

# Introduction

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This issue of the *SQS Journal* is divided, as often before, into an article section (QueerScope), perspectives section (QueerMirror), reports section (Queer View Mirror) and reviews (QueerEye). The contents overview of this issue is, queerly, in reverse order: This time, the reviews section (QueerEye) presents and evaluates quite a few recently completed and published Finnish doctoral dissertations relating to queer studies. These reviews highlight one of the currently prominent focus areas in queer studies in Finland, which could be broadly defined as the study of images and texts. The dissertations presented by Liisi Huhtala, Eva Kuhlefeldt and Mikko Carlson all investigate literature, and the dissertation presented by Taina Kinnunen deals with visual culture. In addition to these, Arto Jokinen reviews the final report of the Academy of Finland's Porno Academy research project, and Tuula Juvonen reviews the movie *Die Freiheit des Erzählens. Das Leben des Gad Beck. The Story of Gad Beck* (2006) based on the book *An Underground Life*, edited by Herbert Frank.

The reports section (QueerView Mirror) presents completed studies as well, but in this section it is done literally as reports, in the researchers' own voice. The "shadow lectios", i.e. the English translations of Finnish *lectiones praecur-*

*soriae* from public defences of doctoral dissertations, have originally been published in Finnish in the *Naistutkimus–Kvinnoforskning* journal, which specializes in critical gender studies. Riina Rautiainen has written a report on her own pro gradu thesis, which has been reviewed at the University of Stockholm.

The special theme of the perspectives section (QueerMirror) in this issue is Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and its Finnish translation *Hankala sukupuoli* (2006). For this Butler Special theme section, Sanna Karkulehto has compiled some results of the *Hankala sukupuoli ja minä* ("*Gender Trouble and I*") questionnaire. The results were obtained from Uniqueer and Naistutkimus (Women's Studies) mailing lists. Leena-Maija Rossi writes about the translation process of *Gender Trouble*, while Janne Kurki evaluates the translation – although he expands his critique to deal more with the original than the translation.

The papers in the articles section of this issue come from different disciplines and investigate very different topics, but nevertheless utilize the same theoretical background. In his article "Queering Public Pedagogy in New York City,"

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North American Loren Krywanczyk writes about what it means to apply queer pedagogy to everyday work as a teacher in a New York public grade school. In her article “The Other and the Real. How Does Judith Butler’s Theorizing of the Subject and Contingency Differ from the New Lacanian Thought?”, Jaana Pirskanen examines Butler’s subject theory from Lacanian premises that have thus far been relatively neglected by researchers, especially in Finland. Janne Kurki, who has written for the Butler Special of the *QueerMirror* section as well, represents a similar, although somewhat more critical Lacanian view.

The cover image of this issue is from Kasimir Sandbacka’s article “‘Noh, enhän mä nää mitään ton hunnun läpi.’ Sukupuolen läpinäkyvät rajat Rosa Liksomın sarjakuvassa ‘Anandamarxin tytöt yleisessä uimahallissa’” (“‘Well I can’t see anything through that veil anyway’. Transparent boundaries of sex/gender in Rosa Liksom’s comic ‘Girls of Anandamarx at the Public Swimming Pool’”). There is no separate gallery section in this issue. The cover image of the “girls of Anandamarx” swimming is from the hybrid novel *Roskaa* (1991) by Rosa Liksom, the thus far very little-researched contemporary author from northern Finland. *Roskaa* mixes words and images and emphasizes the cannibalist nature of the contemporary novel. In his article, Sandbacka examines the construction of gender and how gender is called into question in the text. According to him, “the mingling of worlds and different strategies of cover-up and revealing are part of the play with meanings in the book, a play which blurs identity, gender and political commentary alike”

Sandbacka examines Butler’s places of bodily permeability and impermeability defined by the boundaries of the body in the context of *Roskaa*. In the novel, the veiled body of the anandamarxians as represented by Liksom is being made entirely impermeable for both other bodies and others’ gazes. According to Sandbacka, the use of the veil and the paranoid protection of one’s invisibility bring forth the totalitarizing attempts present in our culture to preserve the purity of the body and identity by confining them inside clear, marked boundaries. We have ample evidence and experience of this kind of artificial demarcation both generally in terms of cultures, societies and nations, or peoples and nation states and, in more detail, in terms of genders and sexualities – or in an even more concrete sense, in terms of knowledge and different interests concerning it, different disciplines and different theories. Lately, this kind of wrangling between disciplines, which has been targeted especially at women’s studies and queer studies, has been represented in Finland in a troublesome way. This quarrelling is troublesome because there is no gain in it terms of the quality of the scientific work. Rather, it can have quite the opposite effect when researchers waste their time in futile lance-breaking.

Another thing that has gained visibility lately in Finland is a regional demarcation on similarly artificial grounds concerning research environments and places where research is conducted, which leads inevitably to unpleasant comparisons of the quality of the said locations. This kind of comparison is unpleasant in the sense that it is, nevertheless, only based on artificial and hierarchizing op-

positions, just as it is the case when binary oppositions are created between any two constructs. In this case, however, these oppositions are upheld in an academic environment by parties that one would expect to be aware of the constructed nature of such definitions of quality.