

VAL SYMPOSIUM 2025

Gender Anxieties: (Re-)Assessments from a Literary and Cultural Studies Perspective

28 November 2025 - Hoek 38, Brussels

Programme

Time Table

Time	Event	Room
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Registration and coffee	Auditorium
9:00 - 9:30 AM	Opening remarks	Auditorium
9:30 - 10:30 AM	Keynote: Hans Demeyer (UC London) 'I won't allow myself to be made to feel guilty here': Gender Anxiety and Whiteness in Neerlandophone Literature from Flanders	Auditorium
10:30 - 11:00 AM	Coffee break	Auditorium
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Parallel Panels 1	Auditorium, Rookkwarts, Magnetiet, Wortelnoot, Macassar
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Parallel Panels 2	Auditorium, Rookkwarts, Magnetiet, Wortelnoot, Macassar
1:00 - 2:30 PM	Lunch	Auditorium
2:30 - 3:30 PM	Podium Discussion: Gender Anxieties and Institutional Practice Gily Coene (moderator, VUB) David Paternotte (ULB) Andrea Pető (CEU Vienna) Alison E. Woodward (VUB)	Auditorium
3:30 - 4:00 PM	Coffee break	Auditorium
4:00 - 5:00 PM	Keynote: Teagan Bradway (SUNY Cortland) Bodies That Gather: Practicing Attachment in Queer Kinship Narrative	Auditorium
5:00 - 5:15 PM	Closing remarks	Auditorium

Parallel Panels 1 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Parallel Panels 2 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
Queer Forms of Storytelling on the Stage and Page Room: Auditorium (32 seats) Chair: Anneleen Masschelein (KU Leuven) - Amber Kempynck (U Gent) Plural, Shifting, and Staged: Gender Nonconformity and Stand-Up Comedy in “Hannah Gadsby’s Gender Agenda” - Quintus Immisch (UC Louvain) Spirals of Time: Queer Temporalities and Classical Reception in Kim de l’Horizon’s <i>Blutbuch</i> (2022)	Memoirs and Autotheory by Women Writers Room: Auditorium (32 seats) Chair: Tola Ositelu (VUB) - Saleh Chaoui (U Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah - Fez) Between Agency and Victimhood: Forms of Self-Assertion in Leila Ahmed’s <i>A Border Passage: From Cairo to America – A Woman’s Journey</i> (1999) and Wafa Faith Hallam’s <i>The Road from Morocco</i> (2011) - Helena Van Praet (U Gent – FWO) Mirrors, Women, and Water in Contemporary English- and Dutch-Language Autotheory
Metafiction and Gendered Authorship Room: Rookkwarts (16 seats) Chair: Katrijn Van den Bossche (VUB) - Eszter Vass (U Konstanz – VUB) Traumatic Disruption and Metatheatrical Critique in Ella Hickson’s <i>The Writer</i> - Josephine Delali Ofei (VUB) Metafiction and Gender Anxiety: Authorial Refusal and Speculative Selfhood in Nnedi Okorafor’s <i>Death of the Author</i>	Gender and Sexuality in Genre Fiction Room: Rookkwarts (16 seats) Chair: Janine Hauthal (VUB) - Aya Chriaa (VUB) The Afterlives of Slavery: Posthuman Memory and Queer Bodies in Rivers Solomon’s <i>The Deep</i> - Christina Slopek-Hauff (TU Dortmund) Who’s Afraid of... Female Desire beyond the Man? <i>Carmilla</i> and Its Literary Afterlives
Women’s Agency and Knowledge in Early Modern Times Room: Magnetiet (18 seats) Chair: Delphine Calle (U Antwerpen) - Maria Pace Aquilina (VUB) Dangerous Women: Gender Anxiety and Female Agency in Aphra Behn’s <i>The Rover</i> (1677) - Laure Primerano (KU Leuven) Early Modern Learned Women in Enlightenment Collective Biographies: Undoing Historical Narratives of Female Exceptionality	Gender Roles and the Private/Public Body Room: Magnetiet (18 seats) Chair: Inge Arteel (VUB) - Charlotte Becuwe (U Antwerpen) The dialectics between the “mère intrépide” and the “mère coupable” in Jean Racine’s oeuvre - Anna Praet (U Gent) Masks, Materials, and Stammers. A gender theory-based retrospective reading of Patrizia Vicinelli’s <i>à, a, A</i>,
Bodies of Knowledge Room: Wortelnoot (16 seats) Chair: Jolien Gijbels (VUB) - Louise Benson James (U Gent) Gut Health and Female Rejuvenation in Medicine and Popular Fiction 1910s–1920s - Ruth Van Hecke (UC Louvain – KU Leuven) “Now You’re All Grown Up, A Woman.” The Female Adolescent in Dutch Women’s Fiction from the 1930s	Approaching Masculinity in Twenty-First-Century Prose and Drama Room: Wortelnoot (16 seats) Chair: Luke Shirock (Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris 3) - Lore Goossens (U Antwerpen – U Gent) Trauma as Old as Time? Beastly Transformations and Masculinity - Tara MacMahon (Cambridge U) Performing Manhood: Confessional Monologues and Masculinity in Katie Cappiello’s <i>Now That We’re Men</i>
Worldbuilding through Narrative Room: Macassar (18 seats) Chair: Michael David Rosenfeld (VUB) - Jante Borremans (U Antwerpen) Rehumanizing the Witch: Adults’ Reflections on the Female Antagonist in Grimm’s “Hansel and Gretel” - Oluwadunni Talabi (U Bremen) Gilead’s Silenced Specter and the Limits of White Feminist Futurity: Blackness as Method in Rae Giana Rashad’s <i>The Blueprint</i>	Cultural Translations Room: Macassar (18 seats) Chair: Kris Van Heuckelom (KU Leuven) - Yunqian Wang (U Gent) Performing Mulan: Female Aspirations in the Creation and Reading of Boy’s Love (Tanbi) Fiction - Oliwia Napierala (U Gent) From Invisibility to Resistance: Women Translators as Cultural Agents in Soviet Russia