

Sanna Kivimäki:

Experience of Writing – Interviews with Finnish Female Authors in Popular Magazines

The aim of my article is to find out the conventions of describing Finnish female authors and their works in popular magazines. I study the general cultural paradoxes concerning women who write and the gendered genres of literary publicity. I consider interviews as some kind of crossroads between so called public and private, literary works and everyday life, which produce certain kind of knowledge based on speech. In my analysis I focus on the repetitions of interviews. I also study the connections in which gender or womanhood is discussed. Finally I explore the conceptions of individualism, relationalism and knowledge in these connections as part of cultural history of writing.

The story of Finnish female author is usually a story of empowerment and story of surviving the work of writing. There is a lot of discussions about families and marriages, landscapes and decors. Metaphors used to describe creative work are often quite bodily, connected to breathing or to giving birth. Gender or womanhood is usually mentioned in relation to men. On the one hand gender is overlooked, on the other hand so called women's issues seems to constitute an own universal sphere, which has hardly any connections to "general" issues like nation or contemporary discussions. The ideal Finnish female author seems to be quite peaceful and equable and she talks calmly with gentle voice. E.g. radicals and feminists are imaginary Others fended off from the Finnish popular literary journalism.

Ilona Virtanen:

"Kalle Is an Ordinary Homosexual" – Representing Homosexuality in the Soap Opera *Salatut elämät*

On television homosexuality has often been represented through negative stereotypes and by othering homosexual characters. During the 1990s a new type of representation, that of the ordinary and normal homosexual, has become the hegemonic representation of homosexuality. The article analyses how the effect of homosexual characters as ordinary is produced by close reading the Finnish soap opera *Salatut elämät* and its gay character Kalle Laitela. It argues that homosexuality is negotiated through very specific terms into the naturalised heterosexuality of the serial.

A distinguishing feature of soap operas is their open narratives: Plot lines do not have a single moment of narrative closure. There is a changing community of characters that are in complex relationships with each other and face innumerable contradictions and social problems. Because of the narrative conventions of soap opera Kalle's sexual identity is also represented as a problem that is exposed and causes crises.

However, homosexuality differs from other plot lines since it separates the gay character from the relationship network of *Salatut elämät*. Whereas heterosexual characters move from one plot line to another through kinship, social or romantic relations with other main or minor characters, Kalle's romantic relationships are only with minor characters that are found outside the soap opera's main spaces (an apartment building, cafeteria and nearby kiosk). Kalle is thus differentiated through space: homosexuality is placed in a gay subculture and within the main spaces in marginal areas such as the building's staircase, yard and basement.

In *Salatut elämät* homosexual characters can also be identified from heterosexual characters by their core identity. Gay characters call into question the naturalised heterosexuality of the serial and thus both homosexual and heterosexual characters need to confess they have an unfaltering sexual identity. There seems to be only two sexual identity categories in *Salatut elämät* and the soap opera repeatedly strengthens the boundaries between them.

On the other hand homosexuality is rendered safe and normal by narratives of romantic love. In *Salatut elämät* homosexuality is acceptable when it is represented through ideals of romantic love. When Kalle is not in a relationship or does not pursue one the plot lines focus on scandals of homosexuality such as prostitution and violence.

Although Kalle cannot be identified as homosexual by his appearance and behaviour, he is still constructed different from the heterosexual characters in *Salatut elämät*. Representations of ordinary gay characters are produced within the heterosexual matrix where homosexuality as difference and "Otherness" defines the boundaries of heterosexuality. Thus within the matrix homosexuality cannot be "ordinary" in the same way as heterosexuality is.

Katariina Kyrölä:

The "Playboy Violinist" and the "Porn Stud" – Looking at Sexy Celebrity Bodies

Two Finnish celebrities, violin player Linda Lampenius and pornographic actor Henry Saari, have both raised much discussion in the popular media during the 1990s by openly using their bodily attraction and sexuality to gain fame. Corporeality thoroughly defines their reputations and representations. In this article





I examine how gender, sexuality and the body are produced in media performances of Linda and Henry. Although many binary, gendered norms are powerfully present in the construction of their sexiness and position in cultural hierarchies, I also discuss potentially subversive strategies in looking at and making sense of them.

Gender and sexuality obtain various meanings as they are articulated in particular feminine and masculine bodies. To study how these meanings may be constructed and read I examine Henry and Linda from several viewpoints within media studies and link their representations with studies of stardom, popular culture, soap opera, comedy and pornography. Henry and Linda are located within these fields distinctively, but their performances show also similarities in addition to differences. This tension produces considerable ambivalence in terms of gender. Conventions that shape celebrity narratives are understood through concepts such as the eroticizing and feminizing look, bodily excess, parody and heterosexual normativity.

The research material contains printed press, television programs and Internet material with an emphasis on printed press. It is not my intention to collect all material on Linda and Henry, but to outline what I interpret central themes during their times in publicity. Overall, the aim is to introduce a multiplicity of possible interpretations on representations of Linda and Henry.

Anssi Männistö:

Western Images of Muslim Women

Western perceptions concerning Muslim women have changed a lot in the course of history. In the 19th century the Muslim areas in the Middle East and Northern Africa were an essential motif of the Orientalistic art. During that time heavily eroticized Oriental women were the central theme in Western paintings.

This article analyses how the long tradition of Oriental art influences the way modern print media represents Muslim women. What these representations have in common is the tendency to load Muslim women with strong meanings.

It was only after the Iranian revolution in 1979, when the image of veiled, "subdued" women begun to emerge. This image was a symbol, that seemed to represent ideals completely contrary to the ideals of the West. The image of the veiled woman begun to signify the anti modernism and menace that were supposed to threaten the West.

During the Bosnian war in the early 1990's the Western audiences became acquainted with the sufferings of the Muslim civilians – particularly women's sufferings. These pictures of war may be one of those images that have contributed to more diversified Western views concerning Muslims.

The ultra-conservative Taliban-regime in Afghanistan created a new phase for Western images of Islam. After the collapse of the Taliban-regime, at the end of the year 2001, the image of the liberated Afghan Woman was possibly the clearest sign of the beginning of new era seen in the media.

The empirical media material shown in this article was collected for a doctoral dissertation. That material consists of photographs representing Muslims in weekly magazines Suomen Kuvalehti and Time during six stages between years 1956-1995.

Janne Rovio:

Tough Guys Don't Dance?

One of the most popular martial arts stars of Hollywood, Jean-Claude Van Damme is also a practitioner of ballet. This practice has found its way not only to interviews and fanzines, but also to the star's two early martial arts vehicles, *Kickboxer* (1989) and *Double Impact* (1991). His roles in these films enhance the spectacularity and "to-be-looked-at-ness" already strongly present in the martial artist, who enacts a similar, if more violent, rite of performance in his martial arts display, one in which the male body is looked at and admired by both male and female viewers. In this essay, Van Damme's role as a women's dancing teacher in *Double Impact* is juxtaposed with the similar professional status of Rudolph Valentino, who was considered by contemporaries as a sexually suspicious "male butterfly". A scene in *Kickboxer* is also analysed, where Van Damme gives a narratively undermotivated dancing exhibition in which his body is fetishized and eroticized in the manner conventionally associated with female cinematic bodies. In both films, the themes of dancing give way to a traditionally masculine martial arts fight. However, the theatricality and the use of dancelike movements betray these scenes as rather half-hearted attempts at redeeming a masculine authority. It is suggested that Van Damme emphasizes the eroticization and feminization of his body in order to substitute the rigidity of traditionally masculine position with energy and attractiveness. By doing so, his star image addresses not only young boys chafing under patriarchal rule but specifically women fans who respond to the star's chivalrous and romantic qualities.