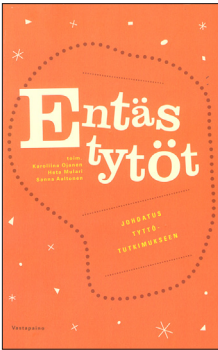


BOOK REVIEWS



BUT WHAT ABOUT GIRLS? INTRODUCTION INTO GIRLS' STUDIES

Entäs tytöt. Johdatus tyttöstudioon. Edited by Karoliina Ojanen & Heta Mulari & Sanna Aaltonen. Nuorisotutkimusverkosto/Nuorisotutkimusseura, Julkaisuja 113. Osuuskunta Vastapaino, Tampere 2011. 320 pp. In Finnish.

Already from the early 1990s the strong and clear-cut traditions of Finnish gender studies have influenced folklorists, literary scientists and educationalists, sociologists, psychologists, social anthropologists and others in their research into girls' culture.

My own bookshelf stores *Letit liehumaan. Tyttökulttuuri murroksessa* (Shake your Hair. Girls' Culture in the Process of Change) edited by Sari Näre and Jaana Lähtenmaa and published in 1992, which is probably the first collection of articles published in Finland that focuses on girls' issues to such a great extent. Ulla Lipponen is the only folklorist represented in this collection, and her article discusses love theme in girls' personal poem collections. Other articles deal with girls' worldview, their sexuality both in real life and in fiction, friendship, their visions of heroes, fan culture, kleptomania, etc. I have repeatedly referred to these articles in my research and regard it as excellent, substantial and necessary material for everybody studying youth and especially girls' culture.

Yet, in Finland hair was still flying in the wind, and research continued; in 2006 the Finnish national network for girls' studies was established, which assembled numerous scientists interested in the field. This association became part of the extensive all-Finland network of youth studies, and *Entäs tytöt* came out as its 113th publication. This collection denotes a kind of intermediate stage, which summarises the nearly twenty years of research into girls' culture in Finland.

As of its establishment, the network has been active; the introduction to the collection states that due to its activities panels and working groups have participated in several scientific seminars and conferences: women's studies conferences in 2006 and 2007, and the Nordic Youth Research Symposium in 2011. In the spring of 2008 separate girls' studies days *Entäs tytöt* were organised, which also gave a name to this book.

The collection that is meant to be an introductory textbook-anthology for the exploration of girls' culture in Finland comprises nine articles from twelve authors, which summarise the corresponding research and its results in Finland so far. Karoliina Ojanen's introductory article about the history of girls' studies in Finland applies a methodical approach, starting from the explanations of concepts, subject matter and topics as well as different research methodologies. The author maintains that usually girls', children's and young people's position with respect to mainstream culture (i.e., men's and women's culture) tends to be marginal. Research into girls' culture might expose special practices, which emphasise and enlighten the structure and approaches to mainstream culture, and also discloses various interesting elements both in modern culture and history. Ac-

tually the whole book is meant to stress that in this light feminist girls' studies become more and more important.

The remaining eight articles in this collection focus on topics significant in girls' studies from different viewpoints. For instance, Anna Anttila, Karoliina Ojanen, Helena Saarikoski and Senni Timonen's co-authored article "Girls' Stories" summarises, in a way, the former folkloristic researches into girls' culture, highlighting their activities in different situations, spaces and experience worlds. The article presents the results of Leea Virtanen's research on girls' and boys' outdoor games carried out in the 1960s–1970s, Ulla Lipponen's gender-based treatments of children's clapping games from the 1980s–1990s, Anna Anttila's studies of girls' love predictions, Helena Saarikoski's research into girls' fan culture, Karoliina Ojanen's analysis of girls' culture in the context of horse-riding and stables, and so on.

Besides folklorists, the collection presents articles from social scientists, an educator, a literary critic and a historian, who are all dedicated to women's studies. They dwell upon different topics, such as girls and reputation, girls' literature, past treatments of girls, girls' studies from the perspective of their body evaluation, girls and the media, school in girls' studies and other relevant issues. The collection can be highly commended as all the presented treatments here are both comprehensive and concise.

This textbook-like collection inevitably makes you draw parallels with Estonia; yet, things here seem to be somewhat different. Firstly, studies of gender aspect are less popular in Estonia and certainly more recent than those in Finland. Secondly, leaving aside the gender aspect, we have not established such an interdisciplinary network for studying youth culture, which joins researchers from different spheres – it seems that we all potter by ourselves. However, we cannot but admit that something has been done in the field. For instance, sociologists from Tartu University study young people's social networks on the Internet, and the linguists of Tallinn University and folklorists from the Estonian Literary Museum – their language use and narratives. The studies on youth subcultures are led by Airi-Alina Allaste, professor of sociology at Tallinn University. Also, we have a non-profit organisation Estonian Youth Institute established in 2001, which is, however, targeted at young people themselves and which presents on its Internet site (<http://www.eni.ee/>) various information about researches and projects related to them (employment, education, study opportunities, leisure time, alcohol and drug problems, etc.).

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