

**“In space, no one can hear you scream”:**

**Sci-fi horror and gendered language use in the *Alien* franchise**

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Ellen Ripley, protagonist of *Alien* (1979) and *Aliens* (1986), is a science-fiction and horror icon who is commonly regarded as one of the first female protagonists to subvert genre tropes associated with the ‘final girl’, i.e. the last remaining survivor of a horror film: She is presented as knowledgeable and courageous but careful from the start, while also being somewhat stoic and tight-lipped. As Clover (1987) notes for slasher films, even stereotypical final girls take on characteristics associated with both femininity and masculinity, which makes it particularly interesting to investigate Ripley’s language use and how it fits in with that of her (male) colleagues. Thus, in my talk, I combine corpus-based and corpus-driven techniques to compare Ripley’s language use to that of other (male) characters in *Alien* and *Aliens* and other horror protagonists. My results show that Ripley is characterised as a protagonist that, by virtue of being a woman in the future, appears to have overcome gender norms of the past.

**References**

Clover, Carol J. (1987). “Her body, himself: Gender in the slasher film.” *Representations* 20: 187-228.