

From the editors Transitions

DEAR READER,

In your hand is a special issue of *lambda nordica* that is concerned with "transitions." Transition is a term with many connotations; it can refer to a change from one political or economic system to another, a movement from one gender category to another, or quite simply to a state of change, a movement from one point to another. By putting the concept in question, the guest editors of this issue also draw our attention to how as a description or an experience, the idea of transition also reflects both epistemological and geopolitical perspective and points of departure. To be "in transition" can also mean to be in a constant state of change; much like a scientific journal is, or it can be associated with a sense of being in between, or in waiting – much like we have long awaited this special issue.

1989 was a historic year. As loyal readers will recall, it was the year that *lambda nordica* was founded, as a Nordic journal for the study of homosexuality. With this, a wall came down and a new

era began; one where multi- and interdisciplinary research on the histories, cultures, and livelihoods of non-heterosexuals became established as a legitimate scientific area of inquiry and knowledge formation, both internationally and in the Nordic region. Since then, the journal and the research field has grown, diversified and professionalized and the alphabet of non-normative genders and sexualities and their politicization has grown within both activism and research. Today at least the letters L, G, B, T and Q are included, often many more letters. Around the same time that *lambda nordica* was founded, the queer critique of stable identity categories such as lesbian, heterosexual or gay was also launched and with it a critical stance against these categories as taken for granted, a priori, and above all universal points of departure for research. This was not to diminish the lived experiences of being assigned or choosing to identify with such categories, but rather to highlight their emergence and diversity as categories across time and space under investigation. Internationally, our sister journal *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* (GLQ) has formulated its aim as being "queer perspectives on sex and sexualities" while *Journal of Homosexuality* has opted to describe its aim as including queer studies.

The attentive reader will note that after many years of careful, and let us call it, mature consideration, *lambda nordica*'s subtitle now indicates that it is a journal that includes queer studies. This does not mean that queer studies are a new topic for the journal, quite the contrary. Already in 1996, with guest editor Don Kulick, we published our first thematic issue on queer theory, the first Nordic journal to do so and since then we have published dozens of articles in queer studies. This field is today neither new nor particularly marginalized internationally; after 20 years of rich scholarly production, queer is here and we have gotten used to it. That is to say,

queer has obtained a certain maturity and age and thus we also think that time is ripe for this to be rendered visible in the name of our journal. The symbolic act of this additional letter in the subtitle of the journal also signals the fall of a wall of resistance against the term queer, while not necessarily signaling a new direction for the journal. Rather, we continue to work with the goal of being the leading journal of research within this letter combined and multi-epistemological area in the Nordic region and at the same time, to be a forum for a growing number of highly qualified researchers who wish to contribute to the international field. We also continue our aim of reaching writers and readers beyond the Scandinavian linguistic community by offering an opportunity to publish in English and opening up a dialogue with the international community by, among other things, inviting guest researchers to introduce new themes. The editors welcome suggestions for future themes as well as individual manuscripts for our open issues, the next open issue will be number 4/2013.

If 1989 was an important year for our research field in the Nordic context, needless to say, its symbolic significance in European, if not world history, is far greater. This was the year that history recalls as the fall of the wall between what used to be known as East and West and the beginning of the building of a new Europe; a Europe that over 20 years later is still deeply marked by economic, political and scientific differences and power relations as well as interconnections. Central, Baltic and Eastern European Studies, and research on these issues, as well as on a number of imagined and actual "transitions" is a well-established geopolitically defined field that is strong both in the Nordic region and in Europe. Södertörn University, which is the physical "home" of *lambda nordica* also hosts the Centre for Baltic and Eastern European Studies, an interdisci-

plinary research centre and also the Baltic Sea Foundation, which is one of the key funders of research in this area in Sweden and across the region. For the Nordic region and for "Nordic research," the fall of the wall has also meant that maps have been redrawn and new research questions have emerged. What are the relations between the Baltic states, the former "Eastern" European nations and the Nordic Region that share not only a common body of water, but also much history? What does the migration of people and ideas across this sea and how do we understand the complex relations of power that shape such exchanges? And of course, for the purposes of *lambda nordica's* lines of inquiry: What kinds of relations do LGBTQ activists and researchers have? We know that many Nordic activists have been engaged in LGBTQ rights struggles in among other places, Russia, and we know that intense dialogues and exchanges of strategies and ideas are taking place across the region.

Within the field of Baltic, Central and Eastern European studies, at least in the Nordic context, research on gender and sexual politics is still fairly marginalized, at the same time as Central and Eastern European perspectives are also fairly marginalized within the international field of LGBTQ studies. Questions of how geopolitical relations of power shape fields of knowledge and how concepts and identity categories travel and get translated and reworked are of crucial importance in this work. How are non-heterosexual lives and political projects to be named and pursued? What is the relationship between LGBTQ rights activism, processes of democratization, European integration and capitalist "development"? How, and by whom, these questions should be investigated and with what terms and in what contexts is now being rigorously studied by Ph.D. students in the new generation queer researchers as well as by established researchers.

We are very proud and delighted to present this special issue, guest edited by Joanna Mizielińska and Robert Kulpa, who are leading scholars in the field of de-centering "western" hegemonies within the field of queer studies. This is an issue that has been in the works for a long time and it is our hopes that it will offer another substantive contribution both to Central and Eastern European Area Studies and to interdisciplinary and international LGBTQ studies. To that end, the editors wish to acknowledge the financial support of the Baltic Sea Foundation and the Department of Gender Studies at Södertörn University for the publication of this issue and also the ongoing support of the Centre for Baltic and Eastern European Studies at Södertörn for research on these issues.

By expanding and investigating the Nordic region's geopolitical proximity, we also want to draw attention to the fact that *lambda nordica's* linguistic "transition" into publishing more work in English not only facilitates our conversations with "Western" colleagues, and while, as our guest editors so insightfully point out, there are several problems with English becoming the *lingua franca* of research publishing, it does also engender fruitful dialogue. *lambda nordica* welcomes more contributions to the conversation about the uneven consequences of linguistic conventions for academic publishing. In this issue all articles are in English, but they also have longer summaries in Swedish, and as usual, most of our reviews are in Scandinavian. We wish to extend a particular thank you to both our guest editors and to our editorial secretary Karin Lindeqvist for careful work of translation in this issue. The next issue, which is on the theme of activism, is guest edited by Fanny Ambjörnsson and Janne Bromseth and is entirely in Scandinavian.

Finally, a few words about an important editorial transition. The decision to include "Q" in the title of our journal was taken at a

meeting where we also voted in our new senior editor Jenny Björklund. Jenny, who is associate professor of literature and works at the Centre for Gender Studies at Uppsala University is a very welcome addition to the editorial team of senior editors Göran Söderström and Ulrika Dahl, review editor Ann-Sofie Lönngren and editorial secretary Karin Lindeqvist.

As is so often the case with scholarly journals, the editors of *lambda nordica* are working entirely on a voluntary basis and, for some of us, on top of full time work in our respective departments. We are also entirely dependent on, and thus very grateful for, the labor of our guest editors, peer reviewers, and often unfunded authors. There are, in other words, hundreds and hundreds of hours of unpaid work behind each issue of this journal and we are very grateful to all of you who support our journal by subscribing, downloading our open-access issues, citing our authors and teaching our special issues. The editors are doing this work because we are convinced of the political and scholarly importance of research on LGBTQ studies, both in the Nordic region and internationally and because we continue to believe in a community of peers who jointly discuss and set the parameters for what constitutes good scholarship in our field. We continue to welcome input from our readers as well as suggestions for future themes for issues, articles and reviews. Please visit our website www.lambdanordica.se for all old issues, as well as guidelines for submitting work to *lambda nordica*.

Enjoy your reading!

ULRIKA DAHL, EDITOR IN CHIEF