

Women in SFF: Navigating Gender and Genre

June 11-12th, 2026 – Newcastle University

Organisers: Abi Hockaday & Aparna Sivasankar

Supported by:



Day 1: Thursday, 11th June

9:30-10:15 Registration (*free refreshments available throughout both days*)

10:15-10:30 Welcome & Opening Remarks

10:30-12:00 Session One (Panel): Ecocriticism and SF

Chair: Ella Mershon

- Megan E. Fourqurean (Liverpool) – “Of Gods, Women and the Land: Cosmo-Ecological Feminism and the Animist Unconscious in Tlotlo Tsamaase’s *Womb City*”
- Joey Jenkins (Newcastle) – “All the Putrid Life of the Mississippi: Queering the Ecogothic Landscape in AMC’s *Interview with the Vampire*”
- Yang Zhang (Jinling Institute of Technology) – “Rooted Future: The Plant Imagination in Contemporary Women’s Speculative Fiction”

12:00-12:45 Lunch (*not provided*)

12:45-14:15 Session Two (Panel): Technology, AI, Performativity

Chair: Abi Hockaday

- Georgie Kett (Manchester Met) – “From BuffyBot to AnnieBot: The Gothic Artificial Other, Constructed Consciousness and Forced Submission”
- Faye Lynch (Liverpool) – “Artificial Girlfriends, Real Problems: AI Girlfriends and the Fictional Fembot in the 21st Century”

- Yue Xie (Lancaster) – “Individual Governance and Gender Performativity: The Makeshift Family in *Journey to the West* (2021)”

14:15-14:30 Break

14:30-16:00 Session Three (Panel): Feminism, Fantasy and the Utopian

Chair: Joey Jenkins

- Hadas Elber-Aviram (Notre Dame London) – “From The Strand to The Story: Feminism and Fantasy in E. Nesbit’s Revisions to *The Story of the Amulet*”
- Charul Palmer-Patel (Trustee, Science Fiction Foundation) – “Disruptive Dowagers: Examining the Place of the Widowed Mother as Fantasy Hero”
- Minal Sukumar (York) – “Elsewhere and the Everyday: Utopian Realism in Indian Women’s Fiction”

16:00-16:15 Break

16:15-17.30 Session Four (Keynote Address)

Chair: Abi Hockaday

Anna McFarlane (Glasgow) - “Reproduction in a Time of Polycrisis?: Temporality and Genre”

Day 2: Friday, 12th June

9.30-10.45 Session Five (Roundtable): Creative and Publishing Experiences

Chair: Aparna Sivasankar

Niall Harrison (SF Editor and Critic), Sarah France (New Writing North) and Roseanna Pendlebury (Editor and Critic)

10:45-11:00 Breaks

11:00-12:45 Session Six (Panel): Gender and Representations

Chair: Hadas Elber-Aviram

- Maia Almeida-Amir (Glasgow) and Stacy Gillis (Newcastle) – “Gender, Genre and the Narrative Politics of the *Star Trek* Holodeck”
- Ivy Liu (Liverpool) – “Asimov’s Women: Women Characters in Asimov’s *Foundation* and *Robot* Series”

- Laura Gledhill (Newcastle) – “How Gameplay Systems Facilitate Non-Violent Agency and Feminine Power in *The Cosmic Wheel Sisterhood*”
- Stephanie Lyttle (Newcastle) – “‘She’s Going to Marry That?’: Aliens, Player Agency and Gendered Romance in Video Games”

12:45-13:45 Lunch (*not provided*)

13:45-14:45 Session Seven (Roundtable): Gender and Genre Beyond Literary Studies

Chair: Stacy Gillis

Aislinn Fanning (Newcastle), Lisa Garforth (Newcastle) & Nikki Godden-Rasul (Newcastle)

14:45-15:00 Closing Remarks