

Ett tjejligt rum

Tidningen *Starlet* 1966–1996

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the Swedish girls' magazine *Starlet* (1966–96), with the primary aim of exploring it as a girls' product and experience and to understand what practices and spatial constructions are made visible in the magazine as well as in previous editors' and readers' recollections of it. The main research question is how bedroom culture appears in *Starlet* and what space is established in this magazine produced for, by, and with girls for 30 years. This is explored through multiple methods and materials, taking both the consumption and production aspects into consideration. The empirical material consists of 150 issues of *Starlet* from its entire era of publication, interviews with former editors and contributors to *Starlet*, and written recollections and reflections from previous readers of the magazine.

The analytical entry points are three-folded: *girl culture* and *girls' culture*, regarding products created for girls or by girls, respectively. *The pursuit of happiness* regards the labour the reader puts into the quest for a fulfilling life and what aspects of life are described as generating happiness. The combined *consumption and production* of the readers are central to the understanding of *Starlet* as a cultural product. Consumers were given space to participate and produce material for publication, and *Starlet* therefore spoke to girls while allowing readers to communicate with each other, making the magazine a social medium before the impact of the internet in the 1990s. *Starlet* became an extension of the girl's bedroom, with and in which readers could relax and have fun, but also ask for and offer support, ponder new topics and experiences, and share both joys and problems with each other.

Through a narrative analysis of the material, this study argues that *Starlet* enables plenty of alternative readings of its content and offers its readers a plastic popular material. *Starlet* exemplifies the potential of popular media by providing creative and communicative material to use for an array of wants and needs, always with the reader's individual and current happiness and desires in focus.

KEYWORDS: girls' culture, gender, youth, media, space, social media, consumption, communication, bedroom culture, popular culture