Call for Submissions—Special Section of *Gender Studies* Journal, 2026 Issue

Gender and Cognition: Intersections of Mind, Culture, and Language

The journal *Gender Studies* (see details about the journal here: https://reference-global.com/journal/GENST) invites contributions for a forthcoming special section on "Gender and Cognition: Intersections of Mind, Culture, and Language," to be published in the 2026 issue. This special issue aims to explore recent developments in cognitive science and gender studies, with a focus on their reverberations in language, literature and culture. We are especially interested in innovative interdisciplinary approaches to gender and cognition, which combine linguistic and cultural analysis with insights from cognitive linguistics, social psychology, cognitive cultural and literary studies, cognitive narratology, gender/ queer studies, and feminist theory.

In recent years, gender has been increasingly conceptualized as fluid and situated beyond the conventional binaries of male and female. There has also been a resurgence of gender-related violence, discrimination and exploitation, antifeminist backlash, and a reinforcement of toxic masculinity. New identities and roles (genderfluid, bigender, and agender), as well as new dynamics regarding the traditional ones, challenge societal and cultural categories and require more inclusive approaches. These developments, often discussed through an intersectional perspective, reshape how gender is lived, represented and legislated. Research in psychology and brain sciences has already addressed many of these transformations in a robust body of work on gender differences and similarities in cognitive abilities (Halpern 2012; Hyde 2005; Hyde & Linn 2006; Miller & Halpern 2014; Pinker & Spelke 2005; Spelke 2005), non-binary identities (Mastrantonio et al. 2025; Schudson & Morgenroth 2022), gender differences in spatial thinking and ability (Hegarty 2018), among many other areas. In addition, the recent science of neurofeminism, which combines practices in neuroscience and feminist studies, has contributed to the reframing of feminist theories and concerns by embracing topics such as re-queering the brain or exploring biologies of diversity (Bluhm & al., 2012; Wilson 1998). However, cognitive research has only begun to engage with these transformations.

Starting from the cognitive studies' concern with embodied cognition and experience as being gendered, our special issue seeks to update and integrate current debates on gender and culture with cognitive frameworks. In relevant previous research, embodiment, considered as both a biological and sociocultural category, reveals how the body is simultaneously material and instilled with cultural meanings and how it brings into play various cultural practices (Gibbs 2005). From this perspective, gender is a hybrid category of how male and female bodies and behaviors are conceptualized and reflected in culturally meaningful models (Cameron 2014). Cognitive linguists emphasize that gendered embodiment is reproduced mentally and expressed in discourse through available metaphors and frames. If conceptual metaphor theory reveals how metaphors across societies interpret gender roles and identities (Koller 2004; Velasco-Sacristán 2005), frame semantics, by contrast, focuses on how gendered language activates underlying mental frames, guiding interpretation and structuring expectations about gender roles and associations (Fillmore 1982; Fillmore & Atkins 2009). Building on this, research on categorization (see psychologist Eleanor Rosch's prototype theory and George Lakoff's theory of idealized cognitive models) shows how gender is also a conceptual category. Like other categories, it is organized in terms of prototypes and (mental) schemas that capture the general knowledge necessary to interpret gender-related experience. Yet these gendered schemas are not abstract but encode cultural expectations of masculinity and femininity and thus connect to broader cognitive cultural theories (Zunshine 2010). While cognitive linguistics emphasizes the mental representations of gender through metaphors,

frames, and schemas, cognitive cultural studies focus more on how these representations are shared and transmitted through cultural models (Holland & Quinn 1987; Shore 1996) that show how people think about and perform gender within a given society.

We particularly invite **qualitative** studies that advance our understanding of how gender and cognition interact in language, literature and culture. Contributions may examine the cognitive processing of gender-related language and experience in contemporary culture. Alternatively, papers can explore nonbinary gender identity construction, polarization and discrimination in cultural and literary discourses. Approaches to embodied cognition through a feminist framework are also welcome, as are any that examine mental models that represent fluid gender identity and other identifications outside of a binary gender system. Other possible topics of investigation include cognitive factors in gender identity and cultural models shaping gendered identities.

Contributions may also address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Cognitive biases, gender schemas and ideologies in language, literature and culture
- The cognitive processing of gender-related information and language
- Metaphors, schemas, and mental models of gender identities (masculine, feminine, or nonbinary)
- Cultural variation in the conceptualization of gender
- Cultural models shaping inclusivity and exclusion in public institutions and other arenas
- Cognitive polarization in (semi-)public debates on gender policy
- Critical approaches to gender stereotypes and social cognition
- Cognitive estrangement and gender in speculative fiction
- Gender awareness and empathy through storytelling in education
- Cultural or literary narratives of gender
- Mental representations of gender in contemporary women's narratives
- Cognitive approaches for feminist readings of literature

We encourage interdisciplinary contributions that engage with gender from a cognitive, linguistic, literary and cultural perspective. Innovative approaches are most welcome in any of the following fields:

- fiction
- non-fiction
- mainstream and social media platforms
- film (fictional and non-fictional)
- public policy
- education

If interested, please send a **350-500**-word abstract presenting the research object and theoretical approach, corpus, analytical framework and any (preliminary) findings to Gabriela Tucan (gabriela.tucan@e-uvt.ro), Elisabetta Marino (marino@lettere.uniroma2.it), Valentina Mureșan (valentina.muresan@e-uvt.ro) and Irina Diana Mădroane (irina.madroane@e-uvt.ro) by **10 December 2025**.

Please note that manuscripts will be accepted only on the basis of abstract submission. Authors will be notified of the abstract selection by **19 December 2025** and the deadline for the submission of the final manuscripts will be **15 May 2026**.

References:

Bluhm & al. (Eds.) (2012). *Neurofeminism. Issues at the intersection of feminist theory and cognitive science*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Cameron, D. (2014). Gender and language ideologies, in Ehrlich S. et al. (Eds.) *The Handbook of language, gender, and sexuality* (2nd edition), (pp. 281–296). Wiley Blackwell.

Fillmore, Ch. J. (1982). Frame semantics. *Linguistics in the Morning Calm: Selected Papers from SICOL-1981*, 111–137.

Fillmore, Ch. J., Atkins, B. T. (2009 [1992]). Toward a frame-based lexicon: The semantics of RISK and its neighbors, in Lehrer A. & Kittay E. F. (Eds.) *Frames, fields and contrasts: New essays in semantic and lexical organization* (pp. 75-102). Routledge.

Gibbs, W. R. Jr. (2005). *Embodiment and cognitive science*. Cambridge University Press.

Halpern, D. F. (2012). *Sex differences in cognitive abilities* (4th ed.). Psychology Press.

Hegarty, M. (2018). Ability and sex differences in spatial thinking: What does the mental rotation test really measure?. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 25(3), 1212–1219.

Holland, D., Quinn, N. (Eds.). (1987). *Cultural models in language and thought*. Cambridge University Press.

Hyde, J. S. (2005). The gender similarities hypothesis. *American Psychologist*, 60(6), 581–592.

Hyde, J. S., Linn M. C. (2006). Gender similarities in mathematics and science. *Science*, 314(5799), 599–600.

Koller, V. (2004). *Metaphor and gender in business media discourse: A critical cognitive study*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Mastrantonio, F. et al. (2025). Sex beyond the binary: An exploratory analysis of non-binary sexuality and partnerships. *The Journal of Sex Research* https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40444763/ (online ahead of print).

Miller, D. I., & Halpern, D. F. (2014). The New Science of Cognitive Sex Differences. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 18 (1), 37–45.

Pinker, S. & Spelke, E. (2005). The science of gender and science: Pinker vs. Spelke, a debate, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Hb3oe7-PJ8

Schudson, Z.C., Morgenroth T. (2022). Non-binary gender/sex identities. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 48(2):101499 https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36401906/

Shore, B. (1996). *Culture in mind: Cognition, culture, and the problem of meaning*. Oxford University Press.

Spelke, E. (2005). Sex differences in intrinsic aptitude for mathematics and science?: A critical review. *American Psychologist*, 60(9), 950–958.

Velasco-Sacristán, M.S. (2005). A critical cognitive–pragmatic approach to advertising gender metaphors. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(3): 219–252.

Wilson, E. A. (1998). *Neural geographies. Feminism and the microstructure of cognition*. Routledge.

Zunshine, L. (Ed.) (2010). *Introduction to cognitive cultural studies*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.