

Opening by the Editors

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'Open issues' trace unknown territory. Even the form is ambiguous. Are they a "well-stocked and themed smorgesbord" for the discriminating palate (Jacobson 2009)? Or a space for "issues as they open" (Judkins and Bowman 2018), like a handful of tickets to inaugural destinations?

Openness to new directions is an orientation often associated with younger researchers before they have been moulded by institutions, directed to plough old furrows into new fields, or tempted to chase the elusive 'academic niche'. The pressures on 'openness', however, are great. Young researchers are encouraged to brand themselves, push ahead strategically in an area of expertise, and avoid the distractions of the speculative and experimental. Equally, the dynamics of academic career production inevitably present a stark future for many early career researchers. They walk a difficult line of conformity, lest they risk being marked as too niche to be employable, particularly within the established disciplines in contemporary academia run according to neo-liberal capitalist logics. What kinds of feminist knowledges and what kinds of feminist knowing do we leave out when we orient ourselves most towards established,

senior academics' contributions? Whose or what kinds of perspectives might we let slip through the cracks in favour of more established knowledge producers?

With this open issue, we directed our call primarily toward younger scholars early in their careers, not because we are naïvely invested in youth, but because we wanted to encourage young scholars in gender studies to share their research with the interdisciplinary audience of *Women, Gender & Research*. As we in the editing group of the issue ourselves are scholars early in our careers, we wanted to acknowledge that finding an audience for your research is one of the struggles that early career scholars are grappling with in establishing themselves as a voice within a field of study.

We encounter gendered forms of 'openness' across this issue, beginning with the radical reckoning that Scandinavian countries are facing with their colonial histories and racist migration practices, past and present. Our texts from trans and queer narratives perform openness by their insistence upon openings towards t4t readings in literature, in counter archives and counter-narratives to produce other trans becomings. The politics

of openness for media discourses and the public come to the foreground when we encounter the unwillingness of Greta Thunberg to close herself to the anger of injustice, and the “semiotic openness” infused in feminist cartoon practices on Instagram. Channelling our final piece on masculinist privileges of the manifesto genre and the call for genre experiments, this collection of younger scholars double-down on the clefts and valleys attendant to the open issue form. We, as editors, and as ECRs ourselves, try to follow them along these pathways.

With 10 articles, 2 round-table discussions, 2 essays, 2 PhD dissertation reviews and 2 book reviews, this open issue is fairly large and covers a variety of different subjects, creating new and exciting theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and empirical openings by a wide range of younger researchers.

In her article, “Embodied Coloniality: Affective experiences of Muslim immigrant women living in Norway”, Nezihat Bakar-Langeland’s research delves into the affective and embodied experiences of Muslim immigrant women in Norway, investigating the enduring impacts of coloniality on their lives. Drawing on in-depth interviews, she explores how colonial legacies shape racialized power dynamics and dehumanization, leading to marginalization and “resulting in feelings of non-relationality, suffocation, survival, resignation, and a loss of futurity”. Through the concept of “colonial wounds,” Bakar-Langeland analyzes the epistemic and ontological/aesthetic injuries experienced by participants. These narratives uncover the persistence of racism and exclusion within Norwegian society, emphasizing the complexities of identity negotiation in a context steeped in colonial structures and racial hierarchies. By situating these stories within broader discourses of decolonial feminism and affect studies, the work illuminates the oppressive and transformative potentialities of resistance in the face of systemic inequities.

Anna Meera Gaonkar’s work explores whiteness, racialisation and affectivity in the contemporary Danish (and Nordic and European) context, set against the backdrop of European post-WWII obsessiveness with issues of migration and

integration. Gaonkar applies an ‘economic’ approach to affect, concerned with exchanges and negotiations, to analyse how *Tryghedspakken* in 2020 (the Security Initiative) and *Parallelsamfundsløven* in 2021 (the Parallel Society Law) manifest white homesickness and affective evictions. Both these actions are explored as ways to “construct instrumental figures that are both racialised and migrantised in opposition to the Danish majority white population”. Such imaginaries have not only historical roots but very present implications, as Gaonkar accounts for through the material threat of eviction and being cut off from welfare experienced by racialised-migrantised residents across Danish society.

Jenny Andrine Madsen Evang produces a multi-layered analysis of the 2016 Black feminist film *Serpent Rain*, separating out the semiotics of the film against the backdrop of other artistic representations of its central story: the sinking of the 18th Century slave-ship *Fredensborg*. Dissecting its sensory aesthetics, Evang describes a set of fragmented ontologies floating to the surface of the film, from its interrogation of typical Scandinavian images (such as of tranquil water) to reliance on the “self-image as a racially innocent, peaceful region”. Beginning with analysis of the role of oceans in Scandinavian imagery, Evang takes us through *Serpent Rain*’s representational spinning around the circuits of capital, followed by its critiques of the spectated gaze and evocation of soundscapes in the synaesthesia strategies of the film’s feminist and post-colonial critiques.

In their article, “Extrapolating the Faroese history of abortion: A material-rhetorical archival analysis of rhetorical accretion”, Turið Nolsøe and Lena Nolsøe investigate the underexplored abortion history of the Faroe Islands, focusing on the case of Anna Maria Jacobsdatter, who was accused and later acquitted of abortion in 1843. Drawing on newly localized archival records, the authors expand the concept of “rhetorical accretion” to examine how administrative and archival practices shape historical narratives. They highlight how gendered, class-based, and national power dynamics under Danish rule influenced the formation of sources and contemporary abortion

discourse. Through a material-rhetorical lens, this research underscores the interplay between geopolitics and biopolitics in constructing Faroese abortion history, offering insights into the socio-political structures that continue to shape reproductive rights debates.

In their article, “Negotiating Trans Affect in Luka Holmegaard’s *Havet i Munden*”, Tais B. Terletskaja sets out to understand how Holmegaard’s book of poetry negotiates the polarized field of trans affect that dominates contemporary trans discourse. Restricting trans experience within a binary of either positive or bad affect, this polarization has serious consequences for how trans folk become visible within the highly pressurized field of cultural and political discourse on transness. Turning to Holmegaard’s book of poetry, Terletskaja shows how it disturbs neat demarcations between feeling good and bad, pleasure and pain, and how it, through what they call an affective attunement, carves out a space for a more ambivalent, open narrative for trans experience. Terletskaja persuasively argues that Holmegaard’s poetry, in its affective attunement to subtle bodily sensations and delights, dares to interrogate the limitations of constrained identity markers and gestures toward another vision for transness that is both rich and varied, even if it is minutely articulated.

Interested in how the gaming community has been fragmented, diverging in polarized directions concerning LGBTQ+ issues and inclusion since the 2010s, Kim Minuva’s article “‘Queerness is unstoppable’ – How video game publications frame LGBTQ topics” maps the terrain of LGBTQ+ topics in gaming culture. Employing a framing and discourse analysis through a queer feminist lens, Minuva works to understand the ways in which LGBTQ+ topics are represented and framed; specifically, their work analyzes how and if the right-wing backlash against LGBTQ+ issues, and the diverging, polarized attitudes surrounding queer and trans issues is reflected in the content in gaming publications. To do so, their article explores the coverage of the three most influential gaming magazines and media, analyzing content written between 2002 and 2020. Through Minuva’s careful

mapping and analysis, they found that though conservative campaigns like GamerGate employ right-wing, queer- and transphobic philosophies and discourse to oppose diversity and inclusion within the content of video games, the overall rhetoric and framing of LGBTQ+ inclusion used in gaming journalism is egalitarian and neutral.

In their article, “Archiving our bodies - trans corporeal traces and t4t archival reading”, Storm Madsen engages with the work of three non-binary or trans-masculine artists, Kris Grey, *No title* (2019), Emmett Ramstad, *The good ones* (2006) and Marie Ahlberg Andersen, *My Dick Clit has many forms* (2022), exploring the corporeal traces of trans becomings that, as Madsen argues, resist hegemonic, linear, medically assisted transition narratives that focus on the physical body in full form. Indeed, the artists’ insistence on displaying nipple scabs, blood stain drops, and crotch imprints as transition documentation allows for, as Madsen argues, another kind of t4t archival material to emerge; one that highlights the slowness, the heterogenous temporality, the ungraspable ambiguity and complexity of trans embodied becomings, and thus, the impossibility of a singular one-directional narrative of trans embodiment and transition. As they eloquently argue and exemplify with their own t4t auto-ethnographic engagement, Madsen contends that t4t counter archival offerings, and the directionality of t4t archival gestures, are important to allowing for other kinds of trans engagement and becomings.

Frida Hviid Broberg’s important contribution, “Hvor vover hun! Vrede og autisme i mediedækningen af Greta Thunberg” (“How Dare She – Anger and Autism in the Danish Media Coverage of Greta Thunberg”), analyzes the rhetorical circulation of the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg’s speech at the UN’s climate action summit in 2019 in Danish media, exploring how feelings anger and worry ‘sticks’ to Thunberg and the youth climate movement. Hviid Broberg demonstrates how the Danish media frames Thunberg’s anger as something to be problematized and pathologized: her anger is often framed as childish, hysterical, and linked to her autism spectrum diagnosis, rather than as a valid reaction to political issues,

specifically climate inaction. The article argues that Thunberg's anger is portrayed as a threat to the mental well-being of other children, making her a subject of societal concern. In an important conceptual contribution, Hviid Broberg proposes understanding Thunberg's figuration in Danish media by introducing the concept of 'the impossible child', a figure who is both a child and not a child, whose anger must be controlled not to protect her, but to safeguard other children from her.

Fabricius's article explores the sharing of comics and cartoons on Instagram as contemporary feminist activism. Through the case study of Mary Catherine Starr (Instagram profile @mom-life_comics), Fabricius investigates the power and potential of "digital feminist consciousness-raising" in an era where the desire for creative expression, the aspirations of activism, the emotional labour of platform community management, and the need to 'side-hustle' become entangled in online action. Starr's work came to prominence for many through a viral vilification of her work in 2022, in which Starr's expressions of gender inequality in cishetrosexual marriages and her 'momfluencer' style came under ridicule and critique. Both her underpinning aesthetic style (with its economic interests) and her subsequent responses to the scandal are analysed by Fabricius from different vantage points of feminist epistemology: the semiotic openness of Starr's discourse, the history of visibility in the meaning-making of feminist texts, and the politics of complaint in response to Starr's justifications. The work illuminates these tensions within the increasingly influential medium of instacartooning.

In her contribution, Kira Skovbo Moser asks what potentials the manifesto genre, qua its masculinist past, can be said to hold for a feminist project of establishing new speaking positions within public discourse. Through a rhetorical analysis of genre as a form of action, Moser analyzes how two Danish feminist manifestos, *LUDERMANIFESTET* (2017) by the fourth-wave feminist collective #GirlSquad and Signe Ulbjerg's "Manifesto for Writing Victimhood" (2021), experiment with the genre's possibilities and limitations for creating positions through which a feminist politics can be

enunciated. Combining the manifesto with other genres (e.g. the women's magazine, the academic article), Moser argues that it is through genre experiments - unexpected genre combinations and embeddings - that these manifestos attempt a renegotiation of who gets to speak for whom within different discourses of feminist concern.

This open issue features two roundtable discussions addressing critical social issues. The first, "(De)Humanising People in Discussions around Race and Religion", led by Lea Skewes with Iram Khawaja, Lene Kühle, and Christian Suhr, explores racialization and Islamophobia in Denmark, focusing on media and political roles in dehumanizing minorities. The second, "On the All-Inclusive Society, or How to Leave No One Behind", organized by The Bevica Foundation's Universal Design PhD and Postdoc Research Network, includes Dan Goodley, Yanki Lee, Jos Boys, and Sarah Glerup discussing inclusivity in disability studies, addressing neoliberal ableism, "super cripple" stereotypes, and equity tourism.

Furthermore, the issue contains two essays. The first, entitled "Gatekeeping Science with The Master's Tools – How Methodological Critiques Police Feminist Research" and written by Jan Thohauge Frederiksen and Simone Mejding Poulsen, explores how feminist knowledge production is often challenged and discredited by (positivist) researchers under the guise of "methodological critiques" that assume a universal acceptance of positivist epistemologies. The authors argue that the "scarecrow" arguments brought forth by such feminist critiques aims not to engage in scientific discussion, but rather to dismiss feminist knowledge production and gatekeep science. The second essay, entitled "Beskattet og Ubeskyttet: Refleksioner over sexarbejde og sexarbejdersvilkår" by Camilla Brokholm Pedersen, traces some of the arguments used against sex work in the Danish media and politics; countering these arguments she instead outlines why rights and legal protections for sex workers is a better model for regulating sex work than criminalization, as providing legal protections has the potential to greatly improve the working conditions and lives of sex workers.

Finally, the issue also includes two book reviews of Margretha Järvinen and Nanna Mik-Meyer's *Køn og Karriere i Akademia. Bag Facaden* (2024) and the anthology *Det aktivistiske museum: praksisser, teorier og aktører* (2023) respectively, as well as reviews of both Anna Meera Gaonkar's and Elizabeth Löwe Hunter's PhD dissertations.

It is our hope that each voice within this open issue will find an audience of readers both within and beyond their 'proper' disciplinary frameworks and that this open issue might reflect the truly rich interdisciplinarity of gender studies as such.

Together and apart, they push the boundaries of feminist and gender studies—while many of them are also simultaneously resisting the boundaries of the more 'established' disciplines. However, we also want to stress that so many threads of solidarity intertwine the contributions. We end this open issue open-endedly: it is on account of – and not despite – the important differences in our academic orientations that we have so much to learn from each other.

Happy reading!

References

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