Chapter VI

Conclusion

This study has made a broad point that Science Fiction writers Gwyneth Jones and Nicola Griffith are visionaries in addressing the quintessential questions like: What is it to be human? How does the human world connect itself with its extraterrestrial counterpart for the self study? Through a series of reconfigurations of the existential concerns of human beings, the literary endeavors of Jones and Griffith offer important critical insights into the questions to explore what it really means to be human in techno-cultural contexts. This study has argued for the alien that plays the significant role in Science Fiction in interpreting contemporary attitudes and anxieties of human beings. Set within the alien-human interface, Science Fiction of Jones and Griffith captures a moment in contemporary life when attitudes change significantly and new anxieties emerge to actually represent this process of transformation in the form of fictional narrative by employing, subverting and exploding the previous conventions of the alien human encounter.

The analytical framework in the present research has been informed by critical study of textual aspects that define Science Fiction: structures and/or narrative devices and, themes and approaches. The research has identified the textual aspects such as estrangement, confrontation of systems or perspectives that are otherwise restricted by a realist narrative and, implications of new set or norms that result in spatial, temporal and the geographic displacement of identity formations that create, as Darko Suvin
puts it, *novum*, the Latin phrase for new or new thing, in the narrative of Science Fiction. Against this background, the literary research of the select Science Fiction is based on the conviction that the notion of alien is sufficiently flexible to allow for shaping the narrative world of Science Fiction. To this extent, we have relied on the genre’s conceptual matrix of cognitive estrangement, the typology of the alien in Science Fiction that we have proposed to articulate associations between Science Fiction and the alien. In this regard, the focus of the study has been to critically reflect on the significant role the alien plays in giving unfamiliar or an estranged view of the familiar position within the Science Fiction narrative and shape its narrative strategies. Also, our aim was to go beyond simple description in order to explain the ways in which the alien-ation works and meaning(s) it creates and, how the ‘alien’ narrative empowers and nurtures newer understanding of realities within the broader framework of human discourse. Moreover, as the study shows, it offers an excellent vantage point from which the notion of genre itself can be questioned, and from which the links between human selves and contemporary cultural manifestations can also be explored. Therefore, the research has argued that it is necessary to consider the alien as a ubiquitous figure present in different cultural manifestations rather than as a figure shaped by a particular genre.

The study has sought to analyse the alien formation in mainly the novels written by Gwyneth Jones and Nicola Griffith. Our intention in the research was not to do mere textual analysis or of the select novels. But, the primary focus of the study was to critically reflect on the significant role the alien plays in giving
unfamiliar view of the familiar position and shape the narrative strategies of the fiction. Also, our aim was to see how the alien encounter narrative empowers and nurtures newer understanding of realities within the broader framework of human discourse. The framework of the analysis required us to study the novels in respect to narrative form, language, thematic structure and perception of human-non human relationship as seen in the select novels. We have primarily argued for the alien as a metaphor and connected it to human experience of being-in-the-world. Specifically, in the first part of the thesis, while creating the analytical framework, we identified the alien as both non-human and foreign, and reactions to it demonstrated both fear of ‘them’ and anxiety about ‘us’ within the contemporary discourses like feminism and colonialism. Beginning with the Science Fiction in the 1960s, we discussed subversion of existing forms of white, male, heterosexual genres to a more diverse body of texts with the potential to radically reconceptualise power relations through the metaphor of the alien. While tracing these developments in the later part of our thesis, we saw that the novels of Jones and Griffith coincide with various contemporary political movements of feminism and post-colonialism. Following the Science Fiction tradition of writers like Samuel Delany, Brian Aldiss, Thomas Disch, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Philip Dick, Jones and Griffith transform Science Fiction by introducing new literary elements and narrative experimentation. Jones and Griffith exhibiting obsession with the metaphor of alien counter, engage with the issues of gender, imperialism and class and subvert the existing bipolarities and hierarchies of power within male and female, coloniser and colonised. Thus, Science
Fiction novel questioning the binaries and hierarchies has been the greatest interest to these writers. It is in this sense that Jones and Griffith create new role models and alternative visions for the humans. Aleutians and quasi-tribal communities at Jeep are examples of live beings that have begun to explore new horizons and identities through their own unique perception of the human world. Science Fiction we have studied may be looked upon as work of literature that which challenges the popular, hierarchical stereotypes of human and non-human, men and women and colonizer and colonized.

In the end, we feel that the Science Fictional account of alterity of human life is not easy to accept all the time. As a response to the alterity, either we compress everything into the stereotyped version of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or we go on being dismissive towards whatever that falls outside ‘our’ world. Gwyneth Jones and Nicola Griffith sincerely engage with the alien alterity and present the sensible fictional account of the alien encounter narrative.