CHAPTER V

Summing Up

> In a classical philosophical opposition, we do not find a peaceful coexistence between the two sides, but a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms dominates the other, occupies the higher place. To deconstruct the opposition one must first of all, at a given moment, reverse the hierarchy.
>
> – Jacques Derrida, *Positions*

> Nothing, no distances, no years, can be greater than the distance that's already between us, the distance of our sex, the difference of our being, our minds; that gap, that abyss which we bridge with a look, with a touch, with a word, the easiest thing in the world.
>
> – Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

The preceding chapters have attempted an indepth analysis and evaluation of the selected thought-experimented science fiction texts by women writers particularly Mary Shelley, Ursula K. Le Guin and Octavia Butler, the major voices in the tradition of science fiction. Since the study is related to one of the most important aspects of science fiction: the writings of some of the women who have chosen SF as a vehicle for their views, it does not, of course, discuss the work of all women who have written science fiction. Rather it has discussed selected works – *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley, *The Left Hand of Darkness (1969), Word for World is Forest (1972)* and *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia (1974)* by Ursula K. Le Guin and *Kindred (1979), Dawn (1987), Adulthood Rites* (1988) and *Imago* (1989) by Octavia Butler, as a few landmarks in the growth and development of the tradition of science fiction by women writers.

The world of science fiction is explored in detail with an emphasis on women writers' contribution to the genre of SF. Science fiction is a distinguished genre because it fuses two different worlds, the world of literature and the world of science. What the thinkers, scholars, writers and critics meant by science fiction, by and large, can be summed up as follows:

Science fiction (abbreviated SF or sci-fi with varying punctuation and capitalization) is a distinguished literary genre; rather it is essentially a literary form and not a branch of science. It is a form of fiction which deals primarily with the effects of actual or imagined scientific progress on human society. It is a broad genre of fiction which often involves speculations on current or future science or technology. It is a literary form in which advanced technology and/or science is a key element. In science fiction the technology which while theoretically possible, is not yet practical. It is a form of fiction which draws imaginatively on scientific

knowledge and/or speculation. It depicts either a utopian or a dystopian picture of the past or the future world but with a present concern. It is a form of writing in which a writer explores unexpected possibilities of the past or the future by using scientific data and theories. It includes stories, novellas, novels, even exercises in poetry and dramas that have a scientific core or fictional accounts of events based on that core. It is a type of narrative about or based upon real or imagined scientific theories and technology. It is often peopled with alien creatures. It includes the hardcore, imaginatively embellished technological/scientific novels as well as fictions which are even slightly futuristic often with an after-the-holocaust, milieu-nuclear, environmental, extraterrestrial, genocide contexts. This fiction deals with the influence of real or imagined science on society or individuals. Novels of this kind pre-supposes a technology or an effect of technology or a disturbance in natural order, such as humanity, which up to the time of writing is not in actual fact been experienced. It is a literary genre that is concerned with the impact of scientific and technological breakthroughs upon human beings and it depicts future sceneries of science and technology developments without contradicting the present understanding of science and technology. SF deals with the possible; i.e. hard SF deals with hardware while soft SF deals with wetware. In hard SF science is not merely necessary, but central and compulsory whereas in soft SF science is referential, fictional and sometimes marginal. The best science fiction, however, deals with both aspects, applying the science to human behavior and systems. The success of science fiction depends on its ability to appear plausible. The things such as – prose in a literary format to explain principles of science to layman; stories of how discoveries are/were made; merely fantasy and fiction without scientific touch; fiction based on inaccurate and/or pseudoscience – may not be included under the title science fiction, according to a few scholars and critics.

Having briefly explored the broad area of the genre of science fiction – the mutual relationships between literature and science, origin and definition of science fiction, the interrelationships among science fiction and other forms of literature, the specificities of science fiction as a genre, the love-hate relationships between science and science fiction, history of science fiction with respect to both men and women tradition with differences and similarities regarding their

treatment to the genre, and the overall importance of science fiction – Chapter I concentrates on the science fiction tradition of women. Viewed the tradition of science fiction from the women's point of view one understands that in spite of the rich contribution of women writers, this kind of genre of science fiction still suffers the malady of phallocentric subsumption. This kind of phallocentric perspective established particularly by writers such as H. G. Wells, Jules Verne, Hugo Gernsback, John W. Campbell, Robert A. Heinlein, Asimov, Arthur Clarke created gender inequality.

With a critical scanning of the history of the genre of science fiction it becomes clear that women writers and women characters in SF before the 1900s were minor ones, "a compulsory appendage" as the Swedish writer Sam J. Lundwall calls them in his book *Science Fiction: What It's All About* (1969/1971). Women were typically portrayed as helpless, weak, easily frightened, and angelic; or, in contrast, they were witch-like, mothering or child-like, indecisive or sly and manipulative, coy, and never had sexual attractions or desires of their own. Women were portrayed as lacking in that adventuresome spirit or professionalism that is needed in a SF hero. Before 1900, almost all SF writers, except for Mary Shelley and other few, were male and wrote exclusively from a male viewpoint as if they were the sole controllers of the universe. It wasn't until the twentieth century that an increasing number of women began to get their SF published. Even then, many used male pseudonyms and wrote from a male point of view. Women were more or less forced to write from a male point of view. In this context the critic, Betty King (1984:1) rightly states the condition of a SF book having women characters:

> Generally speaking, if a SF book was widely read, it had either no women characters or women in only minor or, at best, secondary character roles. If a SF book had a woman main character, it was not widely read or, at least, did not remain popular into our own time.

The constructive change and development occurs in SF with the increase of women SF writers over the years. From Mary Shelley onwards, women writers have played a central role in the shaping and reshaping of science fiction, irrespective of its undeniably patriarchal image. Many writers are more fully exploring the possibilities of the female experience through the realm of the SF

genre. SF has always been the ideal genre for this exploration because of the experimental and speculative nature of its approach, but this exploration has, in the past, been directed primarily towards space, other life forms, telepathy, and other dimensions rather than the exploration of the human potential. SF is the ideal genre for women to explore new self concepts, to expand their view in literature of women as "human" first and "female" second, to create much-needed composite models of whole women with characteristics that they can admire and emulate. In fact there is an intimate relationship between women and science fiction because it is the genre of science fiction which provides freedom to women writers with a hopeful vision of life for emancipation and empowerment. Tom Staicar (1982: vii) very aptly states the specificities of science fiction which provides ample freedom to women writers:

> Science fiction has lured a number of new writers... because only SF permits unlimited freedom in the settings and situations of feminist fiction. Mainstream novels restrict their writers either to a historical setting where sex roles are already established or to contemporary settings where potential future sex roles do not exist except for isolated individuals. Only science fiction allows the freedom to create a "laboratory" world where one can experiment with matriarchal societies that dominate entire nations, group marriages, radical approaches to child rearing, and other feminist speculations about alternatives to existing sex roles and living arrangements.

Throughout its history, science fiction has developed new ways of looking at the world and has spread new concepts about the physical universe as well as new images of society. In the present cycle SF has become a major category of popular culture and an important medium for invention and dissemination of radical ideologies. Science fiction has shaped and reflected changing conceptions of the roles available for women in the real world. It is an experimental genre. It has been influenced by feminism and also influences feminism. Merja Makinen (2001: 129) rightly states the mutual relationship between feminism and the genre of science fiction as follows:

> No genre has been more comprehensively appropriated and innovated by feminist theory than science fiction, despite its early focus on technology and intergalactic gun-fights. Few aspects of feminist thinking have not been echoed, and often predated, by feminist science fiction writers. The speculative, 'thought experiment' nature of the genre has fuelled a comprehensive breadth of innovation. Feminist science fiction has elaborated on all the major feminist debates from the 1970s to the 1990s: from the explorations of phallocentric language, to strong action-women agency; from ideal feminine communities, to the phallocentric dystopias; from explorations of the alien 'other', to questions of identity with the cyborg.

The theoretical and ideological discourses of feminism aiming gender equality at all levels and the genre of science fiction practiced by women writers fictionalizing a humane and conscience use of science create not only the grounds of mutual exclusivism, but of creative complementarity. Science fiction in the hands of women even transcended the shorelines of feminism and fictionalized life not merely from women's perspective but from a humane perspective based on scientific conscience. A critical survey of the tradition of science fiction by women writers demonstrates that science fiction remains as particularly well-suited to the exploration of woman as 'alien' or 'other' in our culture today, as it was with the publication of *Frankenstein* in 1818. Right from the origin of science fiction, women writers have been writing science fiction but in the pantheon of male science fiction writers many women writers are forgotten, deliberately neglected, misinterpreted, in short it seems that their positions is not secure. As the minority both in the reading audience and the contents pages of the SF magazines until the 1970s, women now constitute a major portion of both. In several recent ballotings for Hugo and Nebula awards, women outnumbered men. But the phallocentric history of literary criticism which is "a matter of power, not justice" (Berinkow 1974:3) has not paid a proper attention to the contribution of women to the genre of science fiction. Women's work has still to receive the critical attention it deserves. Women writers have not only subverted the SF form and its conventions for their own ends, but have also contributed a specifically female voice to a seemingly male genre. Women writers use science fiction to challenge assumptions about the genre and its representations of women. Major expansions and redefinitions of the genre have been accomplished by such writers as Le Guin, Joanna Russ, Pamela Sargent, Alice Sheldon (writing under the pseudonym of James Tiptree, Jr.), Pamela Zoline, Marge Piercy, Suzy McKee Charnas, and Octavia Butler. Science fiction reflected in male tradition explores and exploits science as a mode of power, domination, destruction, and violence. Women, on the contrary, perceive the scientific truth as the means of reconstructing human society in positive terms regarding constructive change, growth and all-round sound development unto this last. The space of dominance and violence of men science fiction is replaced by women science fiction writers with space for harmony, co-ordination, and humaneness. The notable women writers and critics

of science fiction raise questions about the role of women and emphasize the fact that, in both, science fiction literature and the real world, women and men are still far from true equality.

Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley (1797-1851), an eminent English novelist, biographer, short story writer, travel writer and editor, has initiated a women's tradition in science fiction through her classic, *Frankenstein (1818).* In her lifetime, she was often overshadowed by the many literary influences with whom she associated, from her own parents Mary Wollstonecraft and Godwin, to her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley and his friend Lord Byron. However, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* from its inception on a stormy night to its publication in 1818 to its numerous forms on stage and screen, crept into the popular psyche more deeply than anything written by her associates. *Frankenstein* can be rightly called the seminal science fiction text as Donawerth rightly comments:

> Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) began a women's tradition in science fiction, a tradition that later incorporated the feminist technological utopia, popular in the nineteenth century US, and that was also influenced by travel narrative and scientific romance (Davidson & Wagner-Martin 1995: 780).

In the case of *Frankenstein* issues become more complicated with the realization that the novel cannot really be slotted into any category. A thorough analysis and evaluation of *Frankenstein* as a science fiction explores its scientific aspects. As a science fiction it tells the story of a daring experiment that goes horribly wrong. It is the story of a scientist who could not control his own creation and was finally doomed by that creation for which he had toiled hard. The novel is a critique of science and its experiments. It is a thoughtful comment on the terrifying consequences of scientific experimentation with life. Drawing upon scientific and technological advances, it suggests the future consequences of such experiments. In order to project this story, Mary adopted the well-known myth of 'Prometheus'. By calling Frankenstein modern Prometheus, Mary Shelley expressed her scientific bent of mind. While Percy Shelley's Prometheus goes to heaven to bring fire, Mary Shelley's Prometheus, Frankenstein, depends on modern scientific technology to reanimate the figure that he composed out of the parts of dead bodies. The modern Prometheus succeeds in bringing the 'fire' necessary for

animating life to lifeless matters, but could not conceive of the horrifying actions of the figure after it would be animated by him. Thus, Mary Shelley's exploitation and fictionalization of the Greek myth of Prometheus and creation of modern Prometheus in a scientific experiment suits to the genre of science fiction because mythology is one of the most important orientations of science fiction. In *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (1998), Anne K. Mellor has recorded Mary's close observation of the scientific inventions and her profound interests in the works of the eminent scientists such as Humphrey Davy, Erasmus Darwin, and Luigi Galvani, the forefront of the late 18th and early 19th century scientific debates which is very effectively fictionalized by Shelley in the present novel. *Frankenstein* is the first novel to be powered by the theory of evolution because Erasmus Darwin's 'Theories of Evolution', particularly his 'vermicelli experiment', was exploited and fictionalized by Mary Shelley in her novel *Frankenstein.* Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802) was not only the biological ancestor of Charles Darwin; he was also the father of the theories of evolution that his much more famous grandson developed. He, thus, stands as a father figure over the first real SF novel. In his 1973 study of SF, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction*, Brain Aldiss made a case for *Frankenstein* as the first true SF novel, showing as it does an awareness of current technology and scientific theory and extrapolating it to create a fresh perspective. But *Frankenstein* is called a science fiction not only for its references to some scientists. Rather the novel is called the first of its genre – the genre of science fiction – because Mary was deeply concerned with some of the basic issues which were related to the scientific inventions of the time, and because she evolved an ethical stand of her own out of this concern which is more relevant in the present age of science.

As a seminal science fiction *Frankenstein* is a unique book in many respects. Interest has always centered on the creation of the nameless monster. This is the core of the novel, an experiment that goes wrong – a prescription to be repeated later, more sensationally, in *Amazing Stories* and elsewhere. Frankenstein's is the Faustian dream of unlimited power, but Frankenstein makes no pacts with the devil. "The devil" belongs to a relegated system of belief. Frankenstein's ambitions beat fruit only when he throws away his old reference

books from a pre-scientific age and gets down to some research in the laboratory. This is now accepted practice, of course but in 1818 it was a startling perception, a small revolution. Victor Frankenstein goes to the University of Ingolstadt and visits two professors. To the first, a man called Kerempe, a professor of natural philosophy, he reveals how his search for knowledge led him to the works of Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus. Krempe scoffs at him: "These fancies, which you have so greedily imbibed, are a thousand years old" (30). This is a modern objections; antiquity is no longer the highest court to which one can appeal. "Ancient wisdom" is supplanted by modern experiment. Frankenstein attends the second professor, Waldman, who lectures on chemistry. Waldman is even more scathing about ancient teachers who "promised impossibilities, and performed nothing" (31). He speaks instead of the moderns, who use microscope and crucible, and converts Frankenstein to his way of thinking. Frankenstein turns away from alchemy and the past, towards science and the future then only he is rewarded with a horrible success. Shelly fictionalized the idea that life can be created without supernatural aid and with the help of science. Science has taken the place of superstition. Mary lived in thoroughly Newtonian world, in which natural explanations could be sought for natural phenomena. It is for this reason she sends Victor Frankenstein to Ingolstadt University, the then a renowned centre for science. Mary knew more of the science of her time than has been generally granted. Mary let Frankenstein to spent so much time with the alchemists, with Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus because she wished to make it plain that the old authorities who "promised impossibilities and performed nothing" (*Ibid.*) had to go. She had to show that they were useless, outdated, and without merit in a modern age. Krempe's contempt is clear: "I little expected," (30) he tells his student, "in this enlightened and scientific age, to find a disciple of Albertus Magnus and Paracelsus. My dear sir, you must begin your studies entirely anew" (*Ibid.*). Waldman summarizes what the modern researchers have achieved:

> They ascend into the heavens: they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air that we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake, and even mock the invisible world with its shadows (31).

As a true exponent of science, Mary Shelly fictionalized a scientific experiment in *Frankenstein* as Brian W. Aldiss (1986:41) rightly states:

> As if to dispel any doubts about her aversion to "jiggery- pokery magic", Mary makes it plain that her central marvel shares the essential quality of scientific experiment, rather than the hit-and-miss of legerdermain. She has Frankenstein create life a second time.

Frankenstein agrees to make a female companion for the monster, subject to certain conditions. When his work is almost finished, Frankenstein pauses, thinking of the "race of devils" that might be raised up by the union between his two creatures which will destroy human race completely. Victor destroys what he has begun, the monster discovers the breach of contract, utters his direst threat – "I shall be with you on your wedding night!" (133) – and disappears. The very words shuddered Victor. Sexual tensions move throughout the book. The rest is a tale of flight and pursuit, punctuated by death and retribution, with everyone's hand turned against the wretched monster, as much from convention and prejudice as from spite. Due to the horribly wrong experiment of science Frankenstein lost his brother, William, Justine Moritz, a servant in the household but was regarded as a member of the family, his intimate friend, Henry Clerval, his dearest beloved, Elizabeth, his father, Alphonse Frankenstein, and last but not the least, his own life.

According to the critic, Anne K. Mellor, science fiction as a genre has three characteristics: it is to be grounded on valid scientific research, it gives a prediction about the future of that research, and lastly, it offers a humanistic critique of either specific technological inventions or the very nature of scientific thinking. All these characteristics may be found in *Frankenstein.* It is grounded on the specific research, namely, that of creating life in the laboratory without a mother's womb. Secondly, it predicts the modern researches on cloning, and more than anything else, *Frankenstein* criticizes the way some scientists have been trying to control nature. Taking the novel for a science fiction it may be observed that, be the scientific research of Victor, a 'bad science' or even 'no science,' Mary Shelley's emphasis is not so much on the research itself as on some ethical issues that emerge from that research. And those ethical issues have not yet lost their social implications. Haldar (2004: 117) states those issues one by one:

> First, if a new species is at all created by the scientists in the laboratory, what will be the social, psychological and moral status of that species in the modern world? Secondly, would not such creation of life in the laboratory disturb the ecological balance? The third issue which is more poignant than the others for its direct attack on the investigator, may be as follows: Is not a modern scientist often disturbed by his/her conscience for inventing something the use of which hardly lies within his/her control? In the case the scientist becomes, as Victor becomes in the novel, a slave to his own creation. What is the use of one's intellect and hard toil, then, if one is destined to be a slave, being unable to exercise one's free will?

We are reminded of Victor's exclamations: "What glory would attend the discovery, if I could banish disease from the human frame and render man invulnerable to nay but violent death!" (25). If Victor were engaged only in finding ways to banish disease from human frame, there would be no cause for his misery. Victor became a slave to his creation and could not even exercise his free will. Victor's mission thus highlights some ethical questions the type of which is raised at the end of the 20th century. Victor Frankenstein's last words are a guideline to science and scientist:

> Farewell, Walton! Seek happiness in tranquility, and avoid ambition, even it be only the apparently innocent one of distinguishing yourself in science and discoveries. Yet why do I say this? I have myself been blasted in these hopes, yet another may succeed (175).

The success of *Frankenstein* as a science fiction, the first of its kind in English literature, owes much to Shelley's ethical concerns expressed in her novel. The writers of the twenty-first century almost echo Shelley when they express their concern that artificial creation of life may create a chaos in the world and that there should be limit to the interference with Nature. Shelley, a writer with a social commitment, provided a vision to the future writers in general and writers of science fiction and scientists in particular. Brian Aldiss (1986:41) rightly states:

> Thus Mary Shelley, like a practiced modern SF writer, prepares us beforehand for what is to follow. Of course she cannot show us how life in instilled in a dead body, any more than a modern writer could, but she can suspend our disbelief.

In the present age of science and technology Mary Shelly's science and scientific experiment in *Frankenstein* is no more a matter of merely fiction but has become a fact of science. In short, *Frankenstein* has become a cultural myth of the modern world and has provided us with a metaphor for the potentially disastrous results of thoughtless scientific aims because it raises some ethical issues as to the limits of a scientist's interference with nature. Victor's search for the principle of life is

projected in the novel, as a scientist's search for the way to create life in a secular world and his tragic fall is moral example of the dangers of knowledge. It is an extrapolation of current science and technology and its effects on future worlds, both living and non-living. It gave a wake-up call to scientists and others particularly decision makers to awaken a new consciousness of the true realities inherent in the positive and negative potentialities of science and technology. It is a revelation of what is in store for humanity if science and technology is immorally or irresponsibly used. From Mary Shelley to the present time, the responsible science fiction writers have been focusing on the world transforming powers of science, if exploited for the excessive goodness and selfishness of humanity. The negative capabilities can be negated if the scientific community is keenly conscious of such destructive effects. By and large, *Frankenstein* is a pioneering and powerful treatise on the responsibilities and values of science with a thought-experiment: a thoughtless research very much leads towards diabolic effects.

Le Guin in her 'thought experimented' science fiction texts has constructed a rainbow of planetary relationships through the principle of 'integration and integrity'. Le Guin, one of the finest writers of our time, has been a central force in making science fiction and fantasy into serious genres. The fictional corpus of Le Guin is divided into the four worlds – *Earthsea*, the Hainish planets, Orsinia, and the American West coast in the near future. This chapter has discussed only the three major Hainish novels: *The Left Hand of Darkness (1969)*, *The Word for World is Forest (1972)*, and *The Dispossessed (1974)*.

The Left Hand of Darkness is solidly based on ecology, and has political issues for its background. By telling the story primarily through the eyes of a male alien from earth, the writer reveals new truths about sexuality, love, loyalty, patriotism, and political power. It explores the themes of sexual identity, incest xenophobia, fidelity and betrayal, human love, human communication, tolerance, cooperation among people with deep differences, and the values and difficulties of dealing with cultural diversity. It is told as a report from Genly Ai to his superiors in the Ekumen, a loosely organized league of some three thousand states that cooperate by sharing ideas and knowledge with one another. Genly Ai was sent alone to the planet Gethen in order to persuade the nations of Karhide and

Orgoreyn to join the Ekumen. In the novel Le Guin worked out what could be called her classic encounter with alienness. It involves the personal encounter that results in increased knowledge of self and other, and it takes place against the background of an international power struggle which threatens the survival of a human community. Caught up in both a personal and an epic struggle, the protagonist, Genly Ai, learns, at great cost, how to love difference. His guide on his journey of discovery is an androgyny, a person who embodies difference. Ai's success depends finally upon his relationship with Estraven, the prime minister of Karhide, who is persuaded of the value of Ai's mission and risks "his" life and reputation to help Ai. Initially Ai finds the process of understanding and dealing with a person who is both sexes at once disconcerting and complicated. In the novel the story of eight-hundred mile trip through ice and snow is a suspenseful tale of survival against the odds as well as a moving account of the growth of friendship. By the time they reached Karhide, Estraven and Genly Ai had forged an unbreakable bond – bond so strong that, when they were betrayed and trapped, Estraven gave his life to save his friend and the mission. Political intrigue and physical hardships bring the two into a deep friendship that eventually allows Ai to think "outside the box" and, with Estraven's help, to develop a risky strategy that will allow the planet to accept the offered contact with the Ekumen. Through his relationship with a native, Estraven, Ai gains understanding both of the consequences of his fixed sexual orientation and of Gethenian life. The bridging of differences in *The Left Hand of Darkness* is achieved as Genly Ai and Estraven communicate their contrasting perceptions of gender and sex, loyalty and betrayal, self and other. The love between Estraven and Ai creates the bond between Gethen and the Ekumen. At the end of the novel, both oppressive governments fell; the new governments agreed to become members of the Ekumen; the starship landed; and in the son of Estraven, Genly Ai found another mind ready to question, to venture, and to change the society. As in many of her works, Le Guin incorporates a social message in this fiction. *The Left Hand of Darkness* drawn by its originating, by its thematic richness, and by the appeal of the two characters who, by learning to love each other, suggest that there may still hope for human beings on Earth. It presents a thesis that if two individual aliens can establish a community then there is hope for relationships between the two planets.

In *The Word for World is Forest* (1972) Le Guin depicts a dark chapter in the Hainish history when contact with the alien leads to war rather than to an alliance. It is a novel about politics and ecology. It presents the theme of colonization and exploitation. In the present novella Le Guin shows the language difficulties that keep the three central characters – Captain Davidson, Raj Lyubov and Selver – from finding a timely solution to intercultural hostilities. The novel represents the conflict between the natives of the heavily forested world Athshe and the Terran colonists who invade and despoil this world. Biology and race-relationship are the bases of this novella. The worth considerable merit of the artistic work is that the writer keeps almost all the actual planning, strategy, and execution of battle action off the page. So the voices of three characters dominate the novel: Captain Davidson, leader of the Terran logging camps; Selver, a native of Athshe; and Raj Lyubov, the ethnographer from India specializing in High Intelligence Life Forms (HILF). The novel features the mental states of these three principal characters. Le Guin goes behind the events of war and murder into the minds where the decisions are made to commit or stop such acts. She deliberately wants to make aware us the hidden fact that war is not fought in some remote frontier, but in the mind and heart of each thinking animal. Failure of communication – between the human beings and the Athsheans, between the scientist Lyubov and the army brass represented by Davidson – leads to tragedy. One more world has been damaged, and one more culture corrupted by imperialistic adventurers. In this novella, Le Guin emphasizes on the Athshean's remarkable dreaming ability. Dreams are the roots of their waking activities. To them dreaming is vital. It is the bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. By means of dreaming-sleep they sublimate their tensions, anger and hatred. The Athshean dreaming-sleep is the mind's communication with the soul, leading to a perfect balance. Rendered rootless they lose their ability to sing away their worries and anger in dreams, and learn to fight and kill.

The conclusion of this short novel confirms the dialectic. Selver is alive but has taught his people the new act of killing, which has in turn resulted in the deaths of several colonists. Davidson is in the isolated Dump Island created by him. Lyubov's work is instrumental in bringing about the League ban on Athshe – the removal of all Terrans and the promise that no League members will return for

several generations and then only to study. Lyubov is dead, but his death is at least in one sense a positive factor. His death has a profound effect on his friend Selver, who feels that the spirit of Lyubov lives on within him, "a shadow in the mind" (163). The human beings have in fact represented the collective shadow of the Athsheans. Selver absorbs this shadow from the dead Lyubov, thereby accepting the responsibility for his own actions. Selver's introduction of violence into his own world has represented his and his race's acceptance of the "other," the human race. The ending is thus, on the whole, a grim one from the view point of the characters. Of the three principal characters, Selver is the only one who returns to some kind of mental health; Davidson falls deeper into madness, and Lyubov dies. Selver's scarred face remains as a symbol of the irremediable physical and mental damage done by the Terrans. Only for the planet itself is it a happy one, for the beautiful forested world is saved and will remain safe from exploitation by Terran colonists, who will never return. The present novel has a very apt message to the world and is not merely an entertainment. Charlotte Spivack (1984:71) rightly remarks: "Written in a mood of protest against the American military action in Vietnam, this novella is not meant to be entertainment." The Vietnam War was a source of Le Guin's anger and frustration that led to the writing of this novella. The hostile events around 1960s and 1970s made her lose hope that humankind would ever find the language, ethics, and technology to lessen alienation and find the "modality of integration and integrity" that she searches for in her Hainish world. In light of Le Guin's presentation in *The Left Hand of Darkness* of the value of joining the larger human community, the League's decision in *The Word for World is Forest* to set Atshe beyond the league boundaries must surely be judged in the same words Coro Mena used for Selver: "You've done what you had to do, and it was not right" (33-34). In short, by stating that assimilation of minorities into a mainstream on the basis of colonialism is not possible, *The Word for World is Forest* presents an antithesis.

The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia (1974) is a synthesis of the Hainish world. It is about an individual who achieves "integrity and integration" in his personal, professional, and social life. In other word, in this novel Le Guin uses the protagonist's journey of discovery to explore a social system that seems to achieve integration and integrity. Like *The Left Hand of Darkness*, a winner of

both the Hugo and the Nebula awards for science fiction, it represents the culmination of the Hainish series. It is also the culmination of Le Guin's Taoist vision, this time with an emphasis on a different feature of that philosophy, namely anarchism. It begins a new phase in Le Guin's writing with a focus on political ideas and a tendency towards both utopian and mainstream fiction. In the novel a physicist from a socialist world attempts to reestablish a broken relationship with its capitalist, materialist sister world. The protagonist is an alien in a strange culture and is also at odds with his home planet's values. He is devoted to the spread of knowledge, but the development of his theories inevitably brings his isolated colonial planet and its mother-planet into contact, although the two cultures bitterly oppose one another. Shevek is a key character in the novels of the Hainish series, because he is the inventor of the ansible. He develops a temporal theory that makes it possible to build a device for instantaneous communication across light years of space. Whereas radio signals travel at light speed through ordinary space, the ansible "signals" can appear in two places simultaneously. The Ekumen as a federation of planets are connected primarily by the ability to exchange information quickly but they are unable to exchange persons, materials, or ships with such speed. One result is that they can communicate more easily than they can fight wars.

More than the literary dimensions of plot, narrative techniques, characterization, and style, it is the social dimension in the portrait of the two worlds – Anarres and Urras – that makes *The Dispossessed* a great science fiction novel, one that richly deserves the Hugo, the Nebula, and the Jupiter awards it won and the abundant praise it received from fans, reviewers, and scholars alike. This most vital dimension is expressed in the novel's subtitle: "An Ambiguous Utopia." A group of anarchig communist idealists on Urras had, about a century and a half before the time of the novel, emigrated to the twin planet Anarres to establish their utopia with no rules and the ruled, no masters and servants, no rich or poor, no domination of offspring by parents or of one sex by another, and no sense of inferiority or superiority, is a truly egalitarian community that their leader-martyr Odo envisaged, but she did not take into account the harsh environment of Anarres and the less-than-perfect human nature. In the hundred and fifty years of its existence, the Odonian society has started developing its own

bugs. Envy, apathy, ego, fear, even privileges and powers – the evils of materialistic, proletarian system – rear their ugly heads. The conscientious Odonian Shevek encounters the ultimate in blasphemy when the statements of the anti-authoritarian Odo are quoted as authority to justify coercion and threat. Turn where he might he faces the "walls' that limit human freedom, communication, and initiative – a recurrent motif in the novel. The utopia has become a little bit dystopian, and Odo's dream of a perpetual revolution has been stultified by the fear of public opinion and the self-righteousness of certain "conventional" citizens. He laments: "We don't cooperate – we *obey.* We fear being outcast, being called lazy, dysfunctional, egoizing. We fear our neighbor's opinion more than we respect our own freedom of choice" (265). In Urras, Le Guin presents a double contrast. The nation A-Io which has modicum of freedom but no equality, a capitalist society where business dominates everything, a paradise for the rich is obviously conceived on the model of the present day United States of America. The other nation, Thu, has communism but no freedom, a totalitarian state. Both the nations are archaic, and to Shevek steeped in anarchic philosophy both are unappetizing. To a lady from the Earth of the novel's time, the whole of Urras, A-Io and Thu alike, appear as enviable utopias. She muses:

> My world, my Earth, is a ruin. A planet spoiled by the human species. We multiplied and gobbled and fought until there was nothing left, and then we died. We controlled neither appetite nor violence; we did not adapt. We destroyed ourselves. But we destroyed the world first. There are no forests on my Earth. The air is grey, the sky is grey, it is always hot. It is habitable, it is still habitable ...this world is... (287).

While A-Io and Thu are similar to the two power blocks of our world and Urras is the Earth of today, the Earth described above is what our world of the future would be like if the existing trends of wasteful consumption, pollution, overpopulation and belligerence continue unchecked. Anarres shows the result of the attempt to break away from realities and live in ideological isolation. Breaking down walls is a theme of the novel. A literal wall between the two planets stands at the Annares space port. The writing on the wall is clear: destroy the walls, the barriers, and be united in mutual amity. Shevek's invention of the ansible promises to penetrate and perhaps someday, remove the walls that separate individuals and cultures, by freeing communication between everyone. The development of his theories inevitably brings his isolated colonial planet and its mother-planet into

contact, although the two cultures bitterly oppose one another. Science is used to maintain unity, peace and harmony. Unity in diversity is acquired and the Hainish-inspired League is but a symbol for this creed.

Le Gun has transcended the shorelines of the genre of science fiction by writing science fictions based on not only pure sciences but also natural sciences, human sciences and most importantly social sciences. According to *Modern Fiction Studies* contributor Keith N. Hull (1986:73-4) Le Guin's novels are "unquestionably high standing, even among readers who generally do not care for science fiction... In these novels Le Guin...describes herself as writing science fiction based on "social science, psychology, anthropology [and] history," the critic added, nothing that the result "is an emphasis on culture" rather than science and technology. The Hanish world is a paramount of the works of Le Guin. Although the Hainish planets are, like Earthsea, outside of consensus reality, the environmental characteristics of the planets and their human communities are validated by the sciences of biology , psychology, physics, and, most importantly, by anthropology, psychology and other social sciences. In these novels Le Guin's protagonists are usually ethnologists or anthropologists who study the natures of different cultures if not by profession then by circumstance. Rocannon (*Rocannon's World*) and Genly Ai (*The Left Hand of Darkness*) are both ethnographers sent to other planets to record their observations, and both Shevek (*The Dispossessed*) and Lyubov (*The Word for World is Forest*) take on themselves the role of cultural observer in other worlds. Their journey is both outward and inward to overcome alienation and isolation. Charlotte Spivack (1984:5) rightly states:

> In almost all of her books the central conflict involves a confrontation between alien cultures, often mediated by the protagonist. For most of these anthropologist-heroes, the journey outward to an alien society is at the same time a journey inward toward self-discovery. Alienation and isolation are their lot, but for these very reasons they are unusually perceptive and sensitive observers. The perspective of anthropology thus affects characterization as well as content.

Because of the immensity and diversity of the Hainish world, communication and understanding become vital. Consequently Le Guin's futuristic scientists have developed tools for enhancing communication such as faster-than-light spaceships and a device called the ansible, which makes communication across distances of

light years instantaneous. Additionally, nearly all the inhabitants have the ability to communicate through what Le Guin calls mindhearing and mind speech, a sort of instantaneous mind reading.

The Hainish novels focus on the significance of diplomacy, the struggle to balance conflicting needs of the human community and of the individual. They deal with the opposition between freedom and social restriction, between fidelity and betrayal, and between alienation and integration. In her novel there is the voyage of discovery that leads to knowledge of the other and to knowledge of the self. Her protagonists come to a new world as representatives of their home planet. Encountering storage cultures, they find themselves being called alien or even "pervert." The protagonists must reexamine their own sense of humaneness, world, and home and are forced to recognize that these aliens are also human beings. Often in Le Guin's works, the main characters have to change in important ways in order to solve a central problem or overcome a key obstacle. The antagonists in the Hainish stories are almost always men who seek personal power and gratification regardless of the effects on the freedom of others or on the nature of the community. The protagonists are diplomats and their struggle assumes epic proportions. If the individual aliens can establish a community of two then there is hope for relationships between the two planets as in *The Left Hand of Darkness.* Although the protagonist is transformed by experience, Le Guin always concludes her novel without depicting what relationships will develop between the two worlds. So the reader comes away from one or several novels of the Hainish world with a heightened awareness of the experience of alienation, the complexities of trying to communicate with the stranger, and the shock as well as delight of an encounter with an alternative way of looking at the world. All of the alien encounter stories about the Hainish worlds demonstrate Le Guin's wish for an improved mode for human relations. They grow out of her moral assessment of the contemporary world. Le Guin (1989: 147) comments:

> Our curse is alienation, the separation of yang from yin [and the moralization of yang as good, of yin as bad]. Instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance. Divisions are insisted upon, interdependence is denied. The dualism of value that destroys us, the dualism of superior/inferior, ruler/ruled, owner/owned, user/used, might give way to what seems to me, from here, a much healthier, sounder, more promising modality of integration and integrity.

The exploration of the "modality of integration and integrity" generates the tension in plot and character, the imagery, and the novels' structure. The integrity of individual people, societies, and worlds can be achieved when the uniqueness and difference of each separate thing is honored. The integration of these diversities is achieved when the interactions and interdependency among them is respected. In her novels Le Guin opposes a forward-looking, ambitious and progressive culture against a quieter, present-centered, and slow-changing culture. Moreover, there is a unification and marriage of different cultures in her novels which transcend the shorelines of human relationships. The search for a mode of human relationships based on integration and integrity is reflected in the structural feature that the three major Hainish novels share: each narrative is told in chapters which shift focus in time period, character, and culture. In the three major novels Le Guin explores different aspects of developing a modality of integration and integrity. In *The Left Hand of Darkness* she portrays a protagonist who learns, of course, with great cost, how to love the alien. In *The Word for World is Forest* she shows the language difficulties that keep the three central characters from finding a timely solution to intercultural hostilities. In *The Dispossessed* Le Guin uses the protagonist's journey of discovery to explore a social system that seems to achieve integration and integrity in his personal, professional and social life. By and large, Le Guin's work has helped to expand the audience for science fiction and fantasy, and she has broadened readers' ideas about the potential and the values of these genres. In short she fictionalized a rainbow of relationships. Mythopoeic imagination, character, style, imagery, and structure are all qualitative features of Le Guin's fiction. But there is in her fiction a vision that transcends even these distinctive elements, Charlotte Spivack (1984: 161) rightly states: "Le Guin's fiction offers a thrilling personal vision of universe, a whirling, expanding infinitely peopled universe, with harmony in its vast movement and unity in its complex diversity."

An indepth analysis and evaluation of the science fiction texts of Octavia Butler, a leading SF voice in African-American tradition, shows her unique contribution to the SF genre. Hailed as the first African-American woman science fiction writer, Octavia Butler has brought a unique perspective to the science fiction genre by providing vision of a millennial world through a synthesis of past,

present and future into a random whole in her fictional corpus. She is the first black woman to come to international prominence as a SF writer. Incorporating powerful, spare language and rich, well-developed characters, her work tackled race, gender, religion, poverty, power, politics, and science in a way that touched readers of all backgrounds. Her twelve novels and volume of short stories garnered her numerous awards, including the MacArathur Foundation Fellowship, MacArathur "Genious grant," both the Hugo and Nebula awards, the Langston Hughes Medal, and a PEN Lifetime Achivement award. Concerned with genetic engineering, psionic powers, advanced alien beings, and the nature and proper use of power, Butler's science fiction presents these themes in terms of racial and sexual awareness. As one of the few African American writers in the science-fiction field, and the only black woman, Butler's racial and sexual perspective is unique. This perspective, however, does not limit her fiction or turn it into mere propaganda. Among Butler's strengths as a writer, is her creation of believable, independent female characters. During her career, Butler published twelve novels and a collection of short stories and essays. Butler's science fiction novels include the Patternist series; *Patternmaster* (1976), *Mind of My Mind* (1077), *Survivor* (1978), *Wild Seed* (1080), and *Clay's Ark* (1984). These works, and the *Xenogenesis* trilogy of *Dawn* (1987), *Adulthood Rites* (1988), and *Imago* (1989), explore the complex power relationships between human beings and extraterrestrials and feature such science-fiction themes as genetic engineering and human/alien sexual encounters. *Kindred* (1979) projects a twentieth century African American woman into the past as a free black woman in the nineteenth century slaveholding South. *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998), based on parables from the biblical New Testament, portray a dystopic America of the twenty-first century in which social issues such as gang warfare, drug abuse, environmental destruction, racism, and religious fanaticism are carried to their extremes. *Fledgling* (2005) tells the story of the Ina, an ancient, vampirelike race that takes human beings as symbionts.

Generally the genre of science fiction deals with future but it was Octavia Butler who has used it for recasting past for better future. Butler has brought a unique perspective to science-fiction genre, especially through her classic novel, *Kindred,* where she exploits laws of physics in order to fictionalize the archetypal

struggle of a black woman with ignorance, injustice and inhumanity. As a typical science fiction, *Kindred,* stands as a milestone in the history of science fiction because it has transcended the shorelines of the genre of science fiction and expanded it by very effectively recasting the past for the better future. In *Kindred* Butler has blended slave narrative, slave-memoir, autobiographical narrative, scientific fantasy and science fiction into a random whole. Throughout this novel, Butler describes how the imprint of slavery is carried not only in the minds but also on the bodies of all African Americans, as symbolized in the novel by Dana's loss of an arm during her ordeal. Divided into six chapters – "The River", "The Fire", "The Fall", "The Fight", "The Storm" and, "The Rope", with a prologue and an epilogue, the novel, *Kindred* fictionalizes the need for cultural and historical knowledge in order to survive in a modern world. It is a story of Dana, a twentieth century California writer who works at menial jobs assigned by a temporary agency who is married to Kevin, a white man. In the novel time and again Dana is transported in time and space to a plantation in nineteenth century Maryland to save the life of Rufus, the son of the plantation owner. Dana learns, through genealogical research, that Refus is her ancestor, and unless she assures his survival to father the child who will known as Hagar, Dana herself well never be born. During Dana's journeys into the past, Refus grows from a young child to adulthood; however, elapsed time in Dana's twentieth century life ranges only from a few seconds to eight days due to the relative time travel technique adopted by Dana. At the conclusion of the novel Dana stabs Rufus to death to save herself from the attempted rape. Having assured her own survival, Dana returns to the twentieth century but not unscathed. She bears the scars of two beatings and has lost part of her arm during her ordeal. Octavia Butler by depicting a woman's successful quest presents important themes such as sexism, growth into a self-in-community, historical education. Thus the novel, *Kindred* explores the character of Edana and through her character successfully illustrated stages of the historically grounded female quest: "The decision to investigate the historical past, difficulties in assimilating it, and the purposeful incorporation of historical past into the present self" (Kubitschek 1991: 69). *Kindred* has enriched the tradition of the African-American women's novel. By and large *Kindred,* as a best specimen of science fiction, is a critique of slavery. "Butler makes new and eloquent use of a

familiar science-fiction idea, protecting one's own past, to express the tangled interdependency of black and white in the United States," Joanna Russ wrote in the 1980s issue of *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction (*Matthews 2006: 582). Williams called *Kindred* "a startling and engrossing commentary on the complex actuality and continuing heritage of American slavery" (*Ibid.*).

Xenogenesis series is about the intricate web of power and affection in the relationships between human beings and alien species. *Dawn,* (1987) Octavia Butler's seventh novel and the first in the *Xenogenesis* series, introduces new possibilities in the scientific realm of genetic arrangement coupled with observations about the conflicts between the sexes and racial groups. The novel describes a post-nuclear holocaust world in which all life is valued. Its text place in the future, 250 years after a global nuclear war has made earth inhabitable. It explores the complex power-relationships between human beings and extraterrestrials and presents the consequences of science and technology, particularly genetic engineering on the lives of earthly people particularly women. Divided into four sections – "Womb," "Family," "Nursery," and "The Training Floor" – it chronicles the non-traditional science-fiction heroine's (a black woman's) rebirth, development, and adjustment to a foreign environment. In *Dawn* Butler seems to want to suggest that gene swapping is the answer to the problems of a hierarchical species – the characteristic from which sexual and racial prejudices grow with their accompanying oligarchy. What is and remains a hallmark of her work is her deftness at creating the sensual, vis-à-vis unlikely, male/female alliances. Lilith, the heroine, is independent, intelligent, capable, and, in most instances, disliked by her peers – the epitome of heroic womanism. It is easy for the reader to sympathize with her quest for autonomy in the environment of aliens. Again we see Butler's signature – a black heroine trust into unusual circumstances and compelled to survive. Through the character of Lilith Octavia Butler very effectively fictionalized black women's quest for their being. *Dawn* ends with Lilith's enforced pregnancy from the mixed seed of her human and Oankali mates. Thus it envisions creating nonpatriarchal, nongendered society.

Adulthood Rites (1988), the second novel in the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, chronicles Akin Iyapo's development into adulthood. Akin, the son of Lilith Iyapo, is the first male child born of a human woman on Earth since the war that

destroyed Earth some three hundred years before. The Oankali have restored Earth with the aid of genetic engineering. They returned the survivors of the holocaust to Earth to go about the business of gene swapping to form a hybrid of the Oankali and human species. Akin, part human and part Oankali, is bred to become the champion of the resisters. The human beings would remain childless rather than mate with an alien. He declares his life's work to be the restoration and propagation of a wholly human society. Divided into four parts – "Lo," "Phoenix," "Chkahichdahk," and "Home" – the rubrics designate locations where environment significantly contributes to Akin's development. In the novel Butler present a need to accept differences. Lilith lectures her human/alien hybrid son, Akin to embrace 'difference':

> Human beings fear difference...Oankali craves difference. Humans persecute their different ones, yet they need them to give themselves definition and status. Oankali seek difference and collect it. They need it to keep themselves from stagnation and overspecialization...When you feel a conflict [within yourself], try to go the Oankali way. Embrace difference (80).

The last sentence might stand as the epigraph for the whole *Xenogensis* trilogy. *Adulthood Rites* is the middle point in the *Xenogenesis* trilogy. Because of this, it serves an important function as a bridge in the development of both character and story. The action of the story begins with the abduction of Akin and ends with an adult Akin, watching from Gabe's shoulder as the city of Phoenix (symbol of hope) burns. The hope for the future of human civilization rests with a black man, who also happens to be alien.

Imago (1989), the last book in the *Xenogenesis* series, tells the story of Jodhas another of Lilith's children. In this novel Butler explores her favorite themes: the reversal of gender roles and the inevitable power struggle between two species that must become interdependent if they are to survive. It is divided into three parts: "Metamorphosis," "Exile," and "Imago." The novel explores how 'otherness and difference' can problematise both gender and ethnicity. In this novel one can witnesses a topsitervidam and deconstruction of the genetic definitions of 'gender' and 'race' based on biological determinism. The narrator, Jodahs, is not only an ooloi construct, but the very first one ever to be born, and hence feared by the Oankali inhabitants of Earth, as a dangerous unknown quantity. Literally constructed by his ooloi parent Nikanj, out of the DNA

(deoxyribonucleic acid) of his two human parents and his two Oankali parents, Jodahs expects to metamorphose into either an Oankali or a human, of either gender, depending upon which parent he feels most drawn to. Through the creation of this metamorphosis, 'gender' and 'race' have become issues of affinity rather than heredity. The ooloi has hybridized not only race and otherness, but the very genetics that is supposed to underpin those differences, and made adult development a process rather than a fixed given. Ooloi are 'nature genetic engineers' and can change hereditary defects, by altering the genetic make-up. The conflict gene will thus be eradicated in Jodahs' own construct children. By exploiting genetic engineering Butler very skillfully dismisses the so called scientific fixities of western culture. For Ooloi, unlike human beings, there is no mind-body split, they are fully integrated. Butler rightly points out the difference between human beings and Ooloi:

> Humans said one thing with their bodies and another with their mouths and everyone had to spend time and energy figuring out what they really meant....Nikanj, on the other hand, meant what it said. Its body and its mouth said the same things (27).

The Ooloi reconceives the mind/body, nature/culture binary oppositions, by eradicating the distinctions. Ooloi love life, all life is a treasure to them, and the desire to conjoin with others goes beyond a wish into a bodily need. Butler writes: "An ooloi is probably the strangest thing any human will come into contact with. We need time alone with it to realize it's probably also the best thing" (147). Through this novel Butler fictionalizes unity in diversity by dismissing phallocentrism and other centrism. Merja Makinen (2001:165) rightly states: "*Imago* imagines a world where both difference and desire are uncircumscribed by the culture norms of Western phallocentrism." As the trilogy ends in *Imago* with a product of the exchange between Oankali and human beings that is radically neither, Butler displays her orientation towards evolution seen as non-purposive transformation. By exploring horror and beauty in rare combination, Butler's science fiction texts became exemplary classics of the 1980s decade.

Butler's fiction draws on African-American history and explores material future societies. Black women usually are at the centre of her novels, but around them Butler develops a wide variety of characters. Butler is interested in the relationships of men and women, children and parents, masters and slaves,

inferiors and superiors as revealed in struggles for great power and for survival, and in how even under these great stresses human values can develop and prevail. All her fiction stands in quiet resistance to the notion that a black character in a science fiction novel is there for a reason. In Butler's novel the black protagonist is there stands like a mountain. She does not hesitate to harness the power of fiction as fable to create striking analogies to the oppressive realities of our own present world. Butler also peoples her imagined worlds with black characters as a matter of course. Events and lives are usually in crisis in her books, but she celebrates racial differences. Butler has black women as protagonists but it is also important that there are always numbers of black characters in her novels. There is enough of a critical mass of racial and sexual and cultural diversity in any Butler novel to make radiant it practicing science fiction writer. She has believed that the conflict between the gift of intelligence and the inborn tendency toward hierarchical behavior is the root of human problems. The central tensions in her artistic vision explore the divisions between rich and poor, male and female, people of different races, and human beings and extraterrestrials. Butler's fictions are skillfully plotted, and although she was not a didactic writer, her work implies a severe criticism of the moral laxity of the contemporary world. Although Butler's African American heritage strongly influenced her writing, she saw racial issues in a wider context, beyond black-white confrontations and even between extraterrestrial and human species. Her positive characters often develop close friendships or sexual ties to those who are "different," in gender, race, sexual orientation, or social class.

Butler has brought a unique perspective to the genre of science fiction, usually the domain of white male writers. As an African American woman, she is attentive to issues of gender, race, and social class. However, she does not view these narrowly as black/white or male/female relationships but has extended these explorations to include differences in sexual orientation and even extraterrestrial/human relationships. A consistent motif in her work is her interest in family relationships, especially the painful experiences of her female characters that must choose between their own desires and the needs of loved ones. Her attention to character development and her inquiry into the moral choices that confront humanity at the beginning of the twenty-first century is quite noteworthy.

Butler has dramatized the complex interaction among the past, present, and future, seeing the acceptance of difference and tolerance for others as a condition for the survival of the human race. Butler has given voice to the voiceless, vision to the visionless rather, she has provided vision of a millennial world. Easton (2000:138) asserted that with *Dawn* "Butler has gifted SF with a vision of possibility more original than anything we have seen since [Arthur C.] Clarke's *Childhood's End.*" Sandi Russell (1992: 170) rightly comments: "The new, as well as the old, are given voice in the works of the science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler....All [her] books are concerned with new societies where equality reigns and the hierarchies of race and religion are abolished." By and Large, the science fictions as presented by Octavia Butler has forged a path for the progress of the third world societies in general and the progress of the minority groups, women, subalterns, the oppressed and the downtrodden in particular. Through her fictions she has provided the vision of a millennial world.

To be conclude, divided into five chapters the present study has explored that women writers of science fiction by preaching and practicing the conscience use of scientific and technological knowledge in their science fiction texts have transcended the shorelines of the genre of science fiction and have constructed a rainbow of planetary relationships with the bond of scientific knowledge and love and thus they have provided vision of a millennial world. The world of SF presented by women writers is a world of millennial vision based on harmonious, interdependent, mutual interrelationship. Science and scientific discoveries should be designed not only for national development but for the progress of the minority groups, women, subalterns, the oppressed, and the downtrodden unto this last in particular.

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