

EDITORIAL

Even in this most patriarchal of medieval fantasy worlds, there is space to imagine female sovereignty and a better world forged out of a coalition of the very old, the very young, women, queers, native peoples, people of color, trans people, disabled people, wildlings, wolves and dragons. (Halberstam, "Winter in America")¹

AS THE DAYS are getting longer and snowdrops begin to rise through the defrosting ground, as *lambda* editors we are thrilled to finally welcome spring with our first open issue of this year. It is indeed a particular and perhaps somewhat perverse editorial pleasure to see an issue come together in a timely fashion! At the same time, like most people around us, we are wondering how long the political winter so aptly described by Jack Halberstam in the blog quoted above that began with the inauguration of the new president of the USA will last, and what its effects will be on the world. In the aftermath of the Orlando tragedy, while campaigning for president, Trump spoke more frequently about LGBTQ issues than any other candidate for the Oval Office ever has and we know that he attracted some gay voters, even if those largely followed the same demographic of his voters over all: white, affluent cisgendered men. We know that his endorsements and support for LGBTQ issues were deeply homonationalist; that is, part of a growing attempt to suggest that the islamophobic, anti-immigration and racist policies that have since been put into place would protect the LGBTQ community against the imagined enemy: terrorists. Since his inauguration, Trump has also appointed many advisors whose track records on queer issues are alarming to say the least and we have good reason to believe that

his policies will have devastating effects for working class and LGBTQ people of color, and especially for trans* people. On this side of the Atlantic Ocean, fascism and other forms of extreme right-wing politics continue to grow and to merge with various kinds of homonationalist agendas too, as a recent book on the subject by Swedish journalist Anna-Maria Sörberg (2017) shows. As we follow France's upcoming election, for instance, Sörberg's discussion of how Marine Le Pen has managed to challenge the idea that Front National is a homophobic party by recruiting gay men into her inner circle is particularly chilling. While hardly new issues, what we are witnessing in these times remind us of the importance of studying how LGBTQ issues and subjects are taken up, appropriated, deployed, and challenged by different kinds of political ideologies. It is hardly enough to advocate for particular rights of a unified and homogenous entity. We are also reminded of the ongoing importance of intersectional analysis and attention to other dimensions of identities and livelihoods than those pertaining to sexual orientation and gender; issues that we will continue to be committed to in future issues of the journal. While the (political) winter seems particularly harsh and never-ending, times like these also remind us of the work done by queer activists around the world and in those nations affected in particular. It is clear that LGBTQ scholars and activists everywhere are deeply committed to teaching, organizing and producing knowledge (rather than "alternative facts") about this time, and they are at the forefront of organizing social movements and imagining other futurities. In this sense, we know that the hetero-patriarchal parody of politics that we are witnessing is starkly contrasted by the work of those who, in Halberstam's terms insist on "a better world forged out of a coalition of the very old, the very young, women, queers, native peoples, people of color, trans people, disabled people, wildlings, wolves," and it seems, indeed that spring has come again this year.

With this year's first issue of *lambda nordica* we are pleased to say that the journal is back on production schedule and already far along on future themed issues. In this open issue, articles have a Nordic focus; the authors come from Finland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and they

deal with queer themes and issues pertaining to LGBTQ livelihoods in the Nordic region. First out is Sade Kondelin who investigates autobiographical narratives by Finnish trans people and makes the argument that the concept of gender dysphoria is most productively studied beyond its role in medical processes of defining and diagnosing transgender bodies. Using theoretical perspectives from phenomenology, Kondelin instead proposes that gender dysphoria should be analyzed as an embodied experience in the everyday lives of transgender people. Such an analysis shows that gender dysphoria, similar to chronic pain, is a bodily feeling and a mood at the same time, and that it occurs in the relationships between “the mind,” “the body,” and “the social.”

Jenny Ingemarsdotter explores queer automobility in interwar Sweden. By analyzing Volvo’s early marketing campaigns, especially their construction of a Swedish “*normalvagn*,” an ideal car for everyone, Ingemarsdotter shows how automobility emerged as increasingly heteronormative in interwar Sweden. At the same time, this “automotive heteronormalization” is undermined by an alternative queer automobility. Ingemarsdotter examines Margareta Suber’s novel *Charlie* (1932), where the car becomes a site for (queer) desire and the connection between automobility and heteronormativity is challenged.

Queer readings of poetry take center stage in Per Esben Myren-Svelstad’s contribution. Myren-Svelstad analyzes a selection of poems by Norwegian writer Åsmund Sveen, whose homoerotic poetry on the one hand, and commitment to Nazism during World War II on the other, have puzzled previous scholarship. Myren-Svelstad reads Sveen’s poems with Halberstam’s concept antisolidarity, showing how the speaker in many of Sveen’s poems is described as having a double loyalty: to his own homosexual identity and to a society that condemns such an identity. However, Myren-Svelstad argues that antisolidarity exposes the impossibility of this double affinity, which ends in hatred, violence, and death.

In a meeting last year with *lambda nordica*’s board and editors, the journal’s country representatives were asked to respond to the question “What is going on in Denmark, Finland, and Norway?” This is-

sue's *We're Here* text, authored by Kaisa Ilmonen, Mathias Danbolt, and Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, explores this question further and takes issue with the status of queer studies in the Nordic region. Bringing together stories from three different national contexts, Finland, Denmark, and Norway, they remain careful not to reproduce geopolitical categories in the telling of queer stories. One important conclusion is that the narrative of the Nordic homogeneity needs to be challenged, so that we do not lose sight of the diversity of voices that in fact exists in the Nordic region, including those of national minorities and transnational migrants.

This issue, and the political situation we opened with, links us directly to the next issue, which is a special double themed issue on queer postcolonial Europe, which should be out by the end of the summer. So, as winter turns into spring, at least in seasonal terms, we are grateful for the continued work and involvement of our authors, reviewers and readers. We began the *lambda* year in February when we celebrated our last two issues and our move to Uppsala University in collaboration with the queer seminar there. Some of the contributors to the special issue on femininities joined us in a discussion about critical femininity studies and its relationship to queer studies. Something we as editors are especially excited about is our new board of associate editors, six engaged and accomplished researchers from the Nordic region: Erika Alm, Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, Kaisa Ilmonen, Anu Koivunen, Michael Nebeling Petersen, and Jens Rydström. This group will be meeting annually with the editors to discuss future themes and the overall direction of the journal. Our first meeting is on May 9, at Uppsala University and we will conclude the day with a lecture by Halberstam. All readers, contributors, and members of the *lambda nordica* community who are in the area are warmly welcome.²

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REFERENCE

Sörberg, Anna-Maria. 2017. *Homonationalism*. Stockholm: Leopard.

NOTES

1. <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com> (accessed 24/3/2017).
2. See www.gender.uu.se, for more information.