

**Call for Submissions—Special Section of Gender Studies Journal,
2027 Issue: *Life-Writing and Gendered Trauma***

The journal Gender Studies (see details about the journal here: <https://reference-global.com/journal/GENST>) invites contributions for a forthcoming special section on “Life-Writing and Gendered Trauma,” to be published in the 2027 issue. The issue edited by Mieke Bal, Arleen Ionescu and Maria Margaroni focuses on the gendered dimensions of trauma which, despite a growing body of works published since the end of the 20th century (Bal 2011; Bal 2023; Herman 1992; Henke 1998; Carpenter 2018; Iantaffi 2020; Michaels and Twomey 2021; Baldwin and Gelsthorpe 2023; Saketopoulou and Pellegrini 2024; Brown 2024), continue to be peripheral in more mainstream psychological treatments of trauma (see, for instance, Katrina Brown 2024 for a critique of mainstream trauma discourse). It proposes new ways of thinking contemporary trauma narratives through a gendered lens that delves into how trauma impacts on the mental and psychological health of individuals who were exposed to gender-based violence, abuse and exploitation, such as sexual harassment and assault, domestic abuse, control and coercion in situations of domestic, economic or sexual slavery, political persecution, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic forms of violence. It also proposes to analyze the gendered contexts of life narratives written by subjects traumatized by violent dislocation from their homes and forced migration (Amelina & Lutz 2019). Our aim in this special section is to look at different works of life-writing narrating experiences of gendered violence and to investigate their distinct approaches to trauma as well as their employment of writing as a medium of healing and a strategy of survival.

There are unique ways in which gendered traumas manifest in writing as a form of ‘scriptotherapy’, a concept that is used both in literary studies (Henke 1998; Hejaz & Singh 2023) and the social sciences (Riordan 1996; Gladding & Drake Wallace 2018). Traumas cannot be healed by eliminating traumatic memories, but by communicating them in various forms, including through the nonverbal or non-symbolic in the case of ‘the new wounded’, those whose cerebral trauma has broken the hermeneutic thread that sustains the talking cure, thus arresting the transferential process that both psychoanalysis and classical trauma theory consider an entangled part of healing (Malabou 2012). Starting from the premise that life narratives are therapeutic tools through which trauma victims can confront their anxieties, depression and ambivalence, gaining insight into themselves and helping others who went through similar experiences do the same (see, for instance, Ionescu and Margaroni 2020), we are interested in the ways contemporary life-writing problematizes the findings of traditional trauma studies (for instance, Caruth’s claims about trauma inaccessibility and unrepresentability). Our investigation seeks to shift attention to forms of auto/bio writing (including autobiographies / autofictions in graphic form) that grapple with the traumatic real, opening it up to unacknowledged ‘what if’ possibilities and transmitting negative affect dynamically, including at a transgenerational level. Aware of how patriarchal power operates through narrative and visual representations, we are interested in gendered subjective experiences and embodied knowledge, aiming to examine how gendered forms of trauma expose the split between blocking and provoking memory, demanding remembrance while at the same time using forgetting as a cope mechanism and, ultimately, a medium of healing. We are also looking for contributions that investigate the tentativeness and openness of working through trauma that provoke its “‘awkward poetics’”, i.e. its fragile balancing between past and present, fiction and reality, the interminability of the process of healing and the finality of

the recurring pain (Eaglestone 2008).

More specifically, this issue will emphasize transpositions of gendered traumatic experiences in contemporary autobiographies and biographies, but also in the newer genres of autofiction, autoethnography, and biofiction as well as in more mixed therapeutic narratives (e.g. autotheoretical fiction), all attempting the fictionalisation of “real” traumatic experiences, narrated by the subjects themselves or by a writer who adopts the persona of the actual person.

We invite contributions related, but not limited, to the following:

- retrieving memories of gendered violence between remembering and forgetting (Bernard-Donals 2009),
- witnessing and healing gendered trauma,
- investigating the transmissibility of gendered trauma and its translatability,
- reflecting on the fictionalization of the self and reality as a strategy of survival,
- moving beyond the individual psychologizing of gendered trauma towards more community-based approaches to systemic violence and healing,
- neuro or psychoanalytic approaches to gendered trauma
- “travelling concepts” (Bal 2002): how “feminism” and “gender” travel across disciplines, cultures, and time periods, including in trauma studies.

Those interested in the above themes can send a 500-word abstract presenting the theoretical approach, corpus and any (preliminary) findings, as well as a 150-word Bio Note to Arleen Ionescu (arleen.ionescu@e-uvt.ro) and Maria Margaroni (margaroni.maria@ucy.ac.cy) by **10 October 2026**.

Please note that manuscripts will be accepted **only on the basis of abstract submission**. Authors will be notified of the abstract selection by **1 November 2026** and the deadline for the submission of the final manuscripts will be **15 May 2027**.

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