





## Beautiful Princess Disorder

Perhaps the most conceptually intriguing point to come out of Alex Quicho's article is that of the girl as a form of collective identity or **networked subjectivity**. In particular, the frequent references to **girl swarms** of course takes us back to Byung-Hul Han's chapters from his book *In the Swarm* that we were discussing a few weeks back. I'm thinking in particular of passages like this one, which references a few TikTok accounts:

Recently, some popular accounts (@chloe21e8, @lilclearpill, and @heartlock-etxo are personal favorites, though it's more useful to read these as nodes in a swarm rather than the products of any one mind) have struck a collective nerve with their embodiment of an ever-shifting mass voice that is ecstatic, girl-coded, and unknowable. "I'm so mentally stable it's insane. I have BPD, beautiful princess disorder. I'm so clear-pilled, I can see through the matrix. I'm not left-wing or right-wing, I have angel wings that grow whenever I transcend into space," goes [the swarm thinking](#) that has transcended format, individual creator, and platform to become [viral TikTok audios](#), [million-view Reels](#), [Grimes citations](#), and beautiful-princess Bible verses carved into my brainstem like lovers' initials in a tree trunk.

?quarto-cite:chloe21e8

?quarto-cite:lilclearpill

?quarto-cite:heartlocketxo

There are some key differences between Han's and Quicho's framing of the swarm here. First, for Han, the swarm is an entirely negative consequence of networked communication, producing the kind of scapegoating and shaming culture discussed in the book *The Shame Machine*. By contrast, Quicho is pretty upbeat about the emancipatory possibilities of the girl swarm and presents the idea of the girl as a kind of "hive mind" in which individual identity is eclipsed by a wider network subjectivity. If you have any immersion in platforms like Instagram and TikTok you will have an idea of what she means.

Crucially, for Han social media is a world of *disconnected*, atomized **individuals**, in contrast to the anonymous effacement of individuals in the modern **crowd**. For Quicho, social media is the opposite. Or at least, to paraphrase Joe Jackson, *It's Different for Girls...*

## Post-Platform

You may have noticed a few references to the term **post-platform** in Alex Quicho's article, and may have been wondering about that. [This Substack article](#) by Kyle Chayka will help with that, but the main thing to be aware of is that the term itself is now widely regarded as discredited by the emerging new social mediascape. To get a better sense of this, take a look at Sarah Marshall's recent prediction of how "[We get past 'post-platform'](#)," which provides an interesting snapshot of the rapid transformations underway in today's social mediascape. Looking through her list, it's hard to disagree that Chayka's melancholy diagnosis of the demise of legacy SM platforms is premature, along with the term "post-platform" itself. Something new is undoubtedly emerging, as we'll be discussing in the remaining weeks of the course, but even though the future looks more decentralized, social media platforms are clearly not going the way of the dinosaurs anytime soon.

## Resources

[frumpenberg](#) (ECE's Instagram)

[Frump Feelings](#) (ECE's Substack blog)

## Babygirls



"So babygirl! It's the new gen Z term of endearment – but what does it mean?" (*The Guardian*, 24 January 2024).

Gita Jackson, "Why sad TV men are the internet's 'babygirls'" (*Polygon*, 8 May 2023).

Alaina Demopoulos, "'Sadness is a trend': why TikTok loves 'crying makeup'." (*The Guardian*, 31 October 2022).

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### **#MorningRoutine**

Rachel Signer, "Broadcasting your breakfast: why TikTokers obsess over morning routines" (*The Guardian*, 18 February 2023).

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### **Amalia Ulman**

Website

Instagram

Alastair Sooke, "Is This The First Instagram Masterpiece?", *The Telegraph*, 18 January 2016

"Amalia Ulman: Meme Come True" (*Dazed*)

Emilie Friedlander, "Social Anxiety: Why Amalia Ulman's Fake 'Middlebrow' Instagram Is No Different From Yours", *Fader*, 7 November 2014.

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