In this paper, we will discuss the social action involved in the construction of stylized girlness – so-called ‘pissisness’ (in Finnish) in short stories published on social media. Drawing on our previous work on various fictions, indexes and discourses of pississness on social media (e.g. Leppänen 2012; Halonen 2012; Vaattovaara & Halonen forthc.), we will argue how this particular type of stylized girlness is extremely ambivalent: it is both admired, thanks to the girls’ sexual attractiveness, and despised – for the very same reason. ‘Pissisness’ appears to be a particular ‘social myth’ (cf. Barthes 1973) for which there are no clear boundaries or definitions; instead, it is a cluster of indexes capable of generating new ones, including (working) class. Thus, pissisness is a resource, not only for addressing and producing gender and sexuality, but also class – in a society where classes are claimed to be non-existing.

More specifically, drawing on insights provided by sociolinguistic, narrative and discourse analysis, and on the basis of a sample of recent stories focusing on pissis girls written by Finnish writers between the ages 10 and 80, we will show ways in which the stories construct the pissis style, its ‘obligatory’ elements as well as the ‘optional’ elements which are used in the crafting of particular storylines. On the one hand, we will analyze ways in which the social category of the ‘pissis’ is crafted as particular crystallizations of gendered, sexualized and classed performances, and, while doing so, how the category of the pissis is simultaneously ‘Othered’ in various ways (e.g. Butler 1993; Skeggs 2004; Leppänen and Häkkinen, 2013). On the other hand, we will show how the ‘Other’ is also used as a resource for ‘therapeutic’ writing, positive self-identification – a sense of belonging, solidarity and togetherness – as well as disidentification.

Keywords: class, social media, gender.