to extensive criticism online for reproducing harmful, sexist stereotypes about women, whilst simultaneously receiving substantial praise for being relatable. The divisive discourse about both trends made them suitable for investigation under this paper’s research question.

TikTok is a social media platform with over 1.59 billion global users (in 2025) (Slotta,2026) and has become a site for both entertainment and political activism (Boffone:2,63). TikTok was selected as the subject of this paper’s research because it is the platform on which the ‘girlification’ trends discussed originated and where their related discourse takes place.

Additionally, the production of publicly available content made data collection readily accessible. Given the platform's growing user base and unique capacity for community creation, this paper aims to investigate how feminist discourses on the app use humour to 'address the shared experiences and perspectives of women' (Case and Lippard, 2009:240) and ridicule 'oppressive contexts and restrictive values' (Merril,2022:275).

As this paper is primarily concerned with the delivery, reception and afterlives of girification trends, a thematic discourse analysis was employed. This method was chosen because it facilitates an understanding of what each trend is, how it functions, and how it is understood colloquially. Additionally, it enables the identification of prominent and recurring themes across trends, including common language, as well as recurring visual and verbal cues. This is essential for identifying tonal markers, making humour more discernible and supporting the data selection process. Most importantly, thematic discourse analysis allows for a balanced examination of both criticisms and defences of each trend, as responses were analysed in detail, with a grounded appreciation for the subject matter and nature of its delivery.

Firstly, the research focused on videos made about 'Girl Math'. Between 24th February 2026 and 22nd March 2026, I searched for content under the hashtags #GirlMath #girlmath #GirlMaths #girlmaths and #girlmathexplained, in the 'Top' section of the TikTok search page. Under this category 'the most relevant search results appear' (TikTok.com, 2026).

Taking inspiration from Skyes' (2025) study of the #stayathomegirlfriend on TikTok I watched over 85 of the 'top' videos, later excluding any which had fewer than 25,000 views and 1,000 likes. Critical content was excluded from the sample at this time, along with videos which lacked verbal/visual indicators of humour, and content produced by men, as the focus here was on the origins and representations of 'Girl Math', which would later be analysed against the formula for girlish play. After excluding content that was not relevant to this paper's study the final data set included 30 videos. Although, this is a relatively small sample, this allowed for a detailed and grounded analysis of Girl Math themes. As, frequently the content listed multiple Girl Math logics in one video, the collation of all 30 videos was sufficient to present a diverse and varied set of themes, and facilitate a rounded understanding of the rationale, whilst highlighting the most prominent and recurring themes.

Content was watched multiple times, so that once familiarised with each concept, like concepts could be organised into overarching themes. Conclusions and comparisons made were led by the data collected, despite this prior familiarisation with the content. Recurring content was organised into the following themes: cost per wear calculations, opportunity costs associated with discounted items, varying payment methods' influence on purchasing, delayed gratification (where the time elapsed between purchase and experience influenced users' perception of cost), attitudes towards shipping costs, attitudes towards refunds/reimbursement. These themes were then analysed through a lens of girlish play, with attention to their 'latent messages' (Case and Lippard,2009:245), to discern whether they reproduced or subverted traditional gender hierarchies.

The same process was followed when the I'm just a girl trend was researched. Over 85 videos were watched, between 24th February 2026 and 22nd March 2026, those not relevant to the researched (based on engagement levels and lack of humour indicators) were excluded, leaving a data set of 30 TikTok videos. Again, I searched the 'top' section of TikTok, for the most relevant videos, under the following hashtags: #imjustagirl, #Justagirl, #i'mjustagirl, #justagirl, #Imjustagirl. Videos were watched multiple times before being organised into groups based on the most recurring themes. It must be noted that there are factors that influence the results generated by searches on TikTok, such as: a user's past search behaviour, and the content they engage with (like, comment, share, watch in full, skip), as well as user information (language, device settings, location) (TikTok.com,2024). And so, it is difficult to know if the content analysed is objectively the most popular (engaged with). However, analysis of the themes presented, still proved useful in answering the research question, as a diverse set of themes were presented, and contested by those critical of the trends, meaning that they were representative enough to substantiate the debate online, which is what this paper contributes to.

Here research was focused on how the trend was being interpreted and the differing ways this manifested. Patterns were identified highlighting the most prominent uses of the term 'I'm just a girl'. Visual aids, audios, captions, hashtags, emojis were analysed to interpret different applications of the trend. The patterns identified included the use of the sad hamster 'mascot', notions of a 'boyfriend mode' and presentations of 'girlhood/' 'girly things'. Gaining an understanding of the uses and interpretations of the term, was necessary for the later

comparative analysis of I'm just a girl and girlish play and addressing criticisms. This was also useful in assessing the degree of humour expressed in such content.

In all cases, only videos posted publicly between 24th February 2026 and 22nd March 2026, were analysed. Halford highlights a limitation of the use of data obtained from social media; she explains that 'social media data have a social life of their own, [...], circulating in timelines, retweets, and online conversation, for example, and may change status over time' as this may occur for example, 'as a user deletes content' (Halford 2017:18). This may impact the longevity of the study, if for example content can no longer be found. This was true of one of the TikTok channels researched in this dissertation's study, Sky Sports' 'Halo'. However, TikTok allows for the downloading of content and screen recording also enables users to save content. As a result, Halo's digital footprint has not been erased, and the content was still available to watch, through second party upload. Furthermore, the deletion of content would not invalidate conclusions drawn from its analysis at the time of writing.

Following advice from Ahmed et al (2017:79-80) and considering consent from creators could not be obtained, all creators were kept anonymous, and any identifying characteristics, as well as direct quotations were removed from discussion. Regardless the subject matter is not one provoking great sensitivity and does not focus on a specific vulnerable group, the likelihood of harm being caused to any participants is minimal and mitigated by their anonymity. As this study is concerned with trends, recurring themes and patterns were of interest, rather than specific/personal experiences and opinions, this redaction did not limit the usefulness of the data.

Later, attention shifted to the comment section, as well as both critical and defensive response videos, made by both men and women. The goal here was to gain an appreciation for how the content was being received and engaged with. Additionally, this analysis highlighted ongoing debates regarding girification trends, which this paper engages with. Under each video analysed, the top three most liked comments were interpreted. These comments were organised into themes such as: agreement/relating, disagreement/expressions of distaste, developing themes discussed in the video with further examples.

Excluded from this sample were comments left by men, and comments unrelated to discussions of the trend (for example referencing something specific to the creator, such as a clothing item worn). Men were excluded from this sample as their reactions were analysed separately from the reactions of women. Here the primary focus was to understand how women were sharing and interpreting such content, as the primary focus of this paper centres around girification trends as an application of girlish play. Again, the anonymity of all commentors was preserved, and as the comments were organised into recurring themes. Comments were not directly quoted, but paraphrased, and only referenced as evidence of recurring themes. Only the three most liked comments (per video) were analysed, as these highlighted what themes users engaged with /related to the most, and no comments referencing specific or identifiable characteristics of the video were included in the sample.

Response videos were not excluded based on evidence of expressions of humour. This is because this section of the research was concerned with how the trends were being interpreted by those not involved in their creation. The aim was to gain an understanding of whether both men and women enjoyed and related to, or were critical of the content, and so the delivery of humour in responses was not relevant to this aspect of the research question. Men were included in data collected here because one of the focuses of this project was to gain an understanding of how men interpret and internalise girlish play, and so their reactions needed to be analysed. Data was divided based on gender, and trend, with an additional data set on responses that spoke about multiple trends in one video.

These sample sizes were smaller, as engagement levels were generally lower for response videos, and so, many videos had to be excluded (under 25,000 views and 1,000 likes). As a result, only 20 videos per demographic were analysed. Although these sample sizes are not as representative of each demographic, they still produced recurring themes and provided a broad understanding of the diversity of responses to each trend.

Findings and Discussion

Introducing Girl Math: Form, Logic and Humour

Emerging from the ‘Girl Dinner’ trend, ‘Girl Math’ was presented as a light-hearted and illogical rationale used by women to justify their spending habits. The trend is an example of ‘if you know, you know’ (IYKYK) humour, understood colloquially as a form of inside joke shared by communities online. ‘Girl Math’ rationale largely centres around ways of losing or gaining money. Examples of this rationale include: ‘when I’ve returned clothes, and the money comes back into my account, I’ve made money’, ‘cash is free/doesn’t count’, ‘when I pick up the bill and my friends transfer me for their part, I’ve made money’, ‘if I pass up on a sale I’m losing money’, ‘if I pay for a holiday in advance, by the time I go it’s free’.

Humour was conveyed through deadpan delivery, sarcasm and hyperbole. Commonly “Girl Math” was reiterated after each justification, often with a smirk or giggle. Creators were seen to be laughing in 26.7% of videos. Videos which included multiple women sharing their examples with each other, showed women bouncing ideas off each other, giggling, agreeing and ‘riffing’. Humour was also signalled through emoji use, present in 33.3% of captions to convey a sense of irony, sarcasm and playfulness. Emojis included: ‘goofy face’, ‘face with tears of joy’, ‘sparkles’, ‘rolling on the floor laughing face’, ‘kissing face’, to signal agreement with the themes discussed ‘sign of the horns’, ‘handshake’ and a sense of femininity (‘nail polish’, ‘ribbon bow’). These emojis, among other similar emojis, were also present in 24.4% of the most liked comments under the videos analysed. Emojis were often paired with hashtags, in video captions, to convey the intention/tone of the post. Common themes found in the hashtags (where used) were mentions of money or saving money, relatability, humour/comedy, reference to “girlthings”, “girlhood” and “womanhood”, reference to other trends such as ‘girl dinner’ and ‘imjustagirl’, as well as ‘girl math’. 20% of the captions analysed explicitly acknowledged that the logic was not to be taken seriously, or played into the irrationality, conveying a sense of satire and sarcasm.

Performing irrationality: Humour, Irony and Girlish Play

The humour underpinning ‘Girl Math’ operates through a deliberate performance of irrationality, where creators exaggerate flawed financial logic for comedic effect. This self-effacing exaggeration represents a form of ironic ‘detachment’, rather than ‘earnestness’ (Lear, 2014:38). In leaning into the stereotype, sexist assumptions are exposed and ridiculed, creating

a site of collective humour (IYKYK). In the case of Girl Math, the self-effacing humour used not only redeems 'faults' but also brings about group solidarity.

Some creators in defence of girl math have argued, in girlification discourses, that the videos are an example of 'Rage Baiting', whereby 'online content designed to incite negative emotions, such as anger. The term has been colloquially used among social media users as an effective strategy for driving virality' (Shin et al ,2025:1274). However, Girl Math requires a more nuanced analysis when explored as an example of rage bait. Here the exaggerated irrationality is not intended to be taken at face value but relies on shared understanding of its irony. The reactions from men in this case, become part of the joke itself. This can be understood as an example Sigmund Freud's theory of the naïve (2014:291). The men's inability to recognise the satire reinforces the IYKYK dynamic, creating a greater sense of solidarity amongst 'the girls that get it'. Therefore, what might initially appear as rage bait can more accurately understood as a strategic extension of girlish play, where self-effacement and irony are mobilised against men to expose and ridicule gender assumptions.

Despite this, 'Girl Math' has been criticised, in response videos made by female creators, for being patronising, 'cringe' and reproductive of age-old stereotypes of women as financially irresponsible and bad at maths. Response videos addressed themes common in girlification discourses online. The majority of these responses adopted a similar format, both visually and audibly. "Snap out of it" by The Arctic Monkeys, "Just A Girl" by No Doubt, "Labour-the cacophony" by Paris Paloma and "Sorority Girls" by Mommy Long Legs were all present in audios that accompanied videos criticising the trends. Under these audios , a list of quotations found in 'girlification' discourses on TikTok were commonly posted such as: 'I'll just marry a rich man', 'I don't care about politics', 'acting dumb so he can explain it to me', 'my only goal is to be a mum', 'girl dinner' and, almost always, 'Girl Math' and 'I'm just a girl'. The captions, hashtags and audios used in such videos expressed a desire for the women engaging in these trends to 'snap out of it' and 'wake up' to what they appeared to believe was the reproduction of sexist stereotypes and the infantilisation or 'dumbing down' of women. Other commentary videos made in reference to these trends, pointed to common themes of weaponised incompetence, bimbo feminism, patronisation as problematic narratives/thought processes.

These criticisms mirror longstanding concerns within scholarship on post-feminist humour, particularly regarding its potential to reproduce gender norms. Shifman and Lemish analysed

a variety of post-feminist forms of online humour, and highlighted ‘gender difference humour, targeting both sexes and focusing on shopping’ as present in their sample. They claimed that ‘old’ debates about gender inequalities are superseded by fun(ny), celebratory texts about differences between man and women’ (Shifman and Lemish ,2010:886). They propose that although such jokes may appear liberating to ‘unassuming women surfers’, they in fact present gender differences as ‘essentialist: natural, unavoidable, universal and therefore assumedly eternal’ and maintain the hegemonic structure (Shifman and Lemish, 2010:887).

Criticisms of girification discourses raise a number of questions, regarding the risks of girlish play and its self-effacing humour. But also questions of who is to blame for the interpretations of these trends. A debate arises, hinging on whether policing each other’s language functions to mitigate the reproduction of gender hierarchies, or if instead this censorship reinforces the repression of women. This chapter argues that such humour functions as rebellious girlish play, mobilising self-effacing humour to subvert gender stereotypes. Through the analysis of recurring rationales and audience responses, this paper demonstrates how humour operates as a means of collective resistance within a digital feminist culture.

Reframing Girl Math: Subversion, Solidarity and the Politics of Gendered Consumption

Defence of the trends also emerges within girification discourses on TikTok, positioning them in direct opposition to Shifman and Lemish’s, representation of female audiences as ‘unassuming’. Creators argue that rather than being regressive, Girl Math is empowering, framing it as a celebration of women’s financial autonomy. This perspective grounds the trend in a broader historical context, whereby women were denied financial independence and had to justify their spending to their husbands. In contrast, Girl Math reworks and reclaims this logic through humour, as women now must only justify purchases to themselves. In this sense, girlish play operates by exaggerating the need to justify purchases to a humorous degree, transforming a once restrictive structure into a playful and collective expression of financial freedom.

Furthermore, these discussions highlight how the value attributed to men and women's consumption remains unevenly organised. Creators point to double standards relating to cosmetics, whereby women are judged both for engaging and avoiding the consumption of such goods. Within both professional and private spheres women who do not conform to beauty standards may be perceived as unprofessional or unattractive, while those who do are often dismissed as frivolous or vain 'girly girls'. As a result, products associated with feminine appearance are frequently discussed as unnecessary 'extras', despite their crucial role in upholding and achieving contemporary beauty standards.

The debate surrounding Girl Math facilitates a wider discussion about the legitimacy of women's consumption. The need to justify purchases is reflective of the extent to which women's spending is not considered innately valid. This rationalisation of spending reflects a patriarchal value system, which is more explicitly demonstrated by phenomena such as the 'pink tax' and 'tampon tax'. These concepts propose the notion that 'there exists a price premium placed on women's consumer goods relative to those of men' (Barnes and Brounstein, 2022:1). These concepts illustrate how gendered inequalities become entrenched in everyday economic practices.

However, rather than simply reproducing these dynamics, Girl Math exposes them through humour, exaggerating the need for justification to illuminate the underlying patriarchal logic. As a result, it highlights the girlish play's capacity to subvert structural constraints, into a site of solidarity and resistance. This extends to how spending habits, noted in Girl Math rationales are understood as reflecting marketing strategy rather than incompetence.

Behavioural Economics and the Logic of Girl Math

Creators frequently highlighted 'Girl Math' as an application of behavioural economics, citing 'sunk costs' and the 'scarcity effect' as relevant processes. The 'scarcity effect' operates by creating 'a temporary product scarcity' to 'increase overall demand and stimulate customer enthusiasm' (Xiao, 2025:77). This logic is reflected in 'Girl Math' sentiments of losing money when passing up on a sale. Here, the perceived scarcity of the product or discount increases their desire for and justifies their purchase of it.

Similarly, the ‘Sunk Cost Fallacy’ and themes of delayed gratification illuminate the dissociation between payment and consumption. As Trevisan explains, ‘the influence [...] of the separation between the moment of payment and that of consumption is that this seems to reduce the attention given to the cost of the product acquired’ (2013:72). Additionally, he explains that ‘taking out bank notes and seeing them disappear into the hands of the cashier might easily appear more painful than making a simple signature’ and similarly ‘the combined value of banknotes we carry with us will normally be lower than the limit on a credit card and this alone can modify our willingness to spend’ (Trevisan, 2013:72). These sentiments are echoed in ‘Girl Math’ assertions that cash or apple pay ‘do not count’. Rather than signalling financial incompetence, the incorporation of such logics suggests an awareness of tactics which influence consumer behaviour. In this sense, Girl Math can be understood as a form of girlish play that not only engages with, but exposes and subverts, the logics of consumer culture.

From #GirlBoss to 🌟 Girl Math 🌟

The subversive potential of Girl Math extends further, acting as an effective antidote to millennial post-feminist, neoliberal movements such as the #GirlBoss. The #GirlBoss was intended to be empowering, but instead has been criticised for encouraging divisive competition amongst women and sensationalising female success. #GirlBoss ideals promoted the notion that through self-discipline women could (and should) ‘have it all’ (Bryne and Giuliani 2025:6). This emphasis places particular focus to women’s physical appearances and ability to juggle family relationships, and professional life (Bryne and Giuliani 2025:14). Instead of empowering women and creating solidarity, this opens space for insecurity and dissatisfaction as it frames those who do not ‘have it all’ as having failed, whilst overlooking the ‘the systemic barriers and inequalities that (different) women continue to face’ (Bryne and Giuliani 2025:6). Furthermore, those who achieved individual success were sensationalised in media accounts, making this success seem unattainable/ (Bryne and Giuliani 2025:13).

In contrast, defenders of ‘Girl Math’, argued that its celebration of imperfection, vulnerability and honesty offers relief from the pressures. Rather than promoting competition, the trend fosters a sense of relatability and collective recognition, as women openly share laughs about their spending habits. The shift from individual success to shared imperfection illustrates the

collectivising functions of girlish play, positioning Girl Math as a humour resistant to neoliberal ideals, instead creating solidarity with digital feminist discourse.

The Girls That Get It, Get It: Collective Reception

These sentiments were shared in the comment sections of Girl Math content. A significant majority (81.1%) of comments expressed relatability, with users contributing personal examples of ‘girl math’ or extending the ‘joke’. Commentors frequently expressed how the content ‘makes sense’ and was ‘so real’, ‘so true’, how they ‘live by’ this logic and discussing what they were going to do with their newfound “savings”, for example.

Emojis also played a key role in signalling tone, particularly that of irony and playfulness. Frequently used emojis included laughing faces (‘face with tears of joy’), bows and the sparkle emoji. While the sparkle emoji can convey multiple meanings, it is often interpreted to signal sarcasm in digital discourse (Kaiser, 2024:468), particularly when used in place of asterisks or used to ‘bookend’ statements, as is common in Girl Math content (see figure 1). These features reinforce the self-aware and performative nature of the humour, demonstrating how such signals are collectively understood and reproduced within online communities. And so, the trend exemplifies the collectivising function of IYKYK discourse, supporting its interpretation as a form of girlish play that fosters group solidarity.

Figure 1: (source: Anon, TikTok)



Infantilisation and the Politics of ‘Girl’

Despite the subversive potential of Girl Math, tensions remain regarding the use of the prefix ‘girl’, given its historically infantilising connotations and the ways in which this might shape how femininity is understood in online discourse. However, this concern is actively contended within girification discourses. Many creators argue that the term ‘girl’ is not inherently

offensive when used by women themselves, suggesting that its patronising or infantilising effects are contingent on context and power relations. The term becomes offensive when used by men as it reinforces gender hierarchies, but not offensive when used between women, as these are not present. Therefore, the use of 'girl' in Girl Math is contextually neutral, given that the trend is created for and by women.

This perspective challenges the assumption that this humour is in some way innately harmful. Some creators argue that, within a patriarchal society where women have traditionally been positioned as intellectually inferior, these such jokes have little material effect on the reinforcement of stereotypes. Instead, they are a result of self-effacement and irony and are actually evidence of intelligence. This type of humour relies on irony and shared experience, meaning that those outside the intended audience (men) might fail to recognise it as satire, and instead interpret it as an authentic portrayal of the feminine thought process.

This debate opens further questions about the idea of linguistic policing. The notion that the connotations of 'girl' might be transformed simply through individual acts of censorship, rather than gradual ideological shifts, was criticised in digital girlification discourses. Girl Math operates, by knowingly engaging with stereotypes of female financial irresponsibility, which draws on the self-effacing element of girlish play. As this humour relies on a shared recognition that the stereotypes are false, their exaggeration is playing into the absurdity of the idea. Therefore, failures to appreciate the irony are not to be understood as evidence that the trend is harmful or risky but indicate the internalisation of persisting sexist assumptions.

Testing the Boundaries of Girlish Play: 'I'm Just a Girl'

As established, girlish play operates through self-effacing, ironic humour which differentiates its subversion of gendered hierarchies from simple reproduction. However, this framework cannot be applied uniformly across all girlification trends, particularly where the boundaries of irony and sincerity are blurred. The 'I'm just a girl' trend provides a critical case through which the limits of girlish play are tested. Unlike Girl Math, which relies on deliberately exaggerated performances of irrationality, 'I'm just a girl' often centres on expressions of inability and male dependency, which is where the distinction between satire and sincerity becomes less stable.

Such themes raise questions about whether these performances function as self-aware satire or whether they risk reproducing the very stereotypes that girlish play otherwise subverts.

The 'I'm just a girl' trend, is used to convey sentiments of 'girlhood' and as justification for behaviour and inability. The trend manifested itself in a variety of ways. One was through the use of the 'sad hamster' mascot. In such cases, a caption would appear on screen, outlining a scenario, and what followed was an image of the 'sad hamster' and the justification 'but I'm literally just a girl'. These scenarios ranged from an issue arising with a woman's car, a leak in their house or a problem with their boyfriend, to their job role (see figure 2).

Figure 2: (source: Anon, TikTok)



Another common theme of the trend was bad driving and poor parking. In these videos, women would show their poor parking, with the caption I'm just a girl, often these were delivered through a format of humorous sketches. Additionally, videos showing women attempting to defrost their windscreen with a lip balm, being messy, disorganised or clumsy, listing the 'girly' things they like, detailing outrageous or mean things they've done, were posted en masse with the caption 'I'm just a girl'. A large portion of videos referenced a kind of 'autopilot' or 'boyfriend mode' that women took on when with their partners. In these videos women would list how women gave up their sense of direction, spatial awareness, common sense,

organisation, and general ability to take care of themselves. These examples implied that the women didn't have to think for themselves as their boyfriend would do it for them.

In this form, 'I'm just a girl' operates as a rhetorical 'get out of jail free' card for any mishap, mistake or choice that women made. Often these videos were accompanied by similar hashtags and emojis as the 'girl math' trend, with many hashtags relating to 'girlhood', 'womanhood' and 'just girl things'. The videos associated with this trend used a variety of accompanying and trending audios such as: "Just A Girl" by No Doubt, and a snippet of Julia Robert's famous "I'm also just a girl, standing in front of a boy asking him to love her" line from Notting Hill, shortened to 'I'm also just a girl'.

Reimagining 'Fault': Temporary vs Fixed

The 'I'm just a girl' trend is a more complex and nuanced example of 'girlish play'. In some respects, it aligns with the 'girlish play' formula in that it presents a fault, typically one of inefficiency, disorganisation or dependence. However, the degree of seriousness is where a more nuanced approach is required.

In 'boyfriend mode' content, the fault is presented as temporary, and situational. This suggests that women are performatively withdrawing their competence, rather than simply lacking it, aligning more closely with the structure of girlish play. This manifestation of the trend seemingly plays on past sentiments which argued 'it's not about what you can do for misogyny, it's about what misogyny can do for you', whereby women jovially discussed how they used their subordinate position to their betterment. This movement is an example of what Given deems performing femininity out of 'habit, expected acceptance or survival', whereby women use the tools around them to 'make their lives easier' (in Foster,2025:16).

In contrast, in sad hamster content, a dependence on men and a resentment for having to self-suffice (e.g. work, complete tasks and problem solve) is commonly presented, here the fault would be a lack of ability. Although this fault is presented as lasting and is less obviously ironic. Here, the 'fault' shifts from a playful exaggeration to what appears as a genuine lack of ability, weakening girlish play's key feature, self-effacing humour.

Although, some interpretations of the trend attempt to reclaim the phrase through displays of independence and self-sufficiency, these examples are limited in comparison to those already discussed. Overall, 'I'm just a girl' demonstrates weak presentations of humour, and has little subversive power. Rather than challenging gender norms the trend appears to lean too far into them, reproducing stereotypes and highlighting the limits of girlish play's subversive capacity. In this case this dissertation argues that 'I'm just a girl' is not a consistent and robust example of girlish play.

Girlish Play or Bimbo Feminism?

The ambiguous delivery of humour in 'I'm just a girl' means that the trend more closely aligns with bimbo feminism than girlish play. Amongst bimbo feminism's characteristic is the celebration, genuine embracing and reimagining of hyper-femininity 'without the constraints of patriarchal expectations' (Foster, 2025:3), a counter to the historic rejection of pink and desire to be 'not like other girls' (Given in Foster, 2025:15).

Bimbo feminism has been described as a gateway feminism, which empowers, educates and validates women. It claims to reclaim 'hyper-femininity through dismantling the dichotomy of femininity being equated to unintelligence' (Foster, 2025:9), often through small acts of resistance. An example of this is the distribution of accessible education, e.g. explaining the Russia/Ukraine conflict in terms of a bad break up (Redkar in Foster, 2025:12).

Although both frameworks embrace playfulness and femininity, bimbo feminism often prioritises reclamation over ironic self-effacement. This distinction is what defines 'I'm just a girl' as an unstable example of girlish play. Where self-effacing humour is clearly delivered through irony and satire, girlish play can function as a form of resistance. However, when these features are not clear they risk reproducing gender norms and sexist stereotypes. This case is, therefore, useful in establishing the boundaries of girlish play, exposing its limits and contextual dependence.

Appropriations of Girlish Play: Uses, Abuses and Boundaries

The afterlives of girlish play are crucial to understanding how these trends are interpreted and transformed beyond their intended purposes. A key form of the appropriation of girification sentiments is commodification. Following the popularity of the 'sad hamster', associated with 'I'm just a girl', its image and slogan has appeared on t-shirts and bumper stickers, Girl Math has been co-opted by advertising campaigns and across TikTok shop, parallel with the scarcity effect, to market products. These instances highlight the commodification of the aesthetics, but also raise concerns about how their connotations shift when commercialised or introduced to unintended audiences.

Soon after the initial wave of 'Girl Math' content, the trend shifted audience, as content emerged whereby women explained 'Girl Math' to the men in their lives. At the same time, the trend was picked up by male channels with response videos and podcast clips made where men discussed the trend. These videos showed men appealing to each other and to women, to clarify if this logic was genuinely being used. These discussions highlighted how meanings attached to Girl Math, understood by those in on the IYKYK humour, were interpreted by a new audience, illuminating how girlish play is received by those outside of its contextual boundaries.

Analysis of men's reactions to Girl Math reveal the shared understanding that is necessary for girlish play to function as humorous subversion. In videos where women explained Girl Math logic to men, the most recurring responses were explicit disagreement (85%) and expressions of disbelief (65%), conveyed through both verbal and non-verbal expression. In 50% of cases, this confusion was channelled into commentary about women (specific to their partners in some cases, and generalised in others), through assertions that the logic 'explains a lot', that women were 'stupid' for its use and sentiments of relief that the women weren't in control of their finances. These comments reinforce stereotypes that women are irrational, unintelligent or financially irresponsible.

Although 35% of responses displayed a degree of playful agreement, although such expressions were generally hypothetical and lacked the self-effacing dimension that is central to defining humour as girlish play. Laughter was present in 60% of cases however, this was commonly rooted in disbelief or frustration rather than shared humour.

Having and awareness of Girl Math's male reception is important, as it highlights that girlish play is context bound rather than cannot universally transferable across all discussions of girification trends. When removed from the shared cultural and gendered context in which girlish play is constructed, its sense of irony and self-effacement is weakened, and the sentiments appear to be interpreted as sincere, rather than playful and satirical. As a result, rather than being subversive of gender stereotypes, male interpretations of Girl Math risk reinforcing them. This illuminates how girlish play relies on audience, authorship and community in order to enact its subversive functions.

These misinterpretations mirror those presented by Sky Sport's 'Halo' channel on TikTok, reinforcing how girlish play is weakened when removed from its indented community and authentic authorship, and in this case through commercial appropriation. On authorship, Claire Horisk argues that 'there are different implicatures in the case where the speaker belongs to the derogated group than there are where the speaker does not belong to the derogated group' (2024:64). Sky Sports' TikTok channel Halo was described as "Sky Sports' lil sis 🌟" and aimed at female sports fans. Although on the surface the channel appeared to mirror elements of girlish play and girification trends, such as playful language, pink sparkly text and 'accessible' commentary, it was met with significant backlash, leading to its removal in under three days. This was due to its lack of belonging to the derogated, which prevented the content form being subversive, instead landing as infantilising and condescending.

This dissertation argues that 'Halo' exemplifies the abusive appropriation of girlish play for commercial gain. Unlike original posts that emerge from the shared experiences of women, 'Halo's' marketing strategy misses the mark due to its contextual sitting in a historically male-dominated institution. As a result, its use of language and feminised visual was interpreted not as self-effacing, but as patronising and reductive. This difference in reception reinforces the theory that girlish play is not defined solely by its content, but by context and authorship. The backlash 'Halo' received also revealed girlish play's self-perseverative capacities. Responses to the channel, including mocking, parody style videos, functioned to reject its misappropriation and reclaim control over girlish play narratives. These reactions not only exposed the risks of misinterpretation and appropriation, but also reinforced the boundaries between subversive girlish play and reproduction of sexist stereotypes.

When regarded holistically, the afterlives of girlish play demonstrate that it is a context-dependent practice. Although it operates as a form of collective resistance, its subversive abilities are dismantled through commodification and misrepresentation. And so, girlish play is understood as reliant on self-effacing humour as well as authorship, representation and the community by which it is received.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the functions and potential risks of post-feminist humour within girification trends on TikTok, focusing specifically on Girl Math and I'm just a girl, as case studies through which the concept of girlish play was explored. This paper challenges dominant scholarly criticisms of digital post-feminist humour, which argue that it operates through the reproduction and reinforcement of gender differences and gender hierarchies. Instead, this research and its application to Kanai's framework has demonstrated the rebellious, subversive and collectivising capacities of the trend.

Through exaggerated performances of irrationality, the trend employs irony, self-depreciation and shared cultural reference to ridicule stereotypes surrounding women's mathematic abilities and financial irresponsibility. Rather than being earnest expressions, this girlish play leans into the absurdity of such stereotypes and in doing so forms solidarity amongst women online. In these communities' humour is used both as resistance and recognition of patriarchal gender assumptions and reclaims them. Furthermore, examining Girl Math alongside concepts of behavioural economics, illuminates how the trend's logic is not proof of gendered inability, but targeted marketing strategies.

However, the analysis of other trends, exposes the boundaries of girlish play. Analysis of the I'm just a girl trend demonstrates the necessity for a degree of irony and self-effacement in the production of playful content by women, in qualifying as girlish play. In the case of I'm just a girl, where humour and self-effacement are not consistent and explicit qualities, the distinction between subversion and reproduction begins to blur. This dissertation asserts that in this case, the trend aligns more with bimbo feminism, where celebration and reclamation of femininity are prioritised. This lack of visible self-referential humour prevents the trend's characterisation as that of girlish play. This case study illuminates the boundaries of girlish play as reliant on

context, delivery, humour and intention. In the absence of these qualities girification trends risk the loss of their subversive capacities and reproducing sexist stereotypes.

Aside from the production of girlish play on TikTok, this dissertation analyses its reception and afterlives, and how they contribute to its connotation construction. Audience responses highlighted that girlish play's humour is not universally interpreted as subversive, instead this understanding relies on the cultural experiences and gender of audiences. The misinterpretation of Girl Math, by men, reveals the necessity of context and shared experience in the interpretation of the trend as ironic rather than sincerity. The implication of this is those who are privy to the content, but not the context might interpret the trend as reproductive of sexist stereotypes, rather than subversive of them. Similarly, the commercialisation of girification trends (aesthetics and themes), as highlighted by the case of Sky Sports' Halo, reveals how girlish play is stripped of its subversive qualities when removed from its intended context and audience, placing importance on the authorship of such content, in relation to its subversive success.

However, this case provoked a critical debate centring around whether girlish play should be policed through censorship or preserved. The response of women to the launch of the Halo channel, extended the reclamatory and resistant capacities of girlish play, as well as its ability to self-preserve. However, the channels failure was used as evidence, by some creators, of the dangers of its misinterpretation. This dissertation argues that the idea that content which collectivises, comforts and entertains women, whilst subverting gender norms should be censored in fear of male interpretation is as anti-feminist and repressive as the stereotypes it seeks to resist. These criticisms expose a regressive attitude towards post-feminist humour, namely girlish play, whereby its ability to mobilise communities in the resistance of patriarchal norms, is undermined and reduced to passive reproduction.

This research contributes to existing literature and extends the concept of girlish play to the contemporary context of TikTok, demonstrating its continued relevance in digital discourses. This paper campaigns for a more nuanced understanding of new forms of post-feminist humor, accounting for irony, authorship and audience reception. As digital cultures are in a state of constant evolution and shape feminist discourse, recognise the boundaries of girlish play and its value is essential to understanding the contemporary landscape of gender assumption and feminist resistance to it.

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