English Summaries

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Gendered Body Images

The most popular Finnish girls' magazine *Demi* has for many years maintained a website, demi.com, for its readers. The website has several highly popular discussion boards, and although its target audience is teen-age girls, the website is also visited by older women as well as men. The users of demi.com form an active online community and also communicate with each other by posting self-portraits on an unofficial web gallery, demix-galleria.net.

In this article I discuss how bodies are represented online and what kinds of meanings they acquire. I argue that on the Internet bodies can be considered from three dimensions: the material body, the imagined body, and the textually and visually represented body. By analysing the discussions on demi.com and demix-galleria.net, as well as interviews with participants of the web community, I examine the interconnections of these dimensions.

On the demi.com discussion boards gender is the most essential category defining bodies. Gendered bodies are represented in four central ways: the body as outward appearance, the body as identity, the sexual body, and the teenage body in transition. Most of the conversations take place anonymously, which enables very detailed and intimate discussions about the body. In these conversations the female body is often described in a very critical and hostile

way – the participants are hostile both towards their own body and the bodies of others. In the web gallery, however, bodily representations are treated much more gently. The confidential and attentive atmosphere of the gallery enables sharing self-portraits with others in an otherwise unprotected online environment.

Sanna Harakkamäki

The Possibilities of Repeating Differently Representations of Corporality in Eating Disorders Websites

The popular understanding of eating disorders is shaped by the representations of these conditions in e.g. scientific journals and women's magazines. In these representations eating disorders are mainly considered as illnesses. However, eating disorders affect many aspects of human experience and viewing them only from a medical discourse does not lead to satisfying explanations of the phenomenon.

In this article I focus on Pro Eating Disorders websites which present eating disorders as lifestyle choices rather than illnesses. These websites are produced and used mostly by young girls and women of 13–25 years of age. Via websites they demand a right to participate in the public debate on eating disorders, and specifically in defining the contexts through which their bodies are being interpreted.

Pro Eating Disorder websites are constructed by copying and pasting

material that recycles, reproduces and repeats specific representations of eating disorders and bodily experiences – the material varies from religious texts to images of idealized bodies in popular culture. Linked with eating disorders these texts and images receive new and often upsetting meanings. In the article I analyze this strategy of "repeating differently" as a means of creating destabilizing meanings of eating disorders which question meanings taken as axiomatic. I also consider how Pro Eating Disorder websites disrupt notions of "feminine" websites as thematically and visually soft, sweet and comprehensible.

Anna Moring

Queer space in virtual reality: *Nearly Roadkill* and *The PowerBook.*

The two novels I read in this article are situated at the crossroad of virtual reality and queer politics. They subscribe to a combination of virtual reality discourses and queer discourses, which I have termed *cyberqueer discourse*. I read the novels as political projects aiming at deconstructing norms of gender, identity and desire. I analyze how the texts use cyberqueer-discourse in this project and how virtual reality is represented in the process.

In a queerfeminist reading the novels appear to offer different reading positions. This leads to different conceptions of the relationship between gender and identity, depending on the political

identifications of the reader. By analyzing the relationship between the politics of writing, the politics of gender and identity, and the use of cyberqueer discourse, I attempt to examine the relation between the queer projects of the novels and the representations they form of virtual reality. An interesting point of analysis is also that the discourse of romantic love appears to limit the queer utopias in the novels.