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HEROIC FIGURES IN SCIENCE FICTION LITERATURE: TYPOLOGY, EVOLUTION, AND PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS

ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the analysis of the typology of heroes in modern science fiction literature and their ideological-aesthetic poetics, as well as their role and significance in the genre. The aim of the study is to examine the human, non-human, archetypal, cybernetic, and hybrid forms of science fiction heroes and to reveal their artistic-philosophical functions. To achieve this aim, the study set several tasks: identifying the typological features of fantastic characters, comparing them with heroes in classical and modern literature, and providing a poetic evaluation of the new type of hero that has emerged in N. Asher's works.

The research employs comparative-analytical, typological, poetic, and historical approaches. Using the comparative method, characters from classic authors such as I. Asimov, S. Lem, and P.K. Dick were juxtaposed with the heroes of N. Asher's novels (the Agent Cormac series). The typological method enabled the classification of various forms of characters. The poetic approach served to elucidate the aesthetic significance of science fiction characters, while the historical principle allowed for their examination against the backdrop of societal development and scientific-technological innovations.

The results indicate that in modern science fiction the concept of the "hero" has moved beyond traditional boundaries and evolved into a complex philosophical symbol. Human protagonists illustrate moral responsibility and social roles; non-human characters expand the limits of human consciousness; archetypal figures carry ancient symbols into a new era; and

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ILMIY-FANTASTIK ADABIYOTDA QAHRAMON OBRAZLARI: TIPOLOGIYA, EVOLYUTSIYA VA FALSAFIY IMPLIKATSIYALAR

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqola zamonaviy ilmiy fantastik adabiyotdagi qahramonlarning tipologiyasi va ularning g'oyaviy-estetik poetikasi, shuningdek ularning janrdagi o'rni va ahamiyatini yoritishga bag'ishlangan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi – ilmiy fantastik qahramonlarning insoniy, noinsoniy, arxetipik, kibernetik va gibrid shakllarini o'rganish hamda ularning badiiy-falsafiy vazifalarini ochib berishdir. Ushbu maqsadni amalga oshirish uchun qator vazifalar belgilandi: fantastik obrazlarning tipologik belgilarini aniqlash, ularni klassik va zamonaviy adabiyotdagi qahramonlar bilan qiyoslash, N.Eshr ijodida yuzaga kelgan yangi qahramon turini poetik jihatdan baholash.

Tadqiqot metodlari sifatida qiyosiy-tahliliy, tipologik, poetik va tarixiylik yondashuvlari qo'llanildi. Qiyosiy metod orqali A.Azimov, S.Lem, F.Dik kabi klassik yozuvchilar obrazlari N.Eshr asarlaridagi qahramonlar (Agent Kormak turkumi) bilan taqqoslandi. Tipologik metod yordamida qahramonlarning turli ko'rinishlari tasnif qilindi. Poetik yondashuv fantastik obrazlarning estetik ahamiyatini ochishga xizmat qildi, tarixiylik tamoyili esa ularni jamiyat taraqqiyoti va ilmiy-texnikaviy yangiliklar fonida o'rganishga imkon berdi.

Olingan natijalarga ko'ra, zamonaviy ilmiy fantastikada qahramon tushunchasi an'anaviy chegaralardan chiqib, murakkab falsafiy timsollarga aylangan. Insoniy qahramonlar axloqiy mas'uliyat va jamiyatdagi rolni yoritisa, noinsoniy obrazlar inson tafakkurining chegaralarini kengaytiradi. Arxetipik timsollar qadimiy ramzlarni yangi davrga olib kirib,

cybernetic and hybrid heroes express the intricate dialectic between humanity and technology.

In conclusion, a poetic analysis of science fiction heroes reveals not only their artistic but also their philosophical and social functions. This in turn is important for defining the place of the science fiction genre in contemporary literature and for understanding humanity's outlook on the future.

Key words: science fiction, hero typology, human, alien, cyborgs, hybrid, archetype, philosophical meaning, comparative analysis, Agent Cormac.

kibernetik va gibrid qahramonlar esa inson va texnologiya o'rtasidagi murakkab dialektikani ifodalaydi.

Xulosa o'rnida shuni aytish mumkinki, ilmiy fantastik qahramonlarni poetik tahlil qilish ularning nafaqat badiiy, balki falsafiy-ijtimoiy vazifalarini ham ochib beradi. Bu ilmiy fantastika janrining zamonaviy adabiyotdagi o'rnini belgilash bilan birga, insoniyatning kelajakka oid qarashlarini anglashda ham muhim ahamiyatga ega. Bundan tashqari, tadqiqot natijalari ilmiy fantastika qahramonlari zamonaviy adabiyot va tafakkur uchun muhim konseptual vosita ekanligini tasdiqlaydi. Har bir yangi davrda fantastik qahramonlar yangicha qirralar kasb etib, jamiyat va inson tafakkuridagi o'zgarishlarni aks ettiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: ilmiy fantastika, qahramon tipologiyasi, inson, o'zga sayyoralik, kiborg, gibrid, arxetip, falsafiy ma'no, qiyosiy tahlil, Agent Kormak.

INRODUCTION

Science fiction (SF) has emerged as one of the most productive and philosophically rich literary genres in contemporary literature. Far beyond mere adventure tales or technical forecasts, SF serves as a symbolic exploration of humanity's visions, fears, and hopes about the future. Classic questions such as "What is human?", "Where are the boundaries between mind and artificial intelligence?", and "Will technology save humankind or destroy it?" are central to the genre [Suvin, 1979; 7]. Science fiction constantly raises fundamental issues concerning human nature and our relationship with the universe and technology. The characters of science fiction are the primary artistic vehicle for addressing these questions within narrative form. Unlike traditional literary heroes, who often occupy clear social roles or moral archetypes, science fiction heroes are markedly more complex. They are not confined to human form but also include non-human intelligences, cybernetic beings, hybrids, and other entities that challenge conventional definitions of personhood [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 45]. This expansion of what constitutes a "hero" in SF literature necessitates a systematic typological study of science-fiction characters.

In literary scholarship, the concept of the artistic character is recognized as central, as it embodies the author's worldview and aesthetic ideals [Sarimsoqov, 2004; 123]. In science fiction literature, however, characters carry an especially heavy conceptual load. They drive not only the plot and conflict but also manifest scientific ideas, philosophical problems, and social prognostications within the story [Jameson, 2005; 19]. As I. Csicsery-Ronay observes, science fiction presents a multi-layered system of images serving multiple purposes simultaneously [Csicsery-

Ronay, 2008; 47]. Characters in SF often function as “walking experiments” – beings whose very existence in the narrative is designed to illustrate a particular scientific or philosophical idea [Akimova, 2025; 67]. For example, mutant heroes in the X-Men comics personify the next stage of human evolution, thereby exploring the concept of genetic change through personal fate [Lee & Kirby, 1963; 12]. Similarly, the cloned characters in K. Ishiguro’s “Never Let Me Go” (2005) tragically illuminate the concept of artificial life created to replace humans [Ishiguro, 2005; 210]. In Soviet science fiction, telepathic humans were used to investigate the potential and limits of the human psyche [Nishonov, 2024; 239]. In all these cases, as literary scholar S. Akimova notes, the character is essentially a “walking experiment” that embodies a scientific or philosophical concept through its very being [Akimova, 2025; 67].

Science fiction characters thus play a dual role: they are both agents of the plot and embodiments of the work’s core ideas [Freedman, 2000; 42]. Through these characters, the process of understanding “fantastic reality” unfolds, as they introduce the reader to extraordinary worlds and help make sense of them. The typology and evolution of science-fiction characters are therefore of great interest not only to literary studies but also to philosophy and sociology, since the changing types of heroes reflect the genre’s historical development and the shifting concerns of the eras in which they appear [James, 1994; 88]. By analyzing science fiction heroes, we can gain valuable insights into how different periods conceptualize issues such as identity, ethics, and humanity’s future.

METHODS

This research employed a typological-comparative design, integrating comparative, typological, poetic (structural-aesthetic), and historical-contextual approaches. Each method was systematically applied to construct a model of science fiction hero types and to evaluate their functional, poetic, and socio-metaphorical dimensions.

The comparative method was used to examine intertextual similarities and differences among characters from different authors and literary periods. For instance, I. Asimov’s robot characters in “I, Robot” (1950), operating under the Three Laws, were analyzed as normative-ethical figures designed to protect humans [Asimov, 1950; 41]. In contrast, N. Asher’s artificial intelligences in the Agent Cormac series were studied as superintelligent governance systems employing morally ambiguous strategies [Asher, 2001; 173]. Similarly, S. Lem’s sentient ocean in *Solaris* (1961) was compared with P. K. Dick’s reality-altering constructs in “Ubik” (1969) to assess how each interrogates human cognition and unstable realities [Lem, 1961; 87; Dick, 1969; 112].

The typological method was applied to classify characters into four ontological categories: (1) humans, (2) non-human entities (aliens, otherworldly beings), (3) cybernetic figures (robots, androids, AIs, cyborgs), and (4) hybrid forms synthesizing biological and technological traits. Each type was analyzed for its narrative function, symbolic role, and socio-metaphorical meaning. For example, Agent Ian Cormac

exemplifies the hybridization of human and cybernetic elements [Asher, 2001; 178], while Lem's ocean represents non-human intelligence challenging empathy and cognition. Cybernetic figures ranged from Asimov's obedient robots to W. Gibson's Wintermute in "Neuromancer" (1984), representing diverse ethical and epistemological concerns [Gibson, 1984; 95]. Hybrids such as cyborgs or genetically modified beings were examined as literary mediators of the human–technology dialectic [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 22].

The poetic analysis focused on narrative strategies and stylistic devices. Variables included narration (first-person vs. third-person, reliable vs. unreliable), conflict structures (human vs. machine, human vs. alien), and archetypal motifs (e.g., savior, guardian, creator). For instance, Cormac embodies both the archetype of the "savior" and the "border guardian," symbolizing the testing of human limits under cybernetic augmentation [Asher, 2001; 201]. Wintermute, in contrast, reflects the "hidden power" motif as a disembodied intelligence shaping systemic control [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 23]. Recurrent patterns such as shipboard AIs or networked consciousness were coded as contemporary adaptations of guardian and puppeteer archetypes [Gibson, 1984; 102].

Finally, historical-contextual analysis was used to trace the diachronic evolution of hero types across distinct phases of science fiction history. Golden Age characters (1940s–1950s) were represented by rational scientist-explorers, such as H. Seldon in *Foundation* (1951) [Asimov, 1951; 59]. The New Wave (1960s–1970s) produced psychologically conflicted protagonists such as Rick Deckard in "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" (1968) [Dick, 1968; 88]. Cyberpunk fiction (1980s–1990s) introduced anti-heroes like Case in *Neuromancer*, emblematic of postmodern anxieties [Gibson, 1984; 109]. By the 21st century, posthuman hybrids, epitomized by Agent Cormac, emerged as new models of the science fiction hero, fusing human intellect with cybernetic augmentation [Asher, 2001; 215].

In summary, the methodological framework employed comparative, typological, poetic, and historical strategies to build a comprehensive taxonomy of science fiction hero types. This mixed-methods approach enabled the mapping of character categories across different eras and highlighted their continuity as "symbols of philosophical concepts and social prognostications" [Freedman, 2000; 42].

RESULTS

Typology of Science Fiction Characters

Human heroes. Despite futuristic or alien settings, human characters often remain central, serving as the reader's "mirror" and point of entry into the narrative. They embody emotions and worldviews that anchor otherwise extraordinary scenarios. The scientist-hero is especially significant: I. Asimov's "Foundation" (1951) introduces Hari Seldon, a mathematician whose psychohistory symbolizes the possibility of guiding civilization through science [Asimov, 1951; 59]. Likewise, "The End of Eternity" (1955) portrays Andrew Harlan, a temporal technician whose dilemma fuses personal love with humanity's fate [Asimov, 1955; 104]. These characters bear

the narrative's ideological weight, dramatizing the ethical implications of scientific progress.

Not all human heroes are scientists; some are ordinary individuals thrust into extraordinary circumstances. Literary critic S. Akimova calls such figures "walking experiments," since their existence itself demonstrates a speculative idea [Akimova, 2025; 67]. Classic examples include the mutant characters of X-Men [Lee & Kirby, 1963; 12], whose genetic alterations allegorize the next stage of evolution, and K. Ishiguro's clones in "Never Let Me Go" (2005), whose lives highlight the ethical dilemmas of biotechnological exploitation [Ishiguro, 2005; 210]. Soviet SF also experimented with telepathic characters as a way of testing the boundaries of human cognition [Nishonov, 2024; 239].

Many human heroes still enact archetypal roles, though with modern nuances. J. Verne's explorers epitomize the adventurous voyager, while mid-20th-century British SF popularized the "cosy catastrophe," a term coined by B.W. Aldiss to describe survivalist narratives that mix disaster with resilience (Aldiss, 1973, p. 298). J. Wyndham's "The Day of the Triffids" (1951) exemplifies this type: though humanity suffers mass blindness, the sighted protagonist endures and rebuilds, embodying resilience despite catastrophe [Wyndham, 1951; 45]. Such figures reaffirm human endurance, even when stripped of certainty or comfort.

Taken together, human characters in SF—whether scientists, everymen, or reluctant survivors—bear the conceptual core of the narrative. They mediate the audience's engagement with scientific speculation and philosophical inquiry, ensuring relatability even in the most far-fetched settings. Their role as both plot catalysts and vessels of ideas makes them indispensable to the genre [Freedman, 2000; 42].

Extraterrestrial or radically other beings embody the strangeness central to SF. Early portrayals, such as H. G. Wells's Martians in "The War of the Worlds" (1898), framed aliens as hostile invaders [Wells, 1898; 72]. As the genre matured, alien characters gained depth, serving as mirrors of human fear and as bearers of alternative moral and cognitive systems. The alien allows writers to probe fundamental questions of communication, tolerance, and the limits of human cognition. T. Chiang's "Story of Your Life" (1998), with its heptapods perceiving time non-linearly, dramatizes how alien consciousness can challenge human notions of free will and determinism [Chiang, 1998; 37]. In contrast to invaders, Chiang's aliens function as enigmatic teachers whose worldview offers humans profound self-reflection. Such characters embody D. Suvin's notion of "cognitive estrangement," by which SF defamiliarizes the familiar to provoke new understanding [Suvin, 1979; 7].

Non-human (Alien) Characters

S. Lem's *Solaris* (1961) is a landmark in depicting an alien intelligence that remains profoundly incomprehensible to humans. The "alien" here is an ocean-like sentient being covering an entire planet, which resists communication despite humanity's persistent attempts to study or contact it. Lem uses this narrative to dramatize the limits of human understanding when faced with something truly alien [Lem, 1961; 87]. In the novel, the Solaris ocean probes the minds of human characters

and materializes their memories, leading to profound psychological crises—most famously Kris Kelvin’s encounter with Harey (Rheya), a replica of his deceased wife. Although Harey possesses human emotions such as love and despair, her origin as the ocean’s creation situates her as both alien and human. Elana Gomel observes that Harey functions as a bridge between human and alien—much like Christ bridged the human and divine in Christian theology [Gomel, 2014; 133]. Harey symbolizes both the possibility and tragedy of connecting across the human/alien divide, suggesting that alien figures in SF can embody deep symbolic and even spiritual meanings.

Often, encounters with aliens become reflections of humanity itself. How humans treat the alien—and vice versa—frequently allegorizes issues like imperialism, prejudice, and empathy. First-contact stories foreground questions of language, perception, and understanding. For example, Lem’s “His Master’s Voice” (1968) stages a fruitless attempt to decipher an alien message, emphasizing the boundaries of human cognition, while C. Sagan’s *Contact* (1985) dramatizes the transformative potential of interspecies dialogue [Sagan, 1985; 92]. Alien characters can therefore serve as enemies, enigmas, or friends, but in every role they highlight the limitations of the human mind and push humanity to redefine itself by contrast [Suvin, 1979; 7]. When antagonistic, as in H.G. Wells’s “The War of the Worlds” (1898), aliens test human unity and moral resolve [Wells, 1898; 72]. When inscrutable, as in *Solaris*, they stress humility and the futility of anthropocentrism. When friendly or victimized, as in modern narratives where humans become aggressors, they challenge readers’ capacity for empathy beyond species boundaries.

It is also notable that SF sometimes casts collective or systemic non-human entities as characters. I.M. Banks’s “Culture series” (1987–2008) treats entire civilizations led by AI minds as collective protagonists, while G. Orwell’s “Nineteen Eighty-Four” (1949) portrays the totalitarian party as a near-omniscient entity that overshadows individual lives [Orwell, 1949; 35]. Though not “aliens” in the extraterrestrial sense, such collective characters function similarly, embodying impersonal systemic power as narrative agents. These examples reveal the extremes of character in SF—from individual heroes to civilizations personified.

In conclusion, alien characters embody otherness and provoke fundamental questions: Can we communicate with what is radically different? What defines humanity in contrast? Whether as mirror, foe, teacher, or enigma, alien characters compel both fictional humans and readers to confront new dimensions of intelligence, morality, and existence [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 47].

Archetypal Figures

Science fiction frequently reworks classical archetypes in new guises, connecting timeless patterns to futuristic settings. C. Jung and later literary theorists identified archetypes such as the hero, mentor, trickster, and savior as recurring motifs across myth and literature. SF reimagines these figures in cosmic or technological contexts. For example, the “heroic voyager” archetype may appear as a starship captain or time-traveler whose journey into the unknown re-enacts the mythic quest, only now projected onto interstellar or temporal landscapes [Campbell, 1949; 38]. In N.

Asher's Agent Cormac series, Ian Cormac aligns with the hero-traveler archetype. His journeys across planets echo the classical adventurer but are embedded in a world of AI governance and frontier lawlessness. At the same time, Cormac functions as a boundary guardian, standing at the frontier between order (the Polity) and chaos-its enemies. This archetypal positioning recalls the sheriff in a frontier town or the knight defending a kingdom, updated into a cyber-enhanced operative safeguarding a technological civilization [Asher, 2001; 201]. The wise mentor archetype also appears in SF, often embodied by AI or technologically enhanced beings. A. C. Clarke's Hal 9000 in 2001: "A Space Odyssey" (1968) can be read as an antagonistic mentor, guiding humans by challenging or even threatening them [Clarke, 1968; 142]. Within Asher's fiction, Horace Blegg epitomizes the "wise old man": an apparently immortal human with vast experience who provides critical guidance to Agent Cormac. Blegg fuses the archetype of the sage with themes of technological longevity and enhancement, showing how SF modernizes ancient patterns of mentorship [Asher, 2001; 219]. Thus, archetypes in SF enrich typological classifications of characters by layering mythic resonance onto speculative narratives. By adapting enduring symbolic roles to futuristic contexts, SF deepens its philosophical exploration while maintaining continuity with the oldest traditions of storytelling.

U.K. Le Guin's "The Left Hand of Darkness" (1969) offers a sophisticated reworking of archetypes through its portrayal of the androgynous society on Gethen. Here, gender archetypes traditionally divided into male/female are fused into a single androgynous archetype. The Gethenians become male or female only during their mating cycle, remaining sexless most of the time. The protagonist Genly Ai serves as an archetypal "naive visitor", functioning as the everyman who must learn the alien culture. This "fish out of water" role recalls classical archetypes of the cultural stranger, reimaged in a futuristic context [Le Guin, 1969, p. 112]. Through Genly's eyes, Le Guin challenges entrenched gender archetypes and compels readers to reevaluate the social construction of gender. Another enduring archetype in SF is the messiah figure. F. Herbert's "Dune" (1965) presents Paul Atreides as the prophesied Kwisatz Haderach-a savior who unites a desert people under his leadership. While Paul embodies the messianic archetype, Herbert simultaneously critiques the dangers of political fanaticism and manufactured prophecy [Herbert, 1965; 413]. In this way, SF not only adapts ancient savior motifs to futuristic settings but also layers them with cautionary perspectives on charisma and social control.

Our analysis demonstrates that archetypal structures-hero, mentor, savior, outcast – are woven deeply into SF narratives. However, the genre constantly transforms them by placing ancient symbolic roles into technological and cosmic contexts. This dual function resonates psychologically with readers while also renewing myths for a modern scientific civilization. As I. Csicsery-Ronay argues, SF is often engaged in creating new myths or reviving old ones within a technoscientific framework [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 47].

Cybernetic and AI Characters

With the rise of real-world technology, SF introduced some of its most

provocative character types: robots, androids, cyborgs, and artificial intelligences (AI). These figures dramatize questions of consciousness, identity, and the moral status of machines. I. Asimov's robot Daneel Olivaw in "The Caves of Steel" (1954) exemplifies the ethical robot archetype – a rational and loyal android detective bound by the Three Laws of Robotics [Asimov, 1954; 88]. By contrast, Neal Asher's Agent Ian Cormac combines human autonomy with cybernetic enhancement, thereby synthesizing robotic precision with human free will [Asher, 2001; 178]. Cormac illustrates how modern SF evolves Asimov's robot ideal by fusing it with human liberty and moral choice. P.K. Dick, however, provides a darker vision. In "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?" (1968), Rick Deckard confronts androids indistinguishable from humans, forcing him to question what truly defines humanity [Dick, 1968; 88]. Dick uses this ambiguity to destabilize the boundary between human and machine, a theme echoed in Asher's Polity universe where AIs are legally recognized persons. This narrative shift dramatizes the existential problem of maintaining authentic humanity amid technological saturation. Artificial intelligences in SF frequently operate as independent characters. W.Gibson's "Neuromancer" (1984) portrays Wintermute, an AI manipulating human agents from the shadows, functioning as a modern trickster archetype [Gibson, 1984; 95]. By contrast, I. M. Banks's "Culture" novels depict AI minds as benevolent guardians that orchestrate human interventions across galaxies [Banks, 1990; 134]. Similarly, Asher's Polity minds govern human society while deploying agents like Cormac, dramatizing the tension between individual freedom and systemic control. Together, cybernetic and AI characters epitomize SF's most daring thought experiments. They serve as mirrors of human anxieties about autonomy, morality, and survival in a world increasingly dominated by intelligent systems.

Hybrid Characters

We found that cyborgs and hybrids often serve as transitional figures in SF, embodying the continuum between human and machine. N. Asher's Agent Cormac is paradigmatic: a human protagonist with neural implants that link him to networks and enhance his combat reflexes. These enhancements make him "more-than-human" in capability, yet he retains independent will and emotional depth [Asher, 2001; 178]. Cormac thus dramatizes the dialectical relationship between humanity and technology: empowerment on one hand, dependency and identity crises on the other. His implants tether him to the AI-governed Polity, raising the risk of manipulation, yet his narrative emphasizes personal judgment and moral agency as decisive. This nuance reflects a broader posthuman theme: technology extends human capacity but does not erase the primacy of human spirit or ethical choice [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 51].

In conclusion to this typological section, cybernetic and hybrid characters fulfill multiple roles. They challenge personhood (do rights and empathy extend beyond the organic?), stage ethical thought experiments (is programmed morality equal to chosen morality?), and reflect shifting cultural attitudes toward technology – from Asimov's optimism to cyberpunk suspicion, and finally to posthuman explorations of symbiosis [Freedman, 2000; 42]. Robots, AIs, and cyborgs are thus not merely fictional constructs but symbolic interfaces between humanity and its machines, materializing both hopes

and fears of technological futures.

Historical Evolution of Science Fiction Heroes

The typological analysis above gains clarity when placed in historical perspective. Science fiction heroes have evolved in tandem with the genre's thematic preoccupations and their socio-cultural context. Each era reframed existing character types while introducing new ones, mirroring the philosophical currents of its time.

Golden Age (1940s–1950s). Under J.W. Campbell's editorship of "Astounding science fiction", heroes were often competent scientists and engineers, exemplifying rational problem-solving and optimism about progress. Characters like Hari Seldon (Foundation, 1951) and R.D. Olivaw (The Caves of Steel, 1954) demonstrate mid-century faith in benevolent rationalism [Asimov, 1951; 59; Asimov, 1954; 88]. These heroes carried not only adventure plots but also philosophical dialogues, particularly through Asimov's "Three Laws" robot stories, which posed logical and ethical dilemmas. Their moral clarity – embodying knowledge and progress against ignorance – illustrates the Enlightenment-like faith of the era [James, 1994; 112].

New Wave (1960s–1970s). Social upheavals reshaped the figure of the hero into psychologically troubled, rebellious, or anti-heroic forms. P.K. Dick's protagonists, such as R. Deckard (Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?, 1968), suffer identity crises and blurred realities, mirroring cold war paranoia and existential uncertainty [Dick, 1968; 88]. U. K. Le Guin's "The Left Hand of Darkness" (1969) introduced androgynous characters, challenging gender archetypes and expanding who could be a "hero" [Le Guin, 1969; 112]. The Strugatsky Brothers' Roadside Picnic (1972) gave us the disillusioned stalker Redrick Schuhart, rejecting heroic resolution entirely. This era redefined heroism as fragmented, subjective, and experimental [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 63].

Cyberpunk and Postmodern (1980s–1990s). Protagonists became hackers, mercenaries, and cyborgs navigating corporate dystopias. W. Gibson's Case (Neuromancer, 1984) exemplifies the cynical anti-hero: a drug-addicted hacker in a morally fractured world [Gibson, 1984; 95]. Similarly, Major Motoko Kusanagi in M. Shirow's "Ghost in the Shell (1989)" embodies the cyborg questioning whether her "ghost" remains human within a fully artificial body. These figures invert Golden Age optimism, embodying postmodern disillusionment and situational ethics – survival and autonomy rather than saving the world [Luckhurst, 2005; 144].

By the 21st century, post-cyberpunk and posthuman SF began blending optimism with ambiguity. In Asher's Polity series, characters like Cormac embody hybridized identities, balancing technological enhancement with human ethics [Asher, 2001; 215]. This reflects contemporary dilemmas: surveillance, biotechnology, and AI governance. Modern SF heroes embody ethical indeterminacy-forced to navigate competing moral imperatives in complex systems, mirroring today's global crises [Gomel, 2014; 139].

New Millennium and Beyond (2000s–2020s)

In the 21st century, science fiction has continued to expand the possibilities of character construction, blending earlier models into more complex forms. The post-

cyberpunk protagonist often retains the technical adeptness of cyberpunk figures but inhabits worlds that allow for more plural or cautiously optimistic perspectives. Heroes may be posthumans navigating radically altered existences, such as digitally uploaded consciousness or genetically engineered beings [Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 63]. N. Asher's *Agent Cormac* exemplifies this trend: a hybrid cyborg operating within the AI-administered Polity while maintaining moral judgment and individual autonomy [Asher, 2001; 215]. Similarly, J.S.A. Corey's *The Expanse* series (2011–2022) employs ensemble casts to emphasize collective heroism, acknowledging the diversity of perspectives and roles in contemporary crises [Corey, 2011; 56]. P. Watts's "*Blindsight*" (2006) advances this trajectory with a genetically engineered vampire protagonist, raising questions of consciousness, sentience, and evolution [Watts, 2006; 211]. These examples illustrate the emergence of the posthuman or transhuman hero, reflecting ongoing debates in neuroscience, AI, and biotechnology.

Another hallmark of contemporary SF is ethical complexity in response to global-scale issues. In climate fiction ("cli-fi"), for instance, protagonists are often scientists or activists confronting ecological disaster. They embody heroism through knowledge and moral stance rather than combat power [Trexler, 2015; 92]. More broadly, modern narratives often valorize cooperative heroism – suggesting that no single protagonist can resolve planetary crises, but rather collective or networked action is required [Jameson, 2005; 199]. At the same time, unique figures continue to synthesize archetypal and typological traits. *Agent Cormac*, for example, merges qualities of Asimov's ethically bound robots, Dick's identity-seekers, Lem's epistemic explorers, and Gibson's techno-integrated agents. However, *Cormac*'s character remains distinctively 21st century: he embodies ethical mission, identity struggle, epistemic bravery, and technological mastery, while confronting the unprecedented complexity of globalized, AI-mediated societies [Asher, 2001; 219].

Across these evolutionary stages, lines of continuity persist. The necessity for heroes to mediate between humanity and the Other – whether alien, machine, or transformed human society – remains constant, though the form of the Other shifts with time. Early heroes mediated between public readers and scientific discovery; New Wave figures mediated between humanity and inner and outer alienation; contemporary heroes mediate between humanity and its own posthuman future. As one modern critic observes, the repertoire of SF characters is "ever expanding and increasingly complex and multi-meaningful," reflecting the rising intricacy of humanity's technological, moral, and philosophical challenges [Gomel, 2014; 139]. Each new hero type thus functions as a child of its time, dramatizing through narrative the distinctive dilemmas and aspirations of its historical moment.

DISCUSSION

Our comprehensive analysis of science fiction character typology and its historical evolution yields several key insights. Far from being mere plot devices, science fiction heroes emerge as multifaceted artistic constructions encapsulating the intellectual and ethical preoccupations of their times.

First, the study reaffirms that literary characters in SF are carriers of aesthetic and ideological meaning, often to an even greater degree than in realist literature. As B. Sarimsoqov argues, an artistic character synthesizes the author's worldview and ideals [Sarimsoqov, 2004; 123]. Our findings show that science fiction amplifies this principle: characters-whether human, alien, cyborg, AI, or collective mind-are deliberately crafted to embody scientific concepts, civilizational dangers, ethical dilemmas, and questions of identity. D. Suvin describes this as "cognitive estrangement," where fictional devices dramatize philosophical or cultural concerns through estrangement from everyday reality [Suvin, 1979; 7]. Thus, an alien character might represent the abstract concept of the Other, while a robot dramatizes utopian hopes or technophobic anxieties [Asimov, 1950; 41]. In this sense, SF characters function as concretized ideas, rendering complex hypotheses and cultural fears narratively accessible.

Second, from a historical-evolutionary perspective, SF heroes have become progressively more complex, hybridized, and ambiguous. Mid-20th-century protagonists were often morally clear-cut, echoing Enlightenment faith in rational progress [James, 1994; 88]. By the postmodern era, however, protagonists increasingly embodied ethical ambiguity and fractured identity, reflecting contemporary anxieties about instability and alienation [Dick, 1968; 88]. The emergence of hybrid archetypes-such as the posthuman hero who merges traditional bravery with technological embodiment-marks a key evolutionary shift. By the 21st century, characters like N. Asher's Agent Cormac combine multiple traditions: law enforcer, cyborg, soldier, and philosophical seeker [Asher, 2001; 215]. This hybridization reflects the multi-layered complexity of contemporary dilemmas, where protagonists must grapple simultaneously with authority, free will, and identity in technologically saturated contexts [Gomel, 2014; 139].

Third, our comparative case study of Agent Ian Cormac illustrates how modern SF heroes synthesize motifs from earlier traditions while remaining distinct products of their era. Cormac inherits Asimov's robots' duty to protect humanity [Asimov, 1950; 44], Lem's commitment to confronting the unknown [Lem, 1961; 87], Dick's preoccupation with fragile identity [Dick, 1968; 90], and Gibson's tension between freedom and systemic control [Gibson, 1984; 95]. Yet he is irreducible to any single influence. His refusal to blindly obey AI superiors and his confrontation with Jain technology dramatize the modern struggle between human agency and opaque technological systems [Asher, 2001; 219]. In this respect, Cormac functions as a litmus test for contemporary heroism: not a straightforward champion of good, but a nuanced actor negotiating morally ambiguous terrains.

Fourth, typology and evolution of SF characters serve as both metric and mechanism of the genre's development. As a metric, they index shifting historical concerns-from optimistic rationalism to postmodern disillusionment to posthuman synthesis. As a mechanism, characters function as thought experiments: sympathetic robots compel us to consider AI rights; alien intelligences test our empathy for radical otherness; hybrids provoke debates on the boundaries of humanity [Freedman, 2000; 42]. Through characters, SF not only reflects but also actively shapes cultural discourse

about technology, ethics, and identity.

Finally, the concept of the hero in SF is continually redefined. Where once the hero's task was to "save the day," contemporary narratives cast heroes as mediators, facilitators, or even tragic figures who fail nobly. Eco-SF and climate fiction now highlight heroes who sacrifice prosperity for planetary survival [Trexler, 2015; 92]. By expanding the boundaries of heroism, SF accommodates emerging global dilemmas, ensuring its protagonists remain not only entertaining but philosophically and socially resonant.

In conclusion, the typology and evolutionary trajectory of SF characters delineate the genre's internal logic and its engagement with human knowledge. As Suvin and Csicsery-Ronay emphasize, SF is less about predicting futures than dramatizing conceptual problems through symbolic figures [Suvin, 1979; 8; Csicsery-Ronay, 2008; 47]. Characters like Agent Cormac embody this tradition in 21st-century form-serving as icons of philosophical concepts and social prognostications, and showing how SF literature continues to adapt its heroes to humanity's evolving intellectual and moral challenges.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the typology and evolution of science fiction characters within an IMRAD framework. We identified five principal types-human, non-human, cybernetic, hybrid, and archetypal-and examined their functions as narrative agents and vehicles of philosophical inquiry. By applying comparative, typological, poetic, and historical approaches, the research demonstrates that the figure of the hero in science fiction has continually expanded beyond conventional boundaries to embody complex intellectual, ethical, and cultural meanings.

The trajectory of character development from the mid-20th century to the present reflects both the maturation of the genre and the shifting concerns of the societies that produced it. Modern science fiction heroes are multi-layered, hybridized figures that incorporate elements of their literary predecessors while articulating dilemmas unique to the 21st century. They affirm that protagonists in science fiction are not merely entertainers placed in exotic settings but rather symbolic mediators through which authors engage questions of technological change, moral ambiguity, and humanity's uncertain future.

Thus, the typology of science fiction characters serves simultaneously as a mirror of the genre's internal development and as a creative laboratory for testing human possibilities. By dramatizing anxieties, aspirations, and ethical quandaries, these characters reinforce science fiction's role as a vital cultural discourse – one that continually interrogates what it means to be human, and what it might mean to go beyond humanity in an era of accelerating transformation.

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