From the Editors

DEAR READERS,

We are very pleased to finally bring you the last issue of 2014. The production of a double issue such as this one is, in some respects, nothing less than a small miracle; given that it requires the work of about two dozen people, each person with their own full schedules, we are always stunned when we finally see an issue come together. The feeling of "being behind" is a familiar one to most academics but as editors we always strive towards being more "in line" and "on time" and hope to be so during 2015.

Since our last issue came out, the futurity of the journal has been secured through continued financial support. We are very grateful to the Royal Swedish Academy and Torsten Amundson's Fund for research on homosexuality for their continued support of the production of *lambda nordica* for the next year. In addition, and in strong competition, we have been given an additional three years of support from the Swedish Research Council, which means that we have part-time funding for two editors-in-chief. The decision of the council was based on (1) the strong academic standing of the editorial board and the editors; (2) *lambda nordica's* sustained academic quality and high degree of innovation; and (3) the journal's very limited overlap with the field of interest of other journals. We see their decision as validation of the hard work of many scholars who have contributed to the journal over the last years and as recognition of the importance of the field of LGBTQ Studies in the eyes of the Swedish Research Council.

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As you know, most of the work that goes into making a journal remains unpaid. Thus, we will continue to rely on our contributors, peer reviewers, and book reviewers for your contributions to *lambda nordica*, and we are immensely grateful for all the work you put in. We encourage our readers to consider *lambda nordica* when looking to place your work – we are open access, indexed in major databases and have a wide circulation and readership – together we can continue to make a strong journal!

This double special issue on the timely theme of Queer kinship and reproduction, edited by senior editor Ulrika Dahl together with Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, began with the international symposium, *Reproducing Kinship, Queering Reproduction: Familial Bonds in the Age of Assisted Reproductive Technologies,* organized by Ulrika Dahl, Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, and Antu Sorainen in Stockholm in October 2013, with the support of Torsten Amundson's Fund. The issue consists of a selection of papers from this event and presents case studies from Finland, Russia, Greece, and Sweden. Following an introduction from the theme editors, Antu Sorainen's article, "Queer Personal Lives, Inheritance Perspectives and Small Places," draws on two life stories of lesbians living in rural Finland. Sorainen brings the relevance of *place* into the discussion about queer kinship networks, and reminds us that queer livelihoods and successions take a range of shapes. Furthermore, she contends that in a context where inheritance legislation is based on a cultural model of marriage and heteronormative generational succession that does not always fit the lives and kinship configurations of queer people, will-writing and inheritance are crucial topics for queer kinship studies.

The second article, "Reproductive Choices of Lesbian-Headed Families in Russia: From the Last-Soviet Period to Contemporary Times," by sociologist Alisa Zhabenko presents unique data on the reproductive choices of three generational cohorts of lesbians in Russia, from the Soviet times until today and points to the challenges of studying this topic in the contemporary Russian climate. Stressing historical and political context Zhabenko shows the complex navigations of gender, sexuality, and family ideals that lesbians have had to navigate in order to conceive

and raise children and challenges easy assumptions about how "it gets better." She also shows that legal recognition or not, lesbians have and continue to have families and access reproductive technologies in Russia.

In "Doing Family 'In the Space Between the Laws': Notes on Lesbian Motherhood in Greece" anthropologists Venetia Kantsa and Aspa Chalkidou discuss lesbian parenthood achieved by assisted reproduction in the Greek context where nonheterosexual partnerships are not legally recognized. Stressing the cultural notions of motherhood and femininity – the idea that "women are natural-born mothers" – the authors of the article investigates how lesbians manage legal exclusion, and which meanings medically assisted parenthood and kinship acquire among these parents.

Lastly, in "Gay Fathers, Surrogate Mothers and the Question of the Human: A Postcolonial Feminist Analysis of Emotions in *Barn till varje pris?*" Johanna Gondouin investigates the media representations of a gay male couple's quest to start a family with the help of an Indian gestational surrogate, Geeta. Drawing on postcolonial and feminist debates on surrogacy, she argues that the normalization of this specific type of queer kinship bonds in this television series is formed through "the exclusion of the racialized female Other" and raises important questions concerning reproductive rights and power asymmetries on a global scale, as well as intersections of privilege and marginalization in current queer reproductive and kinship practices.

Moreover, the issue includes two essays that open up further lines of inquiry. In the first, entitled "Not Gay as in Happy, but Queer as in Fuck You: Notes on Love and Failure in Queer(ing) Kinship," Ulrika Dahl revisits the question of (romantic) love as the foundation of queer kinship and ponders how the "failure" of love might be studied ethically and theoretically. This issue's *We're here*-essay is offered by Cambridge professor of sociology and pioneering scholar in feminist studies of science and reproduction, Sarah Franklin, and concerns the question of "Queer Biology." Franklin proposes that studies of queer kinships are particularly interesting for tracking the queerness of biology and above all the relative value assigned to it.

In sum, this special issue, which is the first on this topic by a Nordic journal, offers a contribution to the growing field of queer studies of kinship, family, and reproduction in Europe. Nordic readers will no doubt recognize the image on this issue's cover. At the time of its conception, Elisabeth Ohlson Wallin's image "Annunciation," from the highly acclaimed and widely exhibited series *Ecce Homo* (1998), could only anticipate the changes in Swedish law that would allow insemination for lesbians as part of national health care only a few years later. This image, we think, is pregnant with symbolism and suggestions for the issues at hand; and we do not just mean the miracle of a journal's production and the long gestation. It makes us think of the still complex questions of where babies come from, of paternity/donor status, and of the continued cultural significance of the two-parent family. It also, we argue, reminds us of the somewhat sore question of *who* belongs to the (lesbian) nation, and of *who* will be able and allowed to reproduce (in) Europe in the future and how racialized ideas of (national) belonging factor into queer reproduction. All these and many others, remain crucial questions and subjects of both research and political debate. We are grateful to Elisabeth for permission to use this image. We also wish to thank our graphic designer of many years, Erika Söderström, for her work and welcome her successor, Oskar Degard, who has begun his work with this issue.

Happy reading!

JENNY BJÖRKLUND *and*
ULRIKA DAHL, EDITORS