

Editorial: Non-Binary and Other (Dis)Identifications

InterAlia Editorial Board

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Our call for the 2025 issue foregrounded “non-binary and other (dis)identifications,” hoping that authors would explore how trans and non-binary sex_gender issues are discussed differently worldwide. No-one responded to our particular interest in linguistic questions and shifting nomenclatures, ones that articulate gender and embodiment beyond the cis-heteronormative, naturalized binary. However, several authors submitted papers that explicitly address trans and non-binary lives, as does Parvy Palmou’s and Klio Geroulanou’s empirical study on the treatment of trans and non-binary persons in the Greek healthcare system. Sara W. Wojciechowska, in turn, based their Polish-language essay on in-depth interviews with non-binary individuals who describe their growing into a sense of self-identity in a process definable as achieving maturity, though the process is markedly distinct from a cis-normative *Bildung*. Moreover, in the Varia section, Seven Alexander Gardner offers a harsh critique of the US asylum regime’s breakdown under current authoritarian conditions, by drawing particular attention to the way trans asylum seekers are negatively affected (and often denied entry), especially if they come from the Global South.

We also received articles which tackle the non-binary through the cultural studies lens of camp and drag performances. Aaron Kharkamni studies the patterns of queer, camp, and gender-ambiguous coding in Disney’s animation films. Kharkamni uses the character Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* (1989) as a paradigmatic case study to argue that while “Disney’s villains frequently pathologised queerness by conflating it with deception, moral instability, and monstrosity,” these features nonetheless become entrance points for subversions and rereadings that claim cultural agency. In Ursula’s case, this involves a radical “cuntification.” While Kharkamni interprets a particular artistic gesture as a rejection of shaming and a disidentification, we would see it also as a move that catapults femininity beyond the limits of the heteronormative gender binary.

Writing in Spanish, Lucía Álvarez revisits the Argentinian celebrity Federico Klemm, co-host of a long-running television program on art. She examines this artist, collector, and TV personality through the lens of Douglas Crimp’s “Getting the Warhol We Deserve” (2005) and Paul B. Preciado’s essay “The Ocaña We Deserve: *Campconceptualism*, sexual insubordination, and performative politics” (2012). But she also interprets Klemm through the lens of a scandalizing story about him,

published in *Página/12* in 1998, and of his own subsequent (and perhaps self-referential) on-the-air pronouncement that each nation gets the fags that it deserves. Álvarez asks what is meant by “deserve” when it comes to reading the ambiguities surrounding Klemm, given his emphatically public place in Argentinian art criticism. Does “deserve” refer to a desirable ideal? Is it perhaps the opposite of such an ideal: a marker of national backwardness? Or does it pose the challenge of a much-needed critical elaboration focused on camp and performativity?

Chris Schramm's article provides an in-depth critique of psychoanalytic ignorance framed as a defense of nonbinary subjectivity. The article, available in English and Spanish, presents itself as the reading of a dream, a typical psychoanalytic method, in which the interplay between power and desire brings out the unconscious cis-heteronormative structuring of the psychoanalytic institution. Schramm's method relies on two meanings of “transition,” which simultaneously stands for gender transition and linguistic translation, a confluence that leads to unique insights.

Also, Luis Barraza Cárdenas' “Fragments of a *Cuir* Cartography,” a hybrid of theory and embodied narrative, as the author puts it, challenges the binary order by claiming that *cuir* embodiment “begins as a territory irreducible to any imposed formula,” so that language has to deal with “traces of something that eludes capture yet insists on existing.” Challenging the dominance of Anglo-centric perspectives, not least by using the term *cuir* (a homophone of “queer” which may be translated as “leather” or “skin”), the article explores racialized geographies by strolling through global cities' streets, darkrooms, and digital spaces.

Furthermore, we include three texts that engage with lesbian representation and queer self-representation. These articles also reflect on historically and translocally shifting nomenclatures, critically engaging with Western dominance and decolonial strategies in queer theory. Writing from Hong Kong, Wen Wen deploys the framework of hauntology to discuss “spectral” lesbian thematics in recent Chinese fiction, where it coexists and merges with – and where it is expressed and overshadowed by – images and voices of femme/femininity. Writing from New Delhi, Disha discusses contemporary Indian cinema's representations of queer characters, notably including lesbians, in the wake of the 2018 depenalization of same-sex acts and the 2023 denial of marriage equality. She points out that while Indian cinematography has moved beyond mocking or merely alluding to queerness, its more recent and more direct depictions of queer lives often resort to homonormative plotlines. Interestingly, these two authors position lesbian existence in the context of the issue's prominent non-binary focus. Also engaging with lesbian life in India is Audrey Correa, who asks about unspoken intersec-

tionality in a collection of biographical accounts edited by Maya Sharma, *Loving Women: Being a Lesbian in Unprivileged India*. Correa insists on the need to consider the caste system that influences the lives of women loving women (not necessarily embracing the term “lesbian”), who, in the case of a lower cast, might face discrimination and violence but might just as likely stand above higher castes’ repressive sexual and gender expectations.

Finally, the Varia section includes also “Balancing Act,” a short theatre play by Paulina Schäfer addressing queerness and personal self-discovery.

Taking an overview of this issue, it seems that (dis)identifications is what interests most of the authors. Identifications are a challenging question for queer ways of social existence. However, the notion of disidentification, established by José Esteban Muñoz as a key concept of queer theory that overcomes the either/or logic of being within or outside of social identities, seems more promising than the question from our call about “non-identitarian and even anti-identitarian postures.”