

# Intersectional Interests to Decolonise the African American Identity: An Overview of Postcolonial Science Fiction, Afrofuturism and Transhumanism

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## ABSTRACT

Transhumanism and the Science Fiction's (SF) subgenres, namely Postcolonial SF and Afrofuturism have many common concerns about the future of humanity. The exploration of their intersectional interests can offer new ways of studying SF novels. Besides, they can clarify the possibilities for decolonizing the African American identity - 'Other'. Moreover, they can illustrate the expansion of the SF genre and its ability to cover different aspects of life. The study will overview the emergence of SF to show the connection with postcolonialism, Afrofuturism, and Transhumanism in SF. In this respect, this research will shed light on Jessica Langer's futuristic postcolonialism, and the Afrofuturistic sense of Mark Dery, the global Afrofuturistic vision of Lisa Yaszek, and Nick Bostrom's human enhancement. Finally, the study concludes by proposing the term of 'Other+' to decolonize the futuristic identity of African Americans.

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Science Fiction (SF) is the genre of ever-changing aims, functions and broad prospects due to the limitless possibilities and boundaries of its components, 'science' and 'fiction'. Accordingly, it is a difficult task to reach a single suitable, comprehensive and absolute definition for SF as a literary genre one thing. Thus, there are many definitions for SF from its emergence until the present time (James and Farah 137,231). One way to categories SF, in the researcher's point of view, is adopting the functional purpose of the term presented in the definition. As a popular fiction, SF is understood to deal with the future, imaginary space and time travels, aliens' invasion, spaceships, scientific extrapolations, extraordinary humans or beings and virtual reality, among others. The emergence and the historical roots of SF go back to Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) in which he sought for idealism and perfection for man's life in an imaginary island. In the eighteenth – century, SF receives a significant boost by Jonathan Swifts' *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Darko Suvin suggests that these travels stand as an archetype of SF because of the different forms of science implementation in fictional stories and the various

settings of the journeys. Later in the same century, SF starts to show a futuristic speculative tendency towards a better future through Louis-Sebastien Mercier's *The Year 2440* (1771) (Alkon 13-14,21). In the nineteenth-century, the genre of SF witnessed a vast expansion in reflecting the different aspects of life and man's advanced scientific visions. Mary Shelley's *The Modern Prometheus* or *Frankenstein* (1818) comes in the first place as the most influential SF ancestors. Paul Alkon and Brian Aldiss believe that SF starts first with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (ibid1). Her story stands to point out the main elements of SF by separating between the factors of supernatural and SF themes; "I have not considered myself more weaving a series of supernatural terrors. The event on which the interest of the story depends is exempt the disadvantage of a mere tale of specters or enchantment" (Shelley xiii). The story of *Frankenstein* marks a turning point in the mainstream of SF genre away from the utopian visions of More and Mercier and from what is supernatural. In addition to Shelley, there are well-known nineteenth-century SF ancestors and originators like the American writer and journalist

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). His imaginative literary abilities to reach out to the SF themes for the readers placed him as “the father of Science Fiction” (Roberts 138). Besides Poe, the French SF writer Jules Gabriel Verne (1828-1905), who produced the futuristic voyages and technological fiction. Likewise, H.G. Wells (1866-1946), who enhanced the themes of SF stories by introducing time travel in *The Time Machine* (1895), genetic engineering in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), scientist’s superego in *The Invisible Man* (1897), and aliens’ invasion in *The War of the Worlds* (1898). These writers represented the first generation of SF models, as initiators for its subject matters and boards. They paved the way for other writers in the twentieth-century, utilizing the genre to express different themes and areas of life.

SF helps to explore the various futuristic possibilities of societies and form a future image for the present human relationships. In *Theory of Mind and Science Fiction* Pagan states that SF “has also been defined in relation to its exploration of ‘other’ imaginary timelines and societies—from the invigoratingly utopian to the harrowingly dystopian” (19). Therefore, SF authors and especially after what happened in Europe after WWII, start to depict the consequences of such human conflicts in the form of dystopian; because “sf is less concerned with validating the scientific-materialist worldview than in playfully problematizing it—prodding it, prying open its contradictions, and exploring its inconclusions” (Csicsery-Ronay 95). During the 1950s, after the WWII, especially after the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, writers like Alfred Bester, James Blish, Ray Bradbury, Damon Knight, Walter M. Miller, Frederik Pohl and Cyril M. Kornbluth, Clifford Simak, Theodore Sturgeon, and Kurt Vonnegut became more interested in including science in their fiction pessimistically. They aimed at attracting the attention of the readers about the passive impact of misusing science and the destructive consequences of establishing power by the misuse of science and technology. During

that time, SF writers started themes related to apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic.

Postcolonial SF is a hybrid literary form. It involves postcolonial and SF issues; as a result, the task of defining postcolonial SF is not easy. Therefore, to reach a workable understanding and to label postcolonial SF, the researcher will discuss the relationship between postcolonialism and SF to demonstrate the relevant aspects of both genres which evolved and composed postcolonial SF as a subgenre of SF and then cover the predominant themes and concerns of postcolonial SF.

There are different studies regarding defining postcolonial SF and developing the relation between postcolonial fiction and SF. In his introduction to *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* Rieder (2008) affirms that the historical context of colonialism is considered to be one of the generators of SF and a source of themes such as the use of knowledge and power, and he states:

no informed reader can doubt that allusions to colonial history and situations are ubiquitous features of early science fiction motifs and plots. It is not a matter of asking whether but of determining precisely how and to what extent the stories engage colonialism. The work of interpreting the relation of colonialism and science fiction really gets under way, then, by attempting to decipher the fiction’s often distorted and topsy-turvy references to colonialism. (3)

The early SF writings come to express and encourage colonial tendencies which announce the readiness of SF to discuss and include postcolonial matters. Further, Rieder argues that colonialism is “part of the genre's texture, a persistent, important component of its displaced references to history, its engagement in ideological production, and its construction of the possible and the imaginable” (15). The ideas of innovation, seeking freedom, liberty, power and hegemony were deployed in the stories of SF like Edward Bellamy's utopians *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888) and *Equality* (1897) and Wells' *The War the Worlds* (1898). Another perspective about the relationship between the two genres has been adopted by Bould et al. (2009):

There is no single period or moment marking the emergence of postcolonial approaches to sf, but rather a gradual and intermittent convergence of their concerns which can best be thought of in terms of a growing space of encounter and change, of active translation and transition in the margins between cultures. (256)

The connection between postcolonial fiction and SF is not a historically bounded one to a particular time or era. Both genres are interrelated and have evolved through time and acquired many features. Their growth in time granted them with the readiness of adaptation to go with a variety of subject matters. In *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (2011) Jessica Langer writes about the nature of postcolonial fiction and SF as a subject of continuous change due to; their inclusion of different texts, the broad areas of both genres, and their flexibility to deal with a variety of matters. Accordingly, she states that postcolonial SF is:

The interpolation of divinity, spirituality and folktale with the science fiction genre holds a particular significance for postcolonial science fiction. Narrative, particularly folktale and legend, is a central function of cultural memory; erasure of these narratives is a central function of colonial power (129)

This combination of colonialism and SF works as an essential agent which gives avenues for different writers and themes to be involved in postcolonial SF. Commenting on the mood of postcolonial SF, Hoagland and Sarwal (2010) state that:

A postcolonial science fiction allows space for the different “voices” of science fiction in Europe, Latin America and the Asian and African Disaporas, and explores the nature of Otherness and Futurity, and what happens when these ideas are expressed by those who were the subjects of earlier versions. (2)

This merging gives a path for postcolonial SF authors to engage the postcolonial topics such as alterity, the ‘Other’, and identify re/formation from the SF perspective, which leads to reshape and to rebuild new visions about those cases. Hoagland and Sarwal also point out many common issues between both genres that can bring them together to generate postcolonial SF as:

both have been perceived at some point in their histories as literary outcasts; both have borrowed liberally from other genres, and in so doing have refashioned those genres in their image; both have been used in explicitly political ways; both have attempted to make sense of a world that is startling in its complexity and brutality; and both have undergone serious, and sometimes damaging assaults questioning the integrity of the genres themselves, how they are used, and by whom. Both genres are inherently moralistic and ethics-driven; each genre may force upon its readers difficult questions regarding complicity, loyalty, responsibility, and obligation. (6)

Hoagland and Sarwal add that among the essential aspects of postcolonial SF is to reinvent and alternate history and to break down the boundaries of the past to represent the indigenous people (16-17,61-62). Together, SF and colonialism allow possible and imaginable ideologies by which the author can change the status of the character away from the realistic and historical facts. By doing so, the writer can offer hope and encouragement for changes. In the same vein, Kerslake (2011), in her book *Science Fiction and Empire*, emphasizes that “the role of empire in SF is in itself multidimensional. It provides a primary doorway into the potential future from the past: a figurative trope by which a contemporary reader may locate the framework of a modern narrative” (190). As Thomas (2013) proposes in his study:

one can argue that the tendency to use sf as a mode of expression for colonial and postcolonial concerns has been common in Western writers from the beginning of science fiction as a distinct genre. (1)

Moreover, as an applicable understanding for the subgenre; he introduces postcolonial SF as an extended version of postcolonial fiction and SF which deals with the effects of technology, in a futuristic sense, rather than the technology itself giving space to discuss these effects upon cultures, religions, and human norms. (53-56)

The studies presented thus far provide evidence about the tendencies, the mutual concerns, and the common points between colonialism and SF, which build up the subgenre of postcolonial SF. These similarities show the correlation between colonial fiction and SF, which reflect the closeness of their concerns as well as proving Suvin’s SF aspect of ‘cognitive estrangement’. Similarly, stated by Masood Ashraf Raja and Swaralipi Nandi arguing the condition of postcolonial SF:

[t]he connection between science fiction and postcolonial studies is almost natural: both these fields are deeply concerned with questions of temporality, space, and existence. Central also to both these fields of study are the questions of the “other”—human, machine, cyborg—and the nature of multiple narratives of history and utopias and dystopias of the future. (qtd. in Zadro 9)

To add to the argument, this kind of connection between two different genres, postcolonial fiction and SF, enables infusing their characteristics together to compose postcolonial SF to allow expressing various aspects of life and to convey a variety of themes. As a result of this infusion, the postcolonial SF authors are allowed possible probabilities and opportunities to picture the future away from the colonial past (Rieder 10). Also, the postcolonial SF writes, especially the coloured, are concerned with offering hope for the colonized members to redefine the postcolonial problems besides recreating new futuristic perception to decolonize their future like the works of Karel Capek's *War with the Newts* (1936), Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy (1987–9) and Gwyneth Jones's *Aleutian* trilogy (1991–7); furthermore, to reestablish better futuristic "relationships between power, culture, body, and identity" (Bould et al. 258-259). Hopkinson and Mehan supported this aspect by, and they believe that the coloured postcolonial SF authors have to address the future and to imagine it from the point of the view of the colonized not from the colonizer's perspective and to look at the future without reflecting the past to replace their status, being no more inferior (8-270). The postcolonial texts tackle postcolonialism from the side of the colonizer, and these works issue the superiority of the colonizer and inferiority of the colonized, the 'Other'. The postcolonial SF cross borderline of the traditional relationship between the colonizer and the colonized to create a new diminution of this relation which permits the decolonizing processes of the future.

Afrofuturism is another SF subgenre, the term is coined by Mark Dery in 1994, after an interview with Samuel Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose. Dery wanted to discuss the possibilities and the capabilities behind the African American SF writings sharing the whites in speculating the future of humanity from their perspectives. He describes Afrofuturism as a:

Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of twentieth century technoculture and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future-might, for want of a better term, be called "Afrofuturism." The notion of Afrofuturism gives rise to a troubling antinomy: Can a community whose past has been deliberately rubbed out, and whose energies have subsequently been consumed by the search for legible traces of its history, imagine possible futures? Furthermore, isn't the unreal estate of the future already owned by the technocrats, futurologists, streamliners, and set designers-white to a man-who have engineered our collective fantasies? (Bukatman 180).

Dery argued the independence of the African American SF writings, away from those of the whites. He assures the existence of African American SF writers for African American readers (or for black people), who deal with and reflect the past, present and speculate the future of their people. Precisely, it concerns itself much with how



the future of the black will look like in parallel with the US changes. Thus, Afrofuturism stands as a vent to reassess the value and to reform the African American identity throughout considering and approving the black futuristic visions. Dery's definition reflects a kind of a national Afrofuturistic sense. The Afrofuturists view the future of African Americans through the 'African-American signification'. In her study, *Race in Science Fiction: The Case of Afrofuturism*, Yaszek (2013) offers probably the most comprehensive understanding of the term 'Afrofuturism'. Her definition indicates the global concerns of the Afrofuturists. She states that "Afrofuturism is speculative fiction or science fiction written by both Afrodiasporic and African authors. It's a global aesthetic movement that encompasses art, film, literature, music, and scholarship." (1)

To better understanding Afrofuturism and its effects on the mainstream of SF, Yaszek identified three goals for the subgenre. The foremost one is that the Afrofuturists want to create good black SF stories by black writers to black readers about black issues. They also want to reveal their past histories and link it with the present black cultures and then to use both, histories and culture, as inspiration sources for their future and to establish their role in industrializing the future. (2) According to Yaszek, the historical development of Afrofuturism in the United States of America falls into three distinctive periods. The first period is from 1850 to 1960, which characterized by the emergence of Afrofuturism publishing in *The Crisis*, which was founded by W. E. B. Du Bois in 1910 and the African American weekly newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* (1907-1966). The Afrofuturist fictions were like: the short story of Charles Chestnutt "The Goophered Grapevine" (1887) was among the first Afrofuturist's tries discussing racism, the future war between the black and the whites in *Imperio in Imperium* (1899) by Sutton E. Griggs, Edward A. Johnson's *New Light Ahead for the Negro* (1904) and W. E. B. DuBois' story "The Comet" (1920), a post-apocalyptic story deals with race relationships in American. During

the 1930s, George Schuyler in his *Black Empire* serials between 1936-1938. He creates a utopian Black Empire in African as "an alternate present where Afrodiasporic people pool their scientific, military, artistic, and business talents to enact a global revolution against the white nations that have enslaved and otherwise oppressed them for over two centuries" (Yaszek3).

Another period of the American Afrofuturism is from 1960 to the present time. It is identified by associating the Afrofuturistic elements of society, race, the effects of advanced technologies, slavery, and futurity with the SF genre. The Afrofuturists aimed at reflecting civil rights, redefining SF with the "New Wave" authors, and including social issues along with scientific ones into their writings. Among the well-known authors of this time are Samuel Delany, Octavia Butler, Charles Saunders, and Steve Barnes.

The third era of Afrofuturism, as Yaszek calls, the "Global Afrofuturism" 1980-present. During the 1980s Afrofuturism exceeded the borders of the United States of America, it became a global subject matter, a collaborative process via the internet, which helped to spread it all over the world. In this global sense, Afrofuturism gained the needed power to address a variety of themes. It involves themes of identity formation regarding the techno-cultural aspects, ideology, political, threatens of advanced technologies, ecology, African American diaspora, and anticolonialism futurity. *Midnight Robber* (2000) and *So Long Been Dreaming* (2004) by the Jamaican-Canadian Nalo Hopkinson are good examples of decolonizing the future of the people of colour. Besides, Minister Faust's *Coyote Kings of the Space Age Bachelor Pad* (2004), not to mention Butler's anti-colonial matters in *Parable of the Sower*, *Parable of the Talents*, and *Lilith's Brood* picturing new relationships between colonizers and colonized.

Moreover, Afrofuturism engages trans-humanism topics, nature and humankind, and identity formation. It also, allows the black writers to re-access their history to formulate their future far away from the dystopian vision of the white SF writers (Kim 2-5,45). In other words, the Afrofuturists write optimistically to liberate and decolonize their future, imaging it better with free welling away from past restrains or contemporary problems. Notably, Kodwo Eshun illustrates that Afrofuturism:

has the ability to enhance double consciousness and even to triple or quadruple or quintuple consciousness, to give us a sense that there are a lot of different ways to think about being black and to think about the relations of the science, society, and race. This allows authors to create complex futures in full color rather than ones that are either simply white washed utopias or black dystopias. (qtd. in Yaszek 3)

In general, “Afrofuturism in all its forms embody the struggle of minorities. It is a struggle to reinforce their independence upon a dominator culture” (Kim 5). It has developed through time crystalizing its purpose, that past and present are sources for inspiring a positive future and generators for a better futuristic humankind’s life and civilization. That is to say, the African American diaspora is not reconstructed in the future, and the history of the African American is not shifted into a mere speculative Afro-diasporic text. It calls for a radical change in dealing with the taken for granted matters. Also, it utilizes scientific technology to reshape the futuristic world of ethnic minorities. It examines how African American identity is built to identify the role of black culture

within the contemporary techno-scientific world (ibid 180).

SF subgenres become an excellent medium for expressing many human affairs. It became “a global language that enables people to communicate their experience of science, technology and society across centuries, continents, and cultures” (Yaszek 10). SF became involving and arguing a variety of aspects, as Suvin defines SF “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (Thomas 66). SF’s capacity does not spot with speculating or extrapolating the future, and conveying highly imaginative stories, it defamiliarises and denaturalizes aspects of everyday life to reconsider the inevitability of accepting things without questioning them (Alkon 10-11). Thus, SF is interested in futurology as well as indicating, expressing, and discussing the present subject matters of people’s societies and cultures. Also, SF is the literature of:

all the worst aspects of science - technocratism, singularity of vision, domination of nature, inserting a new gadget into the same world - then at its best it might be considered the literature of science studies - concerned with the social consequences of developments in science and technology, insisting on dialectic exchange between the novum and the larger social world, sensitive to the contingency of knowledge, and open to

new ways of seeing and being. (Bould et al. 421)

SF and Transhumanism share many similarities in approaching the future of humanity and Earth. Nick Bostrom in '*Transhumanist Values*' (2005a), writes that transhumanism "promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and the human organism opened up by the advancement of technology" (3). He encourages opportunities to improve human wellbeing by eradicating illnesses, eliminating needless misery, and growing human mental, physical, and emotional ability. That is, to remove away the needless discomfort in our lives. Thus, it is a way of new possibilities to have an improved human being through technical development. In this regard, the transhumanist believes that technology plays a significant role in changing the aspects of life, such as physical, mental, social, and spiritual.

Furthermore, humanity will be able to recognize the possibilities of human nature (Huxley 15). Considering the 'Bioluddites', James Hughes proposes the concept of 'Democratic Transhumanism' to address the social reasonability and the moral influences of Transhumanism. In his book *Citizen Cyborg* (2004), Hughes states that "Democratic transhumanism is the next stage of human self-emancipation through science and democracy" (187). A large and growing body of literature has investigated that SF and Transhumanism share utopian and dystopian visions of humanity. Also, both pursue future, speculate futuristic scenarios, and share several issues like apocalyptic struggles, genetic engineering, biological weapons, threatens of artificial intelligence, cybernetic future, humanoid and android, among others. Nevertheless, these themes were derived from SF, and the genre of SF is in "which post- and transhumanist issues have been described, interpreted and developed" (Ranisch and Stefan 227). Further, Hughes argues

that SF played an increasingly influential position to promote bio-futurists thought:

H. G. Wells and Olaf Stapledon proposed far future scenarios in which human beings subspeciated into many different forms. A science fiction subculture around the world began to grow with generally optimistic assumptions about the future, science and technology (158).

Furthermore, Bostrom (2003) demonstrates that SF has taken many people into thinking about the human race's possible development. Authors like H. G. Wells, Olaf Stapledon Jules Verne and Karel Capkek, Issac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, Stanislav Lem, Arthur C. Clark, on to Vernor Vinge, Bruce Sterling, James Halperin, Greg Egan, and others contributed and brought to transhumanism' ideas. They transformed their pessimistic and optimistic views about humans' evolution and the future of humanity. SF helped the transhumanist to develop different concepts about proliferation. Besides, SF introduces the ideas of 'human enhancement' and future threats of genetic engineering. Thus, the genre familiarises transhumanists with the passive consequences of irrational and misused technologies (40-41).

*Science Fiction Literature* by Domna Pastourmatzi studied the effects of SF on the emergence and the development of Transhumanism. She asserts that SF is an essential resource that offers informative feedback on contemporary events and illuminates trans-humanistic and pos-humanistic assumptions and ambitions. She states that:



science fiction is an indispensable intellectual tool, offering insightful commentary on current technological trends and scientific paradigms, as well as illuminating the premises and aspirations of transhumanists and posthumanists (Ranisch and Stefan 277).

Moreover, SF introduces social rights, colonial issues, and racism to the realm of Transhumanism through the story of James Blish *Watershed* (1955). Through this story, the transhumanists see that humanity has come to merge the disparities between our behaviours into one brotherhood and intent that is the highest spiritual watershed of our species (Hughes 97-98). Finally, SF stands a source of innovates proposals for the transhumanist. It is a discussion platform, which may promote the adoption of emerging transhumanism research models. It opens the way for critical appraisal of modern science and revolutionary technological paradigms that can change and shape human future, identity, actions, and relationships.

Moreover, Transhumanism and SF share many aspects like utopian and dystopian visions of humanity, human enhancement, improving society, observation, and evaluation for contemporary issues. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that the emergence of the scientific and technological advancement, environmental degradation, climate change, and existential threats have sparked numerous debates and considerations on the meaning and nature of being human and human life. Thus, Transhumanism has often been considered in relation to SF, including postcolonial

SF (Feder, 2018; Mirenayat et al., 2017; Morrison, 2017; MacDonald 2016).

One of the main ways to see Transhumanism in SF is transcending one's limitations, more specifically one's limitations of the physical body to reduce the existential risks, but also to enhance human life experience, resilience, and wellbeing (Bostrom, 2005a). In SF, Shelley's *Frankenstein* is probably one of the most successful and influential stories discussing the idea of Transhumanism. Helena Feder (2018) presents Transhumanism as a response to the horrors of nature, which influences the aspects of human life and behaviour (7). The study examines the idea of Transhumanism through the representation of Frankenstein's monster. Feder argues that Frankenstein's transhumanist tendency to defeat death and illness reflects the fear of extinction, but his creature is labelled as an 'Other'. This living thing is outcasted by society and rejected by people due to his shape. Thus, *Frankenstein* is relevant in the context of Transhumanism in postcolonial SF. Transhumanism and SF are interdisciplinary (ibid 16). Thus, Transhumanism and SF are interdisciplinary. Therefore, such a relationship allows various approaches to studying SF works.

Morrison (2017) explores Transhumanism – human enhancement in SF through the lens of postcolonial SF. Morrison argues that

science fiction inspired and legitimized the use of utopian techno-futurist rhetoric by western science and technology companies, in order to justify technological advancement at all costs – and in turn legitimize the uneven distribution of technology (1-2).

The study deals with the of the issues of human-cyborg, race, identity, Otherness, Afrofuturism, the utopian potentiality of artificial intelligence (AI), and diaspora in the postcolonial SF. It examines the Afrofuturist decolonization of science and technology in Nalo Hopkinson's postcolonial SF novel *Midnight Robber* (2000). Morrison argues that the contemporary representations of AI in SF show and focus on the inequality of postcolonial relations. The study presents the formation of new slavery and colonization systems under the authority of posthuman desire for controlling and creating 'global capital' by racializing AI (4). Accordingly, such transhumanism tendency will generate new forms of identity, colonizer – colonized relationship, resistance, and marginalized communities. The researcher highlights the risks of "the dangerous, implicitly 'racialized AI' and the host of fears that underlie it. The most straightforward underlying fear is, of course, the fear of the Other, seen in the racialized AI" (ibid 11). As a result, Morrison suggests using appropriate technology and human communication to overcome the marginalization of communities due to the inequality of AI distribution. In other words, there is a call for Hughes' Democratic Transhumanism. Also, he adds, to solve the intermingling of man and machine to reach appropriate usage for technology can be achieved by adopting the utopian decolonization approach of Afrofuturism (ibid 12).

In Chapter 3, Langer explores the issue of Transhumanism in postcolonial SF for the SF film *District 9* (2009), although not framing the discussion in the context of Transhumanism. It is relevant from the perspectives of the racial representation in postcolonial SF and Transhumanism. Langer points out that the movie portrays

Nigerians as opportunist gangsters and prostitutes. However, it represents one of the most explicitly stated parallels in all of science

fiction between the figure of the alien in SF and the figure of the other (specifically, the racial/cultural other) in postcolonialism. (82)

This depiction for the Nigerians corresponds to the colonial perception and representation of the African Americans. Nigerians and aliens are treated in the same by the colonizers; both are Othered, outcasted and isolated in live one place. Moreover, this treatment for the Nigerians and aliens indicates racism, the complexity of the racial identity and the conflict arising from the lack of ethnic tolerance and plurality of the cultures (Smith 145).

Mirenayat *et al.* (2017) show the relation between Transhumanism and SF. It investigates the critical role of 'transformation' in both Transhumanism and SF. The study purposes the ideas of transformational changes, suggesting that Transhumanism aims at fixing, transcending, and altering the human body. As discussed by Mirenayat *et al.*, the human body can be enhanced through a transformation in two ways; by improving the biological feature, transhuman, and by improving the non-biological feature, referred as a cyborg. In the SF, the transformation of the body is aimed at creating a superior human; however, the researchers also point out to the flexibility of the notion of superiority whereby technologically enhanced human body represents the point of one's superiority and inferiority (78). This superiority of the new human body to somewhat resembles Morrison's argument. The mentality of the colonizers and their oppressive methods have been deeply engraved in the scientific and technological solutions. Also, human limitations cannot be transcended with making efforts to decolonize the future and identity. So, to attain future decolonize; human transcendentalism over his limitations is a must.

MacDonald (2016) presents Transhumanism in SF through 'genetic mutation'

as a form of transformation. The study states that the SF novel of B. Kojo Laing, a Ghanaian novelist and poet, *Big Bishop Roko and the Altar Gangsters* (2006) is a

metaphor for a cyborgian transformation from biological to networked existence, the conflation of the digital and the genetic—Roko stages an intervention into the evolutionary process and forces Africa's voice into the realm of cyberspace in an attempt to remedy that technology's unequal distribution. (315)

The study reveals Laing's goal, which is to establish a superior individual through the development of the body to change his value, representation and role in society. Furthermore, to give worthiness for his existences that cannot be erased or marginalized for any reason.

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that Transhumanism and the FS discuss many angles of current issues. The genre of SF opens the door for a critical evaluation of contemporary scientific and technical transformative paradigms that will transform and influence the nature of the citizens, their personality, behaviour and relationships. The flexible nature allows SF to exist and to represent numerous aspects of human life, and Transhumanism is one of these concerns.

Generally speaking, 'Decolonization' was announced by the United Nations (UN) in 1960: 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'. This declaration comes to mean national independence, equal rights and self – determination. It aims at eliminating and overcoming the imperial forces to achieve self – determination through independence. Moreover, the UN formed a Special Committee on

Decolonization which declared an action plan for the 'International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism'; a process of three phases from 1990 to 2020 to facilitate the self-determination of colonies.

The 'Other' is a shared aspect between postcolonial fiction and SF. 'Otherness' has been conceptualized in the folds of postcolonial fiction and SF (Hoagland and Sarwal 10; Langer 82). In postcolonial SF, the Other stands as an essential concept which is presented in the forms of aliens, artificial lives, transformed bodies, and different races or species. It has a significant role in creating themes because it expands the capacity of postcolonial SF to involve issues like hybridity, alterity, colonized versus colonizer, and identity re/formation (Thomas 13,66; Bhabha 25).

As a theoretical concept, the 'Other' firstly coined by Spivak in 1985, based on Hegel's *master-slave* or the theory of *self and other* (Jensen 64). Though the concept has several theoretical interpretations, and perspectives by scholars based on the context of the theorist, among those are Frantz Fanon (1925 –1961), Homi J. Bhabha (1909 –1966), and Edward W. Said (1935 –2003). To Fanon the 'Other' refers to the imbalanced power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized culture as well as racism: "the Other, to personalize its presence in the language of colonial racism — the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely" (Fanon 31). Furthermore, he emphasized the need for apolitical resistance to achieve decolonization; action is needed to case the changes for the cause. Smith (2012) also agrees with Fanon, that Otherness means radicality, and it is vital to case change for culture boundaries and to elevate the social status of the minorities, and this is in the essence of postcolonial SF (13-14). In *Orientalism* (1977) Edward W. Said introduces the Orientale colonized people as 'Others', inferior and victimized as a result of the Self's needs and the postcolonial relationship with the colonizer (Bould et al. .256-257). Like Said, Dillon (2007) states that

colonization is the essential cause behind labelling the natives as Others (219). Both Fanon's racial Other and Said postcolonial Other is a matter of heretical classification. They place Otherness as a passive consequence because of the relation with the colonizer, the political differences, and power in hand. It will cause inferiority, weakness, identity loss, or other negative issues after encountering the colonizer. To Bhabha the picture of the Other does not imply low values; it has a different understanding. It is not the label associated with the colonized people only but associated with the colonizers as well. He argues that the colonized and the colonizer share the effects of postcolonialism, and both are dislocated (ibid). This kind of Otherness is a transitional stage to renegotiate many postcolonial consequences to restore what is lost because of colonialism. It can produce a new dimension to the relation between the colonized and the colonizer based on other aspects than superiority and inferiority, which gives hope for and leads to future decolonization. The Other permits possibilities to make changes and cause difference in understanding, optimistically, the postcolonial/racial Otherness (Bhabha 50-52,67). Similarly, Hoagland and Sarwal's 'Otherness and Futurity', are allowed by postcolonial SF to give hope to re-explore the traditional postcolonial issue as Otherness is related to the future, not to the past.

Decolonization and the Other are among the other interrelated aspects of postcolonial SF. These aspects are among the main concerns of this study, precisely the 'Other'. The element of Other is used here as an essential criterion for analysis among other approaches to achieve the aimed objectives. The way Langer discussed 'decolonization' represents the main argument in this part, which adopts mainly her view to relate postcolonialism to SF and to articulate the idea of decolonizing the future. She states that:

If decolonization is the process of disengaging from a colonizer, then postcolonialism is the

process by which a decolonizing society negotiates its identity apart from that of its colonizer, and apart from its identity as a colonized place or people, within the context of both colonial history and decolonized future. (8)

To associate 'decolonization' with postcolonial SF, Langer equalizes the processes of anticolonialism and decolonization; both are absolute outcomes for the postcolonial condition. Nevertheless, she assumes that decolonization is a process to attain futuristic freedom, and the colonized person has to restore and reestablish his identity for the future away from the past, and the present restrains. Whereas anticolonialism is a process to attain freedom regarding the history and the present situation of colonial/postcolonial limits. Therefore, to make 'decolonization' a possible means to achieve freedom in the future, postcolonial SF utilizes the features of postcolonial fiction and SF to offer an optimistic view for the future cultures (7-8). Equally important, in the conclusion of chapter 4 *Hybridity, Nativism and Transgression*, Langer describes decolonization as a "hopeful process" for the colonized cultures to reproduce it by accepting its 'hybridity' (125). What is meant by hybridity here is the diversity of the native culture due to colonization by other culture. In the colonial/postcolonial sense, nativism is broken down and inactivated, because of the postcolonial identity, as a result of the colonizer and colonized blending, and it is substituted by cultural hegemony. The colonizers consider the natives as Others because they do not belong to their culture and vice versa. Thus, to reject this hegemony, the solution comes with accepting hybridity, accepting the Other in postcolonial perception which allows postcolonial SF to deal with cultural differences, cultural changes, and it enhances the process of decolonization.

In 1993, Woodhull studied the relation between feminism, decolonization, and literature in

the works of the Moroccan writer and theorist Abdelkebir Khatibi. He pointed out the global perspective of 'decolonization' as a process which requires:

peoples of both the East and the West must participate critically... the process of decolonization is associated with the *bi-langue*, a space in which body and language, voice and writing, feminine and masculine sexualities, native and foreign languages, hegemonic and marginalized cultures mingle without merging to form a new unity (ix - x).

In this respect, decolonization across the boundaries of the commitment to pursue democratic transformation and anticolonialism to reach global social change. It aims to link society together to guarantee a better quality of life. Therefore, it extends the intelligence of citizens in order to rethink their challenges and to evaluate the effects of their behaviour against each other to prevent what is harmful in the future.

The modern understanding of 'decolonization', as far as African Americans are concerned, is discussed by Plummer (b.1946), Afro – American Historian, *In search of power: African Americans in the era of decolonization, 1956-1974* (2013). She explores the international creation of newly independent states, civil rights movements, the boundaries of ethnic equality, the African Americans' resistance to racial oppression and the

democratic independence in the United States. Besides, Plummer examines the role and the influence of African Americans in international politics and how the past of the African diaspora and the background of US foreign relations are intertwined. In her study, she assumes that the African Americans' decolonization is associated with desegregation, the struggle against racism and other global concerns like the Cold War (66-67).

In the same respect, Wilder (2015) does not see 'Decolonization' like a liberty phase – anticolonialism, national emancipation and self-determination. In other words, it is not limited to be viewed as an interrelation between a deprived sovereign nation, colonized and a nation of power, colonizers. Alternatively, decolonization can be viewed as a process which involves a diversity of people to reconstruct the national as well as the global systems. He adds that decolonization will require a global reconfiguration and is not the abolition of colonial domination (3-8). In this sense, decolonization considers the future of the world of humanity and the nations of normal states, not necessarily physically colonized. Wilder discusses this global trend of decolonization through studying the works of two Francophones authors, Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906 – 2001) from Senegal and Aimé Fernand David Césaire (1913 – 2008) from the region of Martinique. He explains that Césaire's plays offer the problem between freedom and time in the decolonization process. Besides, he examines Senghor's poetry which presents decolonization on the global scale, which will open a new era for world history (200,214).

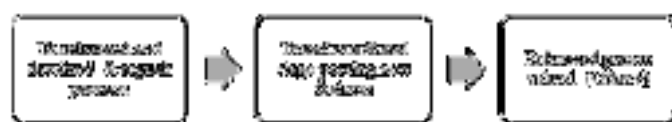
The notion of 'Other' in SF and postcolonialism meant to indicate a being (human or non-human) who is inferior and devalued by the Self individuals. This inferiority and devaluing have different representations in both fields according to the context of the Other. The researcher proposes the 'Other+', who is a modified Other with new, better qualities and ideological territories that may reshape and cause



changes in different aspects of life. It is worth mentioning that the researcher has derived the 'Other+' from the 'H+', which the symbol of transhuman.

Better here is a quality of superiority related to certain Othered human characters in postcolonial SF novels due to their value in life. Their importance is based on unique and notable features that place them to be sources for causing changes in the aspects of life. For future decolonization, transitions and transformations are needed to be positive and empowered by unique qualities and ideology. Consequently, there will be a breakdown of boundaries and distinctions of the inferior Other: the colonized in the cases of postcolonialism or an alien in science fiction. Therefore, the Other+ will be able to facilitate and provide paths for decolonization. Thus, the value of the existence Other+ will overcome the futuristic postcolonial estrangements of the Other. It is a matter of recategorizing the role and the value of the Other to be able to achieve the process of decolonization.

The usage of transformation – human enhancement expresses an intermediary stage between the normal state of the human being and the enhanced one. For this purpose, the concept of Transhumanism demonstrates the enhancement of the human being to be in a better condition to address his plan. Accordingly, the enhanced person will witness the condition of otherness due to his enhancements, who will be useful for others. He is no more the same one who used to be. Therefore, there will be a rebirth for this person with a new identity who is described as Other+. Hence, this can be a reason to think about Transhumanism as a concept in the decolonization process in this study. The chart below illustrates the notion of Other+.



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