

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

Queer Forms of Storytelling on the Stage and Page

Room: Auditorium

Chair: TBC

- 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 *Blutbuch* (2022)
-

Metafiction and Gendered Authorship

Room: Rookkwarts

Chair: Katrijn Van den Bossche (VUB)

- Eszter Vass (U Konstanz / VUB)
Traumatic Disruption and Metatheatrical Critique in Ella Hickson’s *The Writer*
 - Josephine Delali Ofei (VUB)
Metafiction and Gender Anxiety: Authorial Refusal and Speculative Selfhood in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Death of the Author*
-

Women’s Agency and Knowledge in Early Modern Times

Room: Magnetiet

Chair: Delphine Calle (U Antwerpen)

- Maria Pace Aquilina (VUB)
Dangerous Women: Gender Anxiety and Female Agency in Aphra Behn’s *The Rover* (1677)
 - Laure Primerano (KU Leuven)
Early Modern Learned Women in Enlightenment Collective Biographies: Undoing Historical Narratives of Female Exceptionality
-

Bodies of Knowledge

Room: Wortelnoot

Chair: Jolien Gijbels (VUB)

- Louise Benson James (U Gent)
Gut Health and Female Rejuvenation in Medicine and Popular Fiction 1910s–1920s
- Ruth Van Hecke (KU Leuven)
“Nu ben je groot geworden, een vrouw.” Narratieve constructies van het adolescentie meisje in vrouwelijke Nederlandse fictie rond 1930

Worldbuilding through Narrative

Room: Macassar

Chair: TBC

- 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 *The Blueprint*

Parallel Panels 2

Memoirs and Autotheory by Women Writers

Room: Auditorium

Chair: Tola Oshitelu (VUB)

- Saleh Chaou (U Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah - Fez)
Between Agency and Victimhood: Forms of Self-Assertion in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America – A Woman's Journey* (1999) and Wafa Faith Hallam's *The Road from Morocco* (2011)
 - Helena Van Praet (U Gent – FWO)
Mirrors, Women, and Water in Contemporary English- and Dutch-Language Autotheory
-

Gender and Sexuality in Genre Fiction

Room: Rookkwarts

Chair: Janine Hauthal (VUB)

- Aya Chriaa (VUB)
The Afterlives of Slavery: Posthuman Memory and Queer Bodies in Rivers Solomon's *The Deep*
 - Christina Slopek-Hauff (TU Dortmund)
Who's Afraid of... Female Desire beyond the Man? *Carmilla* and Its Literary Afterlives
-

Gender Roles and the Private/Public Body

Room: Magnetiet

Chair: Inge Arteel (VUB)

- Charlotte Becuwe (U Antwerpen)
La dialectique entre la “mère intrépide” et la “mère coupable” chez Racine
 - Angelina Rao (KU Leuven)
Private Marriages, Public Morals
-

Approaching Masculinity in Twenty-First-Century Fiction and Drama

Room: Wortelnoot

Chair: TBC

- Lore Goossens (U Antwerpen)
Trauma as Old as Time? Beastly Transformations and Masculinity
- Tara MacMahon (Cambridge U)
Performing Manhood: Confessional Monologues and Masculinity in Katie
Cappiello's *Now That We're Men*

Cultural Translations

Room: Macassar

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