



---

## **Narratives of Rupture: The Poetics of Transition in American Sci-fi Novels**

**Dr. Parag C Athavale**

Asst. Professor

Dept. of English

Ahmednagar College

Ahmednagar

Paragathavale1@gmail.com

### **Introduction:**

Humans have been an evolving species since inception. Innovations made by the human beings in present days primarily emerged as plays of imagination in the science fiction and were unrealistic for the previous generations. Nowadays, the speed of evolution is higher than the preceding times. As a literary genre, science fiction has contributed precious works over the period of time. Philosophy and life described through science fiction have inspired and motivated a number of scientists and people to draw their attention towards the imaginations and inventions in sci-fi novels. In this genre perceptions by the American science fiction authors are unique projections of forthcoming scenarios. A number of ideas and themes introduced in science fiction have been utilized by the people for defending against odds in society. Creativity of authors have seen striking peculiarities and revealing realities of contemporary human society. Socio-cultural issues depicted in the science fiction are always relevant to contemporary times.

Keywords: sci-fi novels, transitions, genre

Authors of science fiction in America have tackled many themes; from horror science themes to present co-evolutionary ideas. They have directed science fiction towards humanity. They have encouraged people to relate their lives and experience towards science through fictional work. These writers have made strong base for science fiction through modifying themes. With the help of these themes, American science fiction writers have raised issues of gender, identity, and belief in their dystopian or utopian worlds. Simultaneously, the theme of transition of lead characters in literary genre has inspired the society and found its reflection in the films. The present researcher observes that the study of transition of central characters as a theme in American science fiction novels has remained less studied by researchers. The issues of Identity of central character and study of transitions have not been much explored and investigated by researchers of literary

discourse. So, we do not know much about the process of development of transition of main characters as a theme in American science fiction novels.

This paper will be able to find solutions for these deep-rooted thematic issues and understanding the process of development reflected in certain American science fiction novels. Findings of this study will provide solution for advancement of science fiction as leading genre. That will be able to create versatile dimensions of the futuristic society of human being and literature that promotes and encourages the innovations for humanity

Science fiction is speculative and alternative ways of life that made possible by technologies. It delineates an alternative world governed by an altogether different set of rules and social structures. This literary genre is mirror of human's futuristic society. That reflects, how technology might transform human lives and what kind of change humans might desire. Every science fiction novel explores '*what if*' questions and scenarios that always ignite our imagination. Like, what if science and techno experts create dangerous creatures/ clones for unethical purposes? What if aliens land on earth? What if humans fall in love with AI? or vice versa.

Science fiction often creates different kinds of protagonists like superheroes, robots or aliens. Hence uniqueness of this genre is many of the characters are superhuman. Science fiction writers taking multiple benefits of this feature. Also, functionalize it for creating extremely relatable characters through narration. But yet question like functionality of characters and their impact on theme still remains disclosed. These questions arise due to lack of study and unrevealed process of transition happened with central characters. The process of getting changed after transition is not fully investigated by researchers of science fiction. The process of transition of central character is still not described in proper analytical manner with reference of central character's binary oppositions. As well as, how inner and outer forces impacted and made changes in the theme is less explored question of American science fiction genre.

We have to examine directly influences upon theme and central characters for making concrete research through this thesis. Objective analysis of these differences within perspectives of central characters might be intending towards credible establishment of relation between transition and their significance with respect to identity. This study intends to explain and analyse futuristic base of techno advance society with coevolution of AI.

American Science fiction is the genre that globally represents accuracy in parallel effects of techno advancement on contemporary society. According to article in 'Smithsonian magazine' by 'Eileen Gunn' a short story writer and editor "how America's science fiction writers are leading your future." As compare to other science fiction genres; this genre has been describing, how people in the present society feel about the future and issues of forthcoming period with realistic approaches rather than fantasy. Then we can say science fiction is earlier reflection of society. That is leading our human race indirectly. Also, as per "Cambridge companion of American science fiction" published by 'Cambridge.org' into the world of science fiction literature, American science fiction is a genre that describing country's hope, fears, desires and ambitions more effectively rather than romance and fantasies. American science fiction is an interesting genre for study.

Selected writings of the authors have remarkable depiction of main character's characteristics and thematic similarities that are necessities of study. This writing deepens criteria of central human characters still remains human after transition. Therefore, some contrast and parallels of central character regarding to struggle, desire, emotions, ambition, self-discovery, awareness, universal values and representation of social dynamics also present in selected American Science Fiction writings. Hence, the selected American Science fiction writing are as follows:

- Ray Bradbury. *Fahrenheit 451*. 1953
- Ray Bradbury. *Green Shadows, White Whales*. 1992
- Anne McCaffrey. *The Ship Who Sang*. 1969
- Anne McCaffrey. *Crystal Singer*. 1982
- George R R Martin. *Sandking*. 1979
- George R R Martin. *Dream songs. Vol.I*. 2003
- Becky Chambers. *A Closed and Common Orbit*. 2016
- Becky Chambers. *Psalm for the Wild Built*. 2021

*Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*, edited by Canavan Garry and Link Erik C, explores themes and ideas of American science fiction and their roots in American writers' theme of transition. *The Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction*, edited by Latham Rob, offers an in-depth comprehensive assessment of area of scholarly inquiry regarding themes and transition in science fiction. These books take deep insight into the concept of transition. The article titled "Transition and Transformation" explores theme of transition and transformation in literature that is written by Karen Coats. It discusses the importance of character development, Identity formation and exploration of experiences as central aspect of transition. "The Liminal Experiences: Transition and Transformation in Contemporary American Fiction" examines theme of transition in American science fiction with focus on liminal experiences. It examines characters journey through transitional state and highlights contributions of transition as theme for their personal growth. This article has written by James Mellard. Another article "Transition and Transformation: The Fairy Tale Heroine in Contemporary Fiction" discusses personal growth and self-discovery of character through transition as a theme. It also depicting significance these transitions in relation to gender and identity. Writer of this article is Vanessa Joosen. These mentioned articles provide significant insights into theme of transitions and offering different perspectives and contexts for investigation of research it helps to study the theme of transition through the analysis of central characters as depicted in select American science fiction novels and analyse transitions of central characters as theme. It examines perspectives of male and female authors regarding identity as depicted in select novels. It also helps to explore the interlink between transitions and self-awareness of characters in select American science fiction novels. We also understand process of

development of characters through stages of transitions as a theme in select American science fiction.

The study of thematic transition with reference to the most prominent characters in select American science fiction. With analysis of binary opposition of characters research intending to apply post structural critical theory of deconstruction. That coined by Jacque Derrida. Accordingly, it will employ textual analysis for dismantling elements or characteristics of central character as a research methodology to carry out findings. As per the requirements of this research, researcher willing to apply analytical and comparative research methodology of Post-Structuralism to focus on instability and multiplicity of meanings that produces by central character. Consequently, this will helpful to analyse transitions and binary opposition in selected writings of American science fictions.

Conclusion:

The research expects to give an understanding of how the inclusion of transition as a theme in science fiction impacted the writings of selected authors. This study also hopes to argue that selected American science fiction writers introduced the notion of transition in their writings as a theme and extensively influenced the society to respect and share cultural values of each individual. Predominantly this study aims at elaborating the transitions of main characters as a theme in select American science fiction. I examined issues of identity, gender and beliefs depicted in the novels.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Bradbury, Ray D. *Fahrenheit 451*. Ballantine Books. 1953
2. Bradbury, Ray D. *Green Shadows, White Whale*. Alfred A. Knop. 1992
3. McCaffrey, Anne I. *The Ship Who Sang*. Walker & CO. 1969
4. Abrams M.H., Harpham Geoffrey. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.
5. Canavan. Garry., Link. Erik. C, (ed.) "Cambridge companion to American science fiction". *Cambridge University Press*. 2015.
6. Joosen, Vanessa. "Transitions and Transformations: The Fairy Tale Heroine into Contemporary Fiction". *Marvels & Tales*. 2012