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# SHORT-LIVED PLAY

## Trans-European travels in print sex edutainment

Susanna Paasonen and Laura Ellen Saarenmaa

*Media history is still written largely from national perspectives so that the role of import and export, translations and franchises is seldom foregrounded. On geographically and linguistically limited markets, imported materials have nevertheless been crucial parts of popular print culture. This paper explores the market of 'sex edutainment' magazines in 1970s Finland, zooming specifically in on Leikki ('Play', 1976), a sex magazine for women translated from the Norwegian Lek (first launched in 1971) that provided knowledge on topics ranging from marriage to masturbation and lesbian desire. Through contextual analysis of Leikki, a marginal publication that has basically faded from popular memory, this article attends to ephemeral and even failed print media in order to account for the heterogeneity of the 1970s sex press market as it intermeshed with sex advice and education. In so doing, it adds new perspectives to a field largely focused on successful periodicals and addresses knowledge gaps resulting from the exclusion of the sex press from mainstream media historiography.*

**KEYWORDS** Sex magazines; sex education; translation; 1970s; feminism; Finland

*Play*—'new different women's magazine that a man should also get acquainted with' was tagline for *Leikki (Play)*, published in Finland in 1976. The cover of *Leikki* was that of a mainstream women's magazine, yet it featured short stories of sex among women, artistic nudes, full-frontal nudity of both women and men and features on masturbation and sexual health. An import translated from the Norwegian magazine *Lek* (also signifying play) launched in 1971, *Leikki* was an independent 'sex edutainment' periodical targeting a female readership within a market context dominated by a booming domestic trade in men's magazines. Despite being launched as a monthly, it only published four issues. Today, *Leikki* is virtually forgotten.

This article makes sense of *Leikki's* material and cultural conditions of existence through contextual inquiry. Starting with transformations in gender equality and sexual rights in 1970s Finland, it moves to addressing the print market of sexual advice and sex education literature, developments within the sex press and the contemporaneous sex edutainment titles *Seksi (Sex, 1970–1982)* and *Mies ja Nainen (Man and Woman, 1973–1974)* that also operated with imported and translated materials. Weaving together contextual analysis with an examination of all *Leikki's* issues and an interview with its editor Jane Eldor,<sup>1</sup> we then attend to the magazine's concept, its practices of translation and the problems of adaptation involved in its transnational production. The final part

of this article further addresses the methodological challenges that internationally sourced and translated contents pose for media historical inquiry by discussing all three sex education magazines.

Contributing to genealogical media studies foregrounding polyvocality, parallel emergence and shifting horizons of possibility particular to historical contexts, we use *Leikki* as a lens for understanding the popular print media landscape of 1970s Finland as one where sexual entertainment abounded and where the publishing avenues for sex education were expanding in partly experimental ways. Studies of the Nordic sex press have largely focused on successful periodicals.<sup>2</sup> By analysing the short-lived and financially precarious *Leikki*, we then add to historical knowledge of the sex press as composed of actors of divergent economical calibres, mutually conflicting values, interests and views.

### Sexual Politics in Transition

*Leikki* was published during a time of transformation in sexual rights and gender equality in Finland. Yhdistys 9 ('Association 9', 1966–1970) critical of gender roles campaigned for gender equality and paved way for feminist organizing<sup>3</sup> while Sexpo, an NGO on sexual politics (est. 1969) advanced abortion rights, sexual rights and sex education. Together with the gay rights organization Psyke (1968–1986), Sexpo lobbied for the decriminalization of homosexuality, achieved in 1971. It collaborated with Yhdistys 9 on free abortion on social grounds (1971), pushed for the inclusion of sex education in the school syllabus (1972) and launched reproductive and sexual counselling initiatives of the kind previously available only to married couples.<sup>4</sup>

A (still-running) nationally representative survey modelled on a 1967 Swedish study was launched in 1971 to chart sexual habits, attitudes and experiences. Within its heteronormative limitations, the survey paved way for empirical sexology in the country.<sup>5</sup> During the 1970s, the importance of sexual knowledge was increasingly acknowledged and sexuality was addressed as both a societal question and a representational issue in print media, film, television and radio. Local expertise in sex education, sex counselling and sex research developed gradually in the course of all this,<sup>6</sup> even as non-fiction titles on sex and sexuality primarily consisted of translated imports. In addition to international bestsellers such as Alex Comfort's *The Joy of Sex* (1972 / *Rakasta hellästi* 1974) and 'J's' *Sensuous Woman* (1969 / *Haluttu nainen* 1971) available through bookshops and public libraries, men's magazines advertised Finnish, Swedish and Danish mail order companies selections of condoms, sex toys, magazines, 8mm films, guidebooks and leaflets, from L.R. Conner's *The Photographic Manual of Sexual Intercourse* (1969 / *Sukupuolielämän tietokuvasto* 1970) to Suzy Olsson's *Erotisk Glaede* (1969 / *Rakkauden ilo*), Maj-Briht Bergström-Walan and Sture Cullhed's *Kvinna och man* (1968 / *Sinä ja minä* 1969), Inge and Sten Hegeler's *Spørg Inge og Sten* (1968 / *Enemmän iloa toisistamme* 1970) and Lars Björkman's edited collection *Missä me voisimme rakastaa* ('Where Could We Love' 1973).

This wave of translations—much of it of Nordic origins—marked a departure from earlier advice literature on reproduction and marital sex. Of this, Theodoor Hendrik van de Velde's internationally bestselling 1926 *Het volkomen huwelijk* (*Ideal Marriage / Täydellinen avioliitto* 1930) was reprinted multiple times and sold via mail order well into the 1960s. The long-term success of van de Velde's book, along with that of his other three

titles, speaks of lack of development in sex education during the post-war years, as it does of shortage of content published in Finnish.<sup>7</sup> Released by both major domestic commercial publishers and more obscure enterprises, the novel wave of titles of the 1970s addressed an adult population with insufficient access to sexual education. Their insights were no longer tied to heterosexual matrimony as the exclusive site for sex and their context was that of quickly transforming sexual and gender politics.

### The Sex Press

The 1970s was also marked by debates over the accessibility of pornography and transformations in the content published. Denmark and Sweden decriminalized pornography in 1969 and 1971, respectively, whereas the Finnish obscenity legislation of 1927 was not fully revised until 1999. A perceived burst in sexually explicit print content sold in shops and kiosks nevertheless evoked concerns among conservative politicians, resulting in a 1973 parliamentary freedom of press memorandum which recommended that only the distribution and public visibility of porn—and not its content—should be regulated.<sup>8</sup> This resulted in laxer interpretations of the obscenity law and increasingly hardcore magazines crowding the national market. Small independent magazines trading in imported softcore visuals soon went out of business so that, by year 1976 when *Leikki* was published, the Finnish sex press was split between two publishers: Lehtimiehet Oy, the publisher of the country's most popular (scandal tabloid) magazine, women's magazines and specialty titles and Kustannus Oy Williams also trading in translated children's comics and crime pulp. Both Lehtimiehet and Williams used professional designers and printing houses allowing for full-colour glossiness and degrees of visual ambition.

As a sex edutainment title with a feminist bent, *Leikki* contributed to the vibrant sex press, yet it was also an outlier both as an independent publication in a context of centralized production and as a sex magazine targeting a female readership. Finnish men's magazines ('miestenlehdet') of the 1970s addressed their audience through gendered means and with content ranging from female nudity to the topics of war, violence and true crime: while content was also crafted 'for women', this generally consisted of images of naked men also servicing male homosexual and bisexual audiences.<sup>9</sup> As a sex edutainment periodical, *Leikki* competed with Williams' *Seksi* and was to a degree similar to *Mies ja nainen*, a translation of Marshall & Cavendish Ltd's *Man and Woman* that had already been discontinued after 47 issues. In an era when the most successful Finnish men's magazines had a circulation of over 100,000 copies per issue, all three titles were niche.

#### *Seksi: Facts for Adults*

*Seksi*, *Leikki*'s perhaps most obvious rival publication, was edited by Art Wirmola who also edited other sex magazines for Williams. According to its subtitle, 'Facts for Adults' ('Asiatietoa aikuisille'), *Seksi* set out to offer sexual information and education on through content imported from the United Kingdom and other international sources. Content of recognizably Swedish origin was featured by the columnist 'Stig Framåt' (loosely translated as 'Step Forward') writing on sexual cultures and tastes who also

covered local developments such as a Helsinki SM club for 'deviants'<sup>10</sup> and the life-story of a Finnish cross-dresser, Timo-Kaarina.<sup>11</sup> Owned by the multinational media enterprise, Warner Bros, Williams had access to massive stocks of texts and visuals to be exported, translated and re-circulated. Meanwhile, it is much more difficult to establish where exactly such content originated from and how it travelled across national borders.

The visual realm of *Seksi* was rich in naked bodies, with women and their breasts occupying the visual front stage. *Seksi's* educational intent, or at least aesthetic, was evident in articles on male puberty, female sexual health, orgasm, contraception, menopause, hysterectomy, erectile dysfunction, prostate and breast cancer: while building on biological and medical insight, the magazine also gave room for the titillations of 'perversion', female exhibitionism and close ups of women's genitalia.<sup>12</sup> Advice was further given in responses to readers' letters. Lacking a specific geographical sense, these may have been British, Swedish or Finnish. Rather than involving questions addressed at the responding 'doctor', the letters consisted of intimate confessions of personal sexual appetites and queries as to whether these were dangerous, perverted or against the laws of nature, allowing for dialogues on what might qualify as so-called normal sexual behaviour in the Finnish context. The tone of the replies was soothing, confirming over and over again that the preferences voiced were, really, quite regular enough. Given the letters' confessional, playful and slightly teasing tone, they may well have been coined by the same magazine staff that responded to them.

#### *Mies ja Nainen: Talks Facts About Love*

*Mies ja Nainen*, subtitled 'talks facts about love' ('puhuu asiaa rakkaudesta'), was a translation of a British format also distributed in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada in 1970–1976. It is not altogether clear how the format found its way to the Northern, militarily non-allied yet Soviet-friendly Finland, and got translated to a language spoken by less than five million people: there is no evidence of the format having been published in any other Nordic country.

Straightforwardly focused on sex education, *Mies ja Nainen* operated with popular scientific perspectives on sexology, psychology and human biology. Its master narrative of good, healthy sex<sup>13</sup> was particularly addressed at women and heterosexual couples in ways harking back to pre-1970s sex advice literature. Rather than contributing to the so-called sexual liberation, *Mies ja Nainen* was concerned with a re-sexualization of heterosexual matrimony amidst growing divorce rates and the loosening norms of monogamy. Issue covers presenting tastefully shot naked or semi-naked couples urged female readers to learn about the psychology of sexual love<sup>14</sup> and ways of pleasing their male partners.<sup>15</sup> The magazine's attitude towards the diversity of sexual appetites was academic, far from celebratory and strictly heteronormative. Anglo-American cultural context and references remained manifest throughout.

A pedagogical take on sexuality was equally present in the magazine's attachment sections, including an alphabetical list of terms and their explanations (*The Marshall Cavendish A-Z of Sex*) and a series of illustrated sex positions with short informative captions on the pros and cons of each. These point to the periodical being marketed as a reference work that should not simply be discarded after reading. The publisher also

promoted folders for placing the magazine's volumes on a bookshelf: 'You constantly need the information provided by *Man and Woman*. Collect your magazines in elegant plastic leather folders in order to have the information at hand when needed!' The function of a reference work was further highlighted in the thematic indexing of all published articles in the last issue of *Mies ja nainen* in 1974.<sup>16</sup> As the magazine was on the Finnish market only for two years, it seems not to have been a particular success even as its contents were considered appealing enough to be repurposed as the fourteen-volume book series *Kahden kesken: yhteiselämän tietokirja* ('Between us two: Book of facts on cohabitation') by Ad Libris in 1977.

### Serious Play

The titles of sex education magazines stood apart from those of men's magazines, many of which, faithful to their genre marker, emphasized male gender, as in *Mies* ('Man', 1972–1973), *Miesten maailma* ('Men's World', 1962–1973) and *Jermu* ('Old Soldier', 1968–1979), or used male first names such as *Jallu* (1958–2015) and *Kalle* (1950–1956, 1973–2015). Suggestive of a circuitous emphasis on pleasurable, casual sexual explorations, the title of *Leikki* also stands out from both *Seksi* and *Mies ja nainen*—the former simply identifying its overall topic and the latter evoking a gender binary corresponding with its medicalized and heteronormative take on sexuality. In studies of games and play, the notion of play refers to autotelic practices of pleasure; that is, to activities practiced for their own sake, without exterior or ulterior motives, functions or rewards.<sup>17</sup> In the context of sex, the notion of play further suggests exploration and recreational fun at the expense of more sustained social ties and intimate responsibilities.<sup>18</sup> This connotation was key to the magazine brand of *Playboy* (1953–2020) and its spin-off, *Playgirl* (1973–1983) framing sex as commitment-free and geared towards pleasure, as it has been to sex toy commerce and sexpert discourses identifying sex as 'adult play'.<sup>19</sup>

*Leikki* was published by a company (Oy Leikki Ab) not officially registered by the time its last issue was out. As the magazine was not backed up by an established commercial entity, its economical backbone was weak. No data is available on its circulation and it is unclear as to what extent *Leikki* was distributed by Oy Rautakirja Ab that held a virtual monopoly on magazine retail in the country. There are, in sum, gaps to understanding *Leikki's* material conditions of existence.

*Leikki's* first issue did not seek to explain its title, nor was there an editorial to introduce the magazine's overall rationale.<sup>20</sup> This may have been due to *Lek* having already been published in Norway for five years and its contents being imported without paying closer attention to the specificities of Finnish context or the tactics necessary for attracting a local readership. The publishing team consisted of two women: editor in chief Eeva Tejpar and Jane Eldor, *Lek's* Norwegian editor identified as responsible for layout. As Eldor explained in an interview, the reason for publishing *Leikki* lied in *Lek* being printed at in Finland at Uusi Kivipaino, which was much more affordable than Norwegian printing houses. Tejpar was reached through contacts at the printing house, yet, according to Eldor, the two never met. Tejpar, who most likely used a pseudonym, was responsible for translating *Leikki's* editorial content and later worked as a comics editor for Lehtimiehet and Atlantic-Kustannus Oy.

*Leikki's* first issue opened with a translated article on the health benefits of protein, illustrated with photographs of both clothed and naked bodies, a full-page colour shot of full-frontal male nudity included. The magazine combined translated informational content with erotic short stories written from a female point of view, personals, readers' letters and a sex advice column with responses from Jane (Eldor). A Finnish P.O. Box address was provided for reader submissions yet as the first issue could not yet have had a local readership, and as Jane remained the expert also in the following issues, these were most likely translated from Norwegian. In the responses, Eldor frequently referenced available studies and statistics to back up her sex advice and expertise, and her voice remained pronounced throughout the magazine.

On the very last page of the first issue, in a section titled 'greetings from the editor' a reader inquired 'whether this year we'll dare to express our erotic side at the newsagents'—as respectably as we've so far expressed our interest in gossip, royal stuff and 'exposés' of secondary importance?' In her response, Eldor elaborated on the magazine's importance and the potential unease that its female readers may experience:

... Of course it'll take its own time before the world, people, our small community or we ourselves admit to being interested in other things connected to sexuality besides a little golden ring in our finger, or hints as to when which movie star might be sleeping with whom, or which royal got whom.

... It's after all fully natural and acceptable that a man purchases a magazine full of pictures of naked girls – but a man is still always a man! What did you, my fellow sister, profit from the women's year? [1975 was the United Nations' International Women's Year] Do you feel any freer? And how has men's approach to you changed? What about your approach to them?

Isn't it high time for us to overturn these barriers, so that at least the girls and women of the next generation don't need to feel like rubbish bins in a clearance sale – and that the boys and men of the next generation get rid of the great juvenile wonder: are you sleeping with someone or not? This is when we'll have hope of learning to relate to one another as people, independent of gender.

This editorial stance promoted gender equality as something to be gained by transforming mundane patterns of behaviour—by, for example, purchasing the magazine in question. Through explicitly gendered address, it appealed to the reader as a 'fellow sister' possibly recognizing the disappointing lack of development in social equality despite the international momentum of the previous year. By juxtaposing sexual content with gossip and scandal, it defended the former's value for women, despite the latter being more socially acceptable. All in all, Eldor's editorial response did little to explain play as *Leikki's* organizing concept, even as it presented the magazine as a tool for challenging norms pertaining to women's sexuality through a second-wave feminist discourse foregrounding female sexual agency and pleasure.<sup>21</sup> In the editorial section of the next issue, the (anonymised) editor wrote that,

according to letters and hearsay it however seems that the women's magazine *Leikki* has been mainly bought by men. They've bought it either for their wife, girlfriend or another close woman of theirs – and read it themselves. The woman for whom the magazine was actually intended, has hastily browsed through the images, handed back the magazine and either stated that they-are-not-interested-in-such-a-thing, or, as a smart, daring and modern woman said that she hates pictures of women but that the magazine should include more photos of men, only of men and even bolder pictures of men! (...) Is it still not appropriate for women to show interest towards sex?!

This commentary obviously suggests that *Leikki's* visual landscape failed to resonate among Finnish female readers. While the editors acknowledged that, 'considering how many magazines have been sold, and are being sold, merely with photos of naked women', this visual tactic may not appeal to female readers, their response ultimately came across as irritated, conflating enjoyment taken in nude shots with an interest in sex. Finishing by asking for female readers to send requests and comments in order to edit the kind of sex magazine that they wish for, this was the last 'greetings from the editor', the two ensuing issues not including any direct communication with readers or commentary on the feedback received, and the images of naked women did not decrease. The silence following the first two issues may speak of the lack of active reader engagement; no matter what, it speaks of lack of effort in addressing the readership.

### Foregrounding Female Sexual Pleasure

*Leikki* followed the publication of Nancy Friday's bestselling *My Secret Garden* (1973 / *Salainen puutarha* 1974) and it was launched the same year as the Finnish editions of Erica Jong's novel, *Fear of Flying* (1973) and Märta Tikkanen's *Män kan inte våldtas* (*Manrape*, 1975), all contributing to public debates on female sexual pleasure, fantasy and agency (the Finnish translation of Shere Hite's 1976 *Hite Report on Female Sexuality* was published in 1978). The notion of feminism was not yet in broad use in 1970s Finland where political discussions were organized around the notion of gender equality, as in the activities of Yhdistys 9.<sup>22</sup> This does not mean that the key questions of second-wave feminism went unnoticed or unaddressed.

In a notable difference to many Anglophone contexts, debates over sexual politics in 1970s Finland did not however extend to pornography at any depth. Sex education and sexual health were part of the gender equality agenda; concerns over pornographic representation much less so.<sup>23</sup> As a Finnish sex magazine foregrounding women's sexual pleasure in a playful framework, pushing for gender equality with nude shots of both women and men, and featuring articles introducing the joys of lesbian sex in year 1976, *Leikki* is a surprising historical discovery. Examined more closely, it is nevertheless one befitting the contemporaneous sociocultural context. In its non-normative framing accommodating a range of sexual play, *Leikki* aligned itself with the liberal (or even radical) stances of Sexpo, yet came wrapped in the format of a commercial women's magazine and also covered generic topics such as health, beauty and tests for figuring out one's attractiveness among heterosexual men. *Leikki* looked mainstream *and* packed a popular feminist message advocating sexual freedom, possibly failing to please both those seeking more traditional editorial content and those interested in more radical sexual politics [Figure 1](#).





FIGURE 1  
An article on haircare in *Leikki 2: 1976*

Visually, *Leikki* combined nude photos with pictures of nature and animals potentially used to fill space and, when placed on the back cover, to protect readers from prying eyes by obscuring the magazine's overall concept. Some obscurity was already present in the magazine's title that did not evoke direct associations with the sex press, as well as in its cover images featuring smiling, young and fully clothed white women. *Leikki's* visual content seems to have come from different, yet limited sources. A photo series of naked men posing outdoors—on a greenery, by the water, in a forest, at a dock—appearing across the four issues published is aesthetically and thematically coherent, and possibly of Norwegian origin. The shots of nature similarly point towards Norway in their fjells, snowy woods and running streams. Softcore shots of couples, beaches and palm trees, again, indicate transnational imported origins of the kind harder to identify in photos of women or female couples. The fact that the same woman posed in two different ski suits on the front and back cover of the same issue<sup>24</sup> alone speaks of limitations in visual sources, or at least in their applications [Figure 2](#).

Rather than approaching lesbianism as an identity category, *Leikki* presented sex among women as equally available to women in heterosexual partnerships—and, as pointed out above, made broad visual use of female nudity. The promotion of sex among women was something that the magazine was apparently known for in Norway: in a reader letter, a married woman wrote of her husband's outrage when discovering her having bought a 'lesbian magazine'.<sup>25</sup> Although it is impossible to identify the



**FIGURE 2**  
Front and back covers of *Leikki* 2 & 4: 76

authors of these letters, according to Eldor, a substantial amount of visual and narrative content was received directly from *Lek's* Norwegian readers. While *Lek* had a committed readership submitting content, suggesting themes and otherwise impacting the contents and overall concept, this failed to materialize in Finland. In contrast to *Leikki* that did not find a substantial readership or leave a mark in Finnish print history, *Lek* became a long-term brand that exists to date.

In a short story 'It happened in sauna'<sup>26</sup> framed as a reader contribution, two housewives enjoy each other while their husbands were at work, attesting to the beneficial effects of satisfying same-sex encounters: 'A woman knows what a woman likes.' What makes the story perhaps strange for Finnish readers is the narrator never having been to a sauna, given the extensive mundane routines of sauna bathing in Finland. This gap speaks of the story not having been adapted to a novel readership but simply being translated from Norwegian to Finnish so that local contexts collide. The illustrations showing two women bathing in a tiny tub in a living room decorated with paintings, lamps and shaggy carpets further accentuates a sense of oddness and unfamiliarity [Figure 3](#).

The issue of translation is key to understanding *Leikki's* short lifespan also more generally. Despite similarities between Nordic countries, all things do not translate. And, as previous research has shown, translated periodicals require editing and localization in order to find success in another cultural context.<sup>27</sup> Had *Leikki* involved more active dialogue with the local readership and adaptation where contents were not merely imported but domesticated so as to better speak to local context and the reader feedback received,



Raali ja minä olemme samanikäisiä — vain muutama kuukausi eroa — lähes 30-vuotiaita kotiroivaita. Meillä kummallakin on yksi koulukäsen lapsi. Asumme omakotitalossa Iihössä, jonne muutimme samoihin aikoihin.

Meillä oli päivittäin tapana käydä viihtämyksellisesti, juoda kuppi kahvia ja jutella sen jälkeen jomman kumman luona. Pidimme toisistamme, mutta mistään intiimimpiä ei välillämme ollut.

Kaikki alkoi siitä kun naapurimme — siis Raali ja hänen miehensä — rakennuttivat saunan kellarinsa. Raali oli usein kertonut miten hanaa oli käydä saunassa. Minä en ollut eläissinä saanut ja erittäin ihäväpääni hän kehotti minua kokeilemaan. Olin kerran kurkistanut heidän kellarinsa jonne saunahuoneen lisäksi oli tehty suikkuhuone.

Sinä päivänä joimme kahvit Raalin luona. Hän kertoi laittaneensa saunan lämpimään ja vaati minua tulemaan mukaan! Lapseni palasivat koulusta vasta parin kolmen tunnin kuluttua.

Niinpä menimme lämpöä hoitavaan kellariker-

Minä hankasin hänen selkänsä hien roikkuessa meistä molemmista. Raali ehdotti että menimme suikkuun, peseytyimme ja tulimme sitten ottamaan uudet löylyt, jonka jälkeen kävisimme vielä suikussa.

Niin teimme. Ja koska oltimme suikun saunassa pienessä suikukopissa, määrät, alustamat vartalomme koskivat toisiansa vähän väliä. Huuhoimme itsemme ensin kunnolla ja käännesimme sitten suikun pienemmälle siksi aikaa kun saippuimme itsemme. Raali rupatteli miehensä kanssa tekemistään saunastaista ja kertoi suikussa tapahtuneen yhtä sun toista.

— Saippuot selkääni! Raali komensi äikisti ja ojensi minulle vaahdotuvan pesulapun. Ja minä saippuoin, aloitin hartiosta ja jatkoin alenmaksu, pakaroihin saakka, mutta hän pyysi minua saippuoimaan kokonaan ja minä tein niin. Minua nolotti mutten näytänyt sitä. Odotot kasteleivat alkoiivat pyörä päässäni saippuoidessani natsen takamuksa ja reisiä. Raali seiso jalat harallaan, mutten saippuoinut hänen reisiensä väliä. Sitten hän halasi pestä minut. Hän teki sen perusteellisesti aloittaen niskasta, selästä, kaana-

## SATTUI SAUNASSA

LUKIATTAREN KERTOMUS

rookseen. Käytävästä pääsimme sauna- ja suikkuhuoneisiin.

Raallilla oli mukanaan pyyhkeet ja pesulaput. Riisudimme saunas eteisessä. Minua hävetti riisua toisen naisen nähden, mutta Railla ei näyttänyt ajostuttavan tippaakaan, joten minäkin olin olevani reipas. Huomasin häntä kiinnostavan alaston vartaloni yhtä paljon kuin minua hänen vartalonsa. Olin ylpeä vartalostani joka oli yhtä kaunis kuin hänen, ja luulen hänen ajatelleen samoin itsestäni.

Saunassa oli kuuma ja se oli melko abdas. Hänen tuisin kahdella oli tilaa situa vieri vieressä penkillä. Vastapäätä oli suikkuhuone, jonka lämpö tuntui nousuvan päällämme!

Raallilla oli ylläpäätäni pyyhe, jonka hän oli levittänyt lauteille ettemme olisi polttaneet pakaroitamme. Pian alkoi hiki virrata. Raallista se oli hanaa, mutta minä tuisin olin jo osittain vaivastunteeksi.

Raallilla oli froteinen pesulappu jolla hän hankasi reisiään. Hän antoi minulle toisen, ja hämmästyin itsovan ihon paljoutta. Raali tarjoutui hankaamaan minua ja aloitti vastausta odottamatta. Se tuntui hyvältä, mutta minua hävetti hänen siirtyessäni etupöydälle.

loiden alta jolloin pesulappu kosketti väriseviä rintojani — jatkaen ristiselkään, pakaroihin, reisiin — ja niiden väliin, pesi perusteellisesti läpysäulekseni. Minua hävetti eräsi ajattelut Raalin tehneen sitä tahallaan, mutta olin kiitynyt ja peikkasin hänen tekemään jotain enemmän ja samalla toivoen sitä.

— Käänny ympäri! hän sanoi ja alkoi saippuoida käsivarsiani, rintojani, vatsaani ja reisien etupöydä kuin olisin ollut pikkutyttö äidin kylvetettävänä!

Tiesin rintojeni nipukoiden jähkyttyneen saippuavaahdon alla, mutta samoin oli käynyt Raallille. Aloin aavistella jotain, mutten keksinyt perityymiskeinoja vaikka minua nolotti kauheasti. Ja samalla toivoen tapahtuvan jotain vielä enemmän ja hänen johtavan leikkiä.

Vähän väliä hänen saippuoiu vartalonsa kosketti omaani. Tuisin hänen riitansa reittäni kunn haarojeni väliin. Sitten hän nousi ylös seisoen niin lähellä että saippuaset rintaamme koskettivat.

Tunni kuin hän olisi sanonut jotain silmilleän. Hän hymyili äkkä löhösti, heitti pesulapun

FIGURE 3

“It happened in a sauna”, *Leikki 2*: 1976

it might have had more longevity. Speaking of *Leikki's* short lifespan, Eldor herself simply stated that ‘Finns didn’t like it.’

### Missing Field of Research

Sex edutainment magazines are something of a footnote in historical studies of 1970s popular publishing. At the same time, such titles were often multiple, published across national borders and, in some instances, enjoyed longevity. Their market was premised on the shortage of, and a respective demand for, sex education and advice among adult readers. Factual orientation lent the titles with degrees of respectability unavailable to more explicitly pornographic ventures, even as they also featured purposefully titillating content.

The differences between *Seksi*, *Mies ja nainen* and *Leikki* alone speak of diversity of coexistent sexual discourses on a peripheral linguistic and geographical market. These three imported magazines recycled content from diverse national, linguistic and cultural sources, ranging in their focus from physiological and psychological perspectives to cultural analyses, from heteronormative examinations of sex within marriage to explorations of minoritarian sexual cultures, and from a medical focus on sexual health to personalized accounts of female sexual pleasure and satiation. Composed of translated articles and illustrations from international image banks, all three periodicals had moderate success. We



suggest that the issue was one of lacking adaptation and domestication so that their contents came across as too alien to be fully engaging. The magazines featured no Finnish sexperts—not even journalists similarly to Eldor positioning themselves as such—and remained largely detached from local sexual cultures and societal debates.

As Cronqvist and Hilgert<sup>28</sup> argue, media history remains largely written from national perspectives so that the role of import and export, international circulation, translations and franchises becomes if not entirely dismissed, at least marginalized. In geographically and linguistically marginal markets such as Finland, imported and translated materials have nevertheless historically been crucial, ubiquitous parts of print culture. It is only recently that popular historiography has focused on the issue,<sup>29</sup> or that scholars have begun to chart the transnational histories of pornography.<sup>30</sup> Crucial knowledge gaps remain, extending from the scarcity of historical studies of porn in most local contexts to the shortage of historical documentation and archival sources. Adding to these gaps, the sex press has been largely excluded from mainstream media historiographical inquiry: while most periodicals published by Lehtimiehet and Williams are included in the definitive reference work on Finnish print media history, their multiple and often successful sex magazines are not.<sup>31</sup> Since all periodicals published in Finland are archived in public depository libraries and hence remain available for analysis, these gaps cannot be explained through the lack of research material. Set in place through both selection and design, such knowledge gaps create biased perspectives into print media production, distribution and consumption, and work to further marginalize the products and studies of sexual media in historical inquiry.

In an additional challenge to transnational historical research, publishers have not necessarily kept extensive archives of their operations, or these have long ago been destroyed: no publishers' archives are available for *Leikki*, *Seksi* or *Mies ja nainen*. Local actors can be hard or impossible to trace or identify, as with 'Jane Tejpar'. In many cases, they are no longer living. When available for interview, as Jane Eldor was, editors and publishers may not recall the details, dates, names and business arrangements of decades past.

It can also be asked which fields of research historical studies of transnational translation and adaptation in print media belong to. Translation studies have addressed the interpretation of texts across different cultural contexts, focusing on discursive and semiotic analyses over the material conditions and practices of translation.<sup>32</sup> While scholars have broadly examined the spread and impact of Anglo-American popular culture in post-war Europe, the travels of sexual and pornographic content have largely been excluded from the agenda—including traffic going the other way.<sup>33</sup>

The magazines examined in this article operated under diverse economic conditions, *Seksi* having the most longevity due to it being published by an internationally operating company that had a strong hold of the local sex press market. These periodicals were launched by both established and independent actors, all of whom were reliant on access to print-quality photos and articles around which other content could be, although not necessarily was, locally sourced. The availability of material seems to have posed no challenges for *Leikki*, *Seksi* or *Mies ja nainen* due to their imported origins: their challenges had more to do with their appeal and resonance among Finnish readers. While there were adverts in the sex magazines published by Lehtimiehet and, to a lesser degree, in those of Williams, there were none in *Leikki* or *Mies ja nainen*, which added to the direct pressure of

securing large enough a readership to cover the expenses. As these magazines had no pre-existing distribution arrangements of the kind available to *Seksi* that was also advertised horizontally in other sex magazines from Williams, this was a hurdle hard to overcome.

In addition, *Leikki* competed on the highly competitive domestic market of women's magazines where sexual topics were regularly addressed but where the label of a 'lesbian magazine' would have, in 1976, been a kiss of death. Lesbian themes were constant in men's magazines and in scandal tabloids whereas women's magazines threaded softly on the topic. *Leikki* did not find its readers—possibly since these did not sufficiently relate to its overall concept and resisted its visual aesthetic feasting on female nudity, and possibly since they did not even know the magazine existed due to its lack of public visibility and availability. All this is retrospectively impossible to show.

### Conclusion: Platforms of Sexpertise

The most successful Finnish sex magazines of the 1970s traded in markedly domestic and recent content, so that nude models identified by locally resonant first names such as Sirkku, Pirjo and Anneli posed with recent issues of magazines from the same publisher in settings locally recognizable in their object-worlds, street views and landscapes. Personals and readers' letters were further key to building magazine brands and creating bonds with readers. Most of this was not the case with the sex edutainment titles examined here, of which *Leikki* only lasted for four issues, *Mies ja nainen* for two years and *Seksi* for over a decade: while these featured personals and readers' letters seeking advice, their veracity is impossible to identify, and seems partly unlikely. These periodicals contributed to the popularization of sex education among adults but did much less to add or establish local voices to the nascent local field of sexpertise: this only happened through the emergence of Finnish sex research in the 1980s, and beyond.

Such expertise, again, was distributed mainly in book format, which had been the main loci for sexual knowledge already before the 1970s. While sex advice became a standard feature in youth magazines, and remained such in sex magazines, periodicals building their entire concept on sex edutainment lacked success. Potential reasons for this are multiple: as discussed above, these range from the magazines' overall concepts to their varying resources and financial backbones, their difficulties in reaching a female readership, the credibility of their experts and, most importantly, to their lack of care in adapting and domesticating imported contents for the Finnish market.

Considering the print market of sex advice more broadly, it may be the case that those looking for sex advice gravitated toward books promising more established knowledge in comparison to magazines where themes and approaches shifted from one issue to another and where the expertise of authors positioned as such was seldom explained or established. The felt need for sex advice may have been both temporally and thematically specific so that it made little sense to subscribe to a monthly periodical generally addressing the topic. Perhaps the combination of educational and titillating content failed to meet the needs of those looking for either sexual education or titillation. And perhaps there was simply less embarrassment and more trust involved in consuming sexpertise in book format. As we have argued, a market for popular sex education existed in 1970s Finland. It just did not actualize as a sustainable print magazine market.

## Notes

1. The interview was executed on 19th of November 2020, and concerned collaborations with the Finnish printing house and the launch of *Leikki*. Some information that came up on the phone interview was confirmed through text messages on the 1 December.
2. E.g., Arnberg and Larsson, "Benefits"; Arnberg, "Under the Counter".
3. See Kurvinen and Turunen, "Toinen aalto".
4. Sundell, *Oikealla asialla*, 9–10.
5. Juvonen, "Normative Sex"; Taavetti, "Discovered", 214–5.
6. E.g. Sievers, *Salattu seksuaalisuus*; Haavio-Mannila, *Työpaikan rakkaussuhteet*; Kontula and Haavio-Mannila, *Suomalainen seksi*; Sundell, *Oikealla asialla*.
7. On sex advice literature in postwar Finland, see Ritamies, *Sinappikylvystä*, 151–70.
8. Jyränki, "Pahennus", 93.
9. Author.
10. *Seksi* 1:1973.
11. *Seksi* 4:1973.
12. *Seksi* 8:1972; 9: 1972.
13. Larsson, *The Swedish*; Paasonen, Susanna, Healthy Sex and Pop Porn: Pornography, Feminism and the Finnish Context. *Sexualities* 12, no. 5 (2009): 586–604.
14. *Mies ja Nainen* 37:1974.
15. *Mies ja Nainen* 27:1973.
16. *Mies ja Nainen* 46:1974.
17. E.g., Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*; Caillois, *Man, Play*.
18. Attwood, Sex and the Citizens.
19. Paasonen, Susanna, *Many Splendored Things: Thinking Sex and Play*. London: Goldsmiths Press, 2018.
20. *Leikki* 1:1976.
21. See Gerhard, *Desiring*.
22. Holli, "Tasa-arvosta".
23. E.g., Smith and Attwood, "Anti/pro/critical".
24. *Leikki* 2: 1976.
25. *Leikki* 4:1976.
26. *Leikki* 2:1976.
27. Antola, "Strategies".
28. Cronqvist and Hilgert, "Entangled".
29. See Popp et al., *Commercialized*.
30. E.g., Carter, "Original"; Larsson, *The Swedish*; Björklund and Larsson, *Swedish Cinema*.
31. Tommila and Uino, *Suomen*.
32. Antola, "Strategies".
33. Larsson, *The Swedish*; Stevenson, *Scandinavian*.

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