

Discovering New Frontiers: Topical Themes in Contemporary Indian Science Fiction Literature

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ABSTRACT

This is the advanced generation, so the writers are more focused on writing about AI, robots and technology, alienation, and the gaming world. This research paper both critically examines and applauds the creative brilliance and thematic richness of Indian science fiction literature, while also offering a prism through which to perceive its artistic worth and cultural significance. It takes readers into speculative storytelling as it explores the many themes of Indian science fiction and the diverse worlds it creates. In this research, we will use thematic analysis, which is a qualitative research methodology, to analyse and interpret the themes, to ensure the themes are useful in connection with the research objectives, and to accurately capture the substance of the data. Researchers go over and revise the themes that have been found. In this research paper, we study new sub-themes and areas of the science fiction genre in the selected work of contemporary writers like Samit Basu, S.B. Divya, Gautam Bhatia, and Vandana Singh.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence (AI), Bot-terrorism, Gaming world, Futuristic technology, Alienation*

As a result of the country's rapid technological advancement, digital globalisation, and socio-political transformation, Indian science fiction (SF) has quickly developed into one of the most vibrant and intellectually stimulating genres of modern literature. The current literary era, sometimes referred to as the "advanced generation," has seen writers focus more on biotechnology, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual reality while incorporating these topics with themes of environmental crisis, ethical complexity, and alienation. This shift represents a localised study of how technology is engaged with the issues of identity, labour, and human consciousness, and the internalisation of international tendencies of speculation. According to Suparno Banerjee (2020), Indian science fiction has transformed imitation of Western styles towards the production of Indian science fiction, which integrates cultural memory, speculative imagination, and ethical inquiry into the story.

Through the works of contemporary writers such as S.B. Divya, Samit Basu, Gautam Bhatia, and Vandana Singh, the research paper will critically analyze and hail the thematic diversity and creative genius of Indian science fiction. Since the advent of hybrid human-machine personalities to the politics of algorithmic control and gig economies, their writing presents

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an insightful lens through which to view the techno-cultural imagination of India. Imagining the future, S.B. Divya writes about *Machinehood* (2021), a biotechnology and artificial intelligence (AI) revolution that undermines human dominance, and Samit Basu writes about *The City Inside* (2022), a dystopian society with surveillance by influencers and capitalists. Gautam Bhatia explores ideological control and architectural enclosure in *The Wall* (2020), whereas Vandana Singh restores scientific imagination in terms of ethics and ecofeminism in the article *Ambiguity Machines* (2018). When put together, these works of literature form a literary terrain that questions the future of humanity in a world that is becoming increasingly posthuman.

Academics state that the posthuman turn in literature, which is characterized by the loss of demarcation between the human, machine, and environmental worlds, is a major rethink of cultural theory (Braidotti, 2013). Due to the combination of AI and digital themes into the histories, mythologies, and social realities of South Asia, Indian science fiction provides a unique nexus of technological futurism and cultural philosophy. Khan (2021) asserts that highlighted social injustice, ecological fragility, and moral responsibility make Indian science fiction develop a critical opposition to the mainstream Western techno-utopianism. The appropriate balance is demonstrated by the selected authors, depicting technology as the natural continuation of human evolution that requires the application of ethics and emotional bargaining, instead of seeing it as an alien imposition.

Although science fiction is gaining increasing popularity across the globe as an interpretation of the world through the prism of technology, Indian SF is not very popular in the field of academic coverage, and in particular, its significance in addressing the issues of AI, digital labour, and emotional alienation. The majority of critical frameworks still give priority to cyberpunk or Western posthumanism (Hayles, 1999), frequently ignoring the unique ways Indian authors integrate gender perspectives, ecological consciousness, and local sociopolitical realities into futuristic stories. The emergence of sub-themes in Indian SF that go beyond Western paradigms must therefore be recognised and examined. These sub-themes include algorithmic oppression, technological dependency, virtual communities, and the gaming world as a metaphor for reality construction.

Thematic analysis, a qualitative research technique that allows for the interpretation of patterns and meanings across literary data, is used in this study. This method identifies and reinterprets recurrent themes in light of each author's sociocultural and ethical framework. These themes include ecological entanglement, digital surveillance, human-machine hybridity, and the alienated self. In addition to cataloguing technological representations, the goal is to reveal how these themes serve as critiques of modernity, power, and life in an increasingly interconnected world. Consequently, this study aims to achieve three main goals:

1. To determine the recurring and new themes of artificial intelligence, robotics, technology, and alienation in modern Indian science fiction.
2. To investigate how these themes speak to larger ethical, ecological, and sociopolitical issues.
3. To assess Indian science fiction's artistic and cultural significance in redefining the interaction between people, machines, and their surroundings.

The speculative visions of Divya, Basu, Bhatia, and Singh are blended in this research to bring the Indian science fiction to the borders of literary production and digital transformation, where fiction and fact fuse together to investigate the nature of humanity. The complexity of the themes of these texts introduces another formulation of futurism that

criticizes and improves science fiction canons across the globe. This second futurism is founded on interconnectedness, diversity, and empathy. According to Braidotti (2013), posthuman literature communicates to us the necessity to redefine our shared, collective belonging in the world that is shared with intelligent machines and planetary others. Indian science fiction, in this manner, has transformed into an Indian cultural identity reinvented in an age dominated by artificial intelligence, and not just an aspect of technological change.

Overview of Indian Science Fiction

Gradually the Indian science fiction has become a vital field of literary analysis which bridges the local realities and the global imaginations of technology. Early Indian speculative literature often was based on philosophical and mythological traditions, and cosmology and allegory were often used to talk of science, morality, and the human condition. However, Indian science fiction in the twenty-first century has evolved to deal with such issues as artificial intelligence, the digital revolution, the ecological crisis, and socioeconomic inequality in global modernity. According to Suparno Banerjee (2020), Indian science fiction (SF) is located in a hybrid cultural space in which both local cosmologies and scientific reason are mixed to form local and universal tales. Coming up with the definition of Indian science fiction as an intellectual negotiation of mythology and modernity, Sami Ahmad Khan (2021) expands upon this hybridity and indicates that technological imagination in India often does not lose the moral and spiritual aspect that is often absent in the strictly Western stories. Writers such as S.B. Divya, Samit Basu, Gautam Bhatia, and Vandana Singh can bring futuristic visions to Indian society by focusing on such issues as caste, gender, surveillance, and ecological sustainability. Their works reveal that Indian SF is not only an imitation of international SF but also a reaction to the existing discourse about human evolution, ethics, and progress. The academic engagement has also led to the critical legitimacy of the field. Banerjee (2020) uses *Indian Science Fiction: Patterns, History, and Hybridity* to provide a basic taxonomy of Indian science fiction, beginning with postcolonial discourse and proceeding to the ultimate global futurisms. Similarly, Khan explores the interactions of nationalism, mythology, and technology in Indian narratives in the article *Star Warriors of the Modern Raj* (2021). Both academics stress that Indian science fiction is valuable because it can depict alternative modernities, futures that are influenced by collective ethics rather than technological dominance.

Thematic Trends in Global Science Fiction

It is essential to place Indian science fiction within the larger context of global science fiction history in order to comprehend its innovations. Technology has long been a metaphor for human ambition and alienation in Western science fiction. Science fiction has envisioned the effects of human technological overreach since Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which questions the ethics of creation, Isaac Asimov's *I, Robot* (1950), and William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984). According to N. Katherine Hayles (1999), SF in the late 20th century signalled the shift "from the human to the posthuman," in which identity became more intertwined with information systems and code.

Since then, posthumanist academics like Rosi Braidotti (2013) have expanded on this concept to create a philosophical framework that acknowledges the co-evolution of humans, machines, and the environment and rejects human exceptionalism. According to her, the posthuman condition necessitates a "ethical repositioning" that recognises the interdependence of technology and human vulnerability (Braidotti, 2019). The influence on this framework is strong in modern science fiction, in which the central issue is the way humans and artificial intelligences can live morally, and not whether machines can think.

Feminist and eco-critical perspectives have brought the field to transform as well. Donna Haraway (1991), in her book *A Cyborg Manifesto*, attempted to disrupt the dichotomy of the mechanical and the organic by showing the cyborg as a means of rebellion not only to techno-capitalism, but also to patriarchy. Like this, other scholars, such as Stacy Alaimo (2016) and Ursula Heise (2008), applied SF to the study of the planetary and ecological scale and showed how ecological ethics could be fulfilled through technological imagination. These international perspectives provide the theoretical background of the distinct stories of Indian SF and introduce the digital modernity with the spiritual plurality and cultural morality.

Indian Science Fiction in the Digital and Post-Human Age

A state of hyperconnection and algorithmicity where human experience is mediated by data and digital infrastructures is reflected in modern Indian science fiction. S.B. Divya and Samit Basu are among the many authors who create worlds in which automation, surveillance, and virtual economies dominate the world; this is echoed in the Indian technological revolutions. Divya poses a significant question on autonomy, sentience, and equality on *Machinehood* (2021), a future which has been overtaken by AI-based labour and performance-enhancing biotechnology. Johny (2024) states that the book by Divya challenges the idea of the capitalistic exploitation of both the biological and the artificial bodies and urges the ethical acknowledgement of all sentient beings. Like this, a 2022 novel by Samit Basu, *The City Inside*, portrays a dystopian society in which reality is constantly modified, streamed, and commercialised. His work is a representation of what Zuboff (2019) calls the so-called surveillance capitalism, where human freedom is substituted with the extraction of data. Basu shows how technology contributes to the social division and emotional isolation of characters by putting them in digital environments of endless surveillance. These issues can be compared to the issues of influencer culture and online identity, which are widespread in the world. *The Wall* (2020) by Gautam Bhatia is more philosophical, as it explores the limits of knowledge and confinement in a closed society. The wall is both a literal and symbolic boundary under the totalising systems, which tacitly marks the boundaries of freedom and creativity. Vandana Singh, on the contrary, takes empathy and environmental awareness back to the world of speculation. Her book of stories, *Ambiguity Machines and Other Stories* (2018), is an act of ethical thought intertwined with a scientific investigation to offer what Singh (2018) calls a science of empathy. Together, these authors demonstrate how Indian science fiction contributes to the posthumanist discourse on the world with a new approach to the definition of technology as a place of ethical reflection and cultural compromise instead of imitating Western dystopias. The Indian context, with the features of inequality, pluralism, and rapid modernisation, gives new life to science fiction and adds moral dimensions to it.

S.B. Divya's novel "*Machinehood*": Bot terrorism, human vs bots, cyborgs, and Futurism

Bot terrorism, human vs bots, cyborgs, and Futurism. Science fiction and thriller author S. B. Divya is a renowned writer, and she was nominated for the Hugo and Nebula awards as a result of the work "Runtime." She writes, besides co-editing *Escape Pod* with Mur Lafferty, which shows that she is a member of the broader community of speculative fiction. Divya uses a blend of scientific facts with her academic experience in computational neuroscience and signal processing to make her style of narration. Her long history as an electrical engineer is a strong factor in her exploration of the science-humanity relationship in her writing career, when she started writing as a professional. Divya focuses her work on human life in the high-tech and futuristic environment. Her critical view of moral and living issues of people provides the readers with new visions of how people interact with technology. The creative

capacities of her imagination are revealed when she researches the creative social structures, technologies, and cultural conventions in terms of imaginative situations. Divya is a master of convincing and well-developed characters. She makes her readers identify with her protagonists as they undergo tough situations and develop as people, and this adds more mystery to her stories as well. The readability and relatability of her novels are enhanced by the fact that she pays attention to character development, which engages different types of readers because her books become engrossing and interesting to read. The *machinehood* book raises ethical issues with regard to bioethics, as well as the ethical implications of performance-enhancing technologies. *Machinehood* (2021) by S. B. Divya is an important part of the twenty-first-century Indian science fiction through merging the moral intensity of a political thriller with the speculative apparatus of posthumanism. The novel, set in the late 21st century, envisions the possibility that artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and performance-enhancing biotechnology have altered society entirely and made it almost impossible to distinguish between machines and humans. Besides taking advantage of such an environment as a futuristic spectacle, Divya also uses such an environment as a theoretical ground in analyzing the ethicality of technological progress, i.e., the crisis of human identity and independence in the algorithms of Capitalism. The protagonist of the narrative is Welga Ramirez, a former military man and shield of the gig economy, whose body, chemically modified and being surveilled everywhere, represents what Donna Haraway (1991) describes as the cyborg condition: a hybrid of machine and organism that was the product of the social reality of late capitalism. In *machinehood*, the human body forms the centre of political battle and economic competition. Divya symbolizes the commodification of biological life as part of digital capitalism by the fictional gig economy workers, who ingest performance pills to stay productive and compete with self-governing robots in the labor market. This is in line with the concept of surveillance capitalism, which was proposed by Shoshana Zuboff (2019), where all human activities are converted to business gains in the form of data. The pill is a symbolic and technological instrument of labour discipline, which regulates not only productivity, but also emotion, pain, and endurance. Divya is turning this abstract criticism into an experience. Such a depiction dramatises the posthuman condition of N. Katherine Hayles (1999), where information is being stripped of its body and the human subject is being redefined as a piece of data, code, or interface. Political philosophy and ethics introduce these problems with the emergence of the titular *Machinehood*, the group of sentient beings that demand to be accepted and given their rights. Their manifesto compels the reader to reflect upon the ethical boundaries of humanity because it demands that all types of intelligence should be honored and respected (Divya, 2021). Divya disrupts the categories of oppressor and victim, human and machine, with this demand being framed in a narrative of a world crisis and bot terrorism. This ambiguity resembles that presented by Luciano Floridi (2013) in *The Ethics of Information*, who argues in favor of applying the morality of authentic and informational agents to the inclusion of artificial and informational agents as members of a shared infosphere. The campaign of the *Machinehood* is a philosophical argument in spite of the fact that it is violent and questions the anthropocentrism of contemporary ethics. Accordingly, the abstract moral elaboration of Floridi is converted into political drama through the speculative act of the novel, unveiling the unreliability of human exceptionalism in the world of distributed intelligence.

Rosi Braidotti (2013) describes the cyborg paradox in *The Posthuman* as the subject who is both empowered and disoriented by technological augmentation, and Welga's own metamorphosis throughout the story is representative of this paradox. Welga exemplifies what Braidotti refers to as the "affirmative ethics" of posthumanism, the ability to see beyond the dichotomies of human versus machine, dominance versus submission, and instead

embrace relational coexistence, as she challenges the *Machinehood*'s ideology as well as the exploitative gig economy that provides for her livelihood. Divya's battle to recover agency in the face of bio-corporate systems exemplifies her worries about moral responsibility in a time when agency is shared by networks, machines, and people. *Machinehood* "displaces the humanist subject and reconfigures agency as an entangled condition shared among multiple intelligent systems," according to Greeshma Johny (2024). This interpretation highlights the novel's reluctance to clearly give biological or artificial beings a moral superiority.

The criticism of the gig economy and the vulnerability of technologically mediated labour is another important aspect of Divya's world. The hyperconnected economy of 2095 is similar to what Antonio Casilli (2019) refers to as the "digital underclass", workers who carry out disjointed microtasks that provide machine-learning systems with no security or acknowledgement. Even mental and physical stamina will be marketed in the near future, according to Divya's extrapolation of this dynamic. Concerns regarding bio-optimization, quantified self-technologies, and the biopolitics of productivity are reflected in the workers' reliance on performance pills. This extension places *Machinehood* in the tradition of feminist techno-critique, which highlights how technological progress frequently reinforces rather than eliminates racial, class, and gender inequality (Braidotti, 2013).

According to John Rieder (2017), Divya's stylistic fusion of high-tech thriller pacing and ethical speculation is a prime example of the "globalisation of science fiction," in which speculative imagination serves as a vehicle for examining the political and economic disparities of late modernity. The novel's transnational settings, which include Chennai, Nairobi, and orbital stations, ground it in socioeconomic specificity while reinforcing the posthuman transformation's global reach. The *Machinehood* crisis's Indian origin places posthuman ethics in the Global South and demonstrates that discussions about automation and AI personhood are not limited to Western technological hubs. Instead, Divya argues that these crises are universal, albeit with distinct influences from local labour histories and colonial modernity.

The theoretical core of *Machinehood* is the dramatisation of a conflict between two conceptions of evolution: the moral evolution towards inclusivity and empathy, and the technocratic, capitalist pursuit of efficiency. Haraway's (1991) claim that the cyborg can be "a creature of social reality as well as of fiction" and the novel's imaginative speculation converge; Divya's characters experience this reality, balancing autonomy and dependence, improvement and exhaustion. The plot's "bot terrorism" is more of a mirror reflecting human society's failure to develop morally alongside its innovations than an act of rebellion. In this way, the book turns into a philosophical parable about the Anthropocene, in which coexisting with technology rather than controlling it is essential to human survival.

Machinehood is therefore a sophisticated posthuman discourse intervention. Through the textures of global labour, biotech consumption, and algorithmic control, it re-articulates well-known questions, such as what it means to be human, how far empathy can extend, and whether consciousness guarantees moral worth. Although the novel's dense exposition has occasionally been criticised by critics, its conceptual ambition makes it a classic of Indian speculative fiction. By encouraging readers to envision a future in which personhood is a negotiated ethics across species and systems rather than a biological privilege, it turns the thriller genre into a site of philosophical inquiry.

Samit Basu's novel "*The City Inside*": Virtual Reality and Technological Dystopian

Through the works of Samit Basu, we see the evolution of modern speculative fiction. His creativity is vividly displayed in *The City Inside*, where he depicts the lengths the imagination can go. *The City Inside* is bound to be captivating with the drama, secrets, and intrigue it contains. The process of investigating the work of the human imagination is likely to make a powerful difference in the perception of the readers. The works by Basu appear to recreate some of the social problems, like the presence of powerful forces, social graft, and the politics of domination. The struggle to control in *The City Inside* is driven by political conspiracies and hierarchy oppression. The influence of power on individual lives, as well as the more social side to its influence, is apparent as the story is infused with power struggles, oppression, rebellion, and liberation. Basu's novels display thrilling plots set within the framework of a mystery to be solved and an adventure hunt, always featuring imaginative combat that keeps Basu's readers excited. As characters steer the complexities of the city and uncover its secrets, Samit Basu's portrayal of a technological dystopia showcases his rich imagination.

Samit Basu uses the language of digital modernity to translate the posthuman condition in *The City Inside* (2022). In the novel's near-future Delhi, influencer economies, social media networks, and algorithmic control rule instead of state machinery. The protagonists, Rudra, an heir to political privilege, and Joey, a reality curator, live in a world where constant digital surveillance has blurred the lines between private and public life.

Similar to the saturation of media depicted by Basu, Shoshana Zuboff's (2019) concept of the so-called surveillance capitalism, where human experience is a raw material to extract data, is analogous. Uniqueness is a commodity, as every dialogue, thought, and emotion is quantified. AI alienation in this case is expressed through the fatigue of constant presence and not the solitude of invisibility. Being a curator of the lives of individuals streamed live, Joey is also a representative of the work by Jean Baudrillard (1994), who expressed the idea of hyperreality, which is the simulation of reality, not the real one.

Basu puts a thrilling and scary perspective on technology. It explores how technology may be a tool of empowerment and control. The technological environment of *The City Inside* is a background that helps gauge the dangers of uncontrolled technological progress in the case of virtual reality to AI systems, which is composed of anything and everything people are adopting. Thematic arguments about technology and society limits bring up the problem of unregulated innovation and regulation that should be contained. Such themes as courage, sacrifice, and the relentless search for justice, but also intersectional ecological dishonour, are included there. This conspicuous absence of social concerns is observed in the novel in the ecologically crippled society. This theme is the socio-political frame that is defined by human influence on the environment. The narrative is also urging, along with rising concerns about the issue of climate change and global-integration sustainability, because Basu describes an environment that is regressing.

The literary works of Samit Basu, such as the *Game-World Trilogy*, the *Riot* series, and several others, can be said to be the best Indian Literature Sci-fantasy novels of the century. *The Simoqin Prophecies* started with a promise that he was going to use sci-fi elements in his thrillers, and Basu has not turned back to date. He combines magic and technology, and this produces complex stories that take the readers to another world. Basu is also famous for his versatility, the ability to smoothly mix science fiction, humor, and fantasy, to has granted him

a special niche among the literary giants. His literary oeuvre encompasses an enormous diversity of topics and locations, from magical, fanciful areas to gloomy landscapes.

All said and done, the novel raises several significant issues and provides a complex narrative that will be attractive to the reader in both the local and the international market. It is full of themes of surveillance and privacy, technological dystopia, social inequality, cultural identity and change, resistance and rebellion, and environmental degradation. Interestingly, much of the work of Basu is aimed at the adult audience, and this translates the science fiction and fantasy genre to the generation to which Basu belonged and makes it more thrilling to read. Youthful heroes in the stories by Basu often surmount challenges in magical environments. Such an approach makes his writing lively and real to the extent attracting readers and plunges them into the lives and passions of characters that walk between the real and the imaginary.

Basu criticises social hierarchy and technological dependence through this digital hyperreality. His Delhi is a city of screens, shattered by ecological degradation, algorithmic manipulation, and privilege. His characters are emotionally rather than physically alienated; they are constantly connected but incredibly alone. According to Punday (2019), modern science fiction reflects "affective dissonance within networked existence," in which human emotion is destabilised and mediated by technology.

Thus, *The City Inside* continues the conversation that Divya started by placing automation and artificial intelligence in the context of social control and cultural production. The contradictions of a society addicted to connection but devoid of genuine intimacy are revealed by Basu's speculative realism, a future that seems frighteningly real.

Gautam Bhatia's novel *THE WALL*: World Division and Social Structure

Gautam Bhatia has dabbled in science fiction with his novel *The Wall*. In this dystopian story, Bhatia combines political intrigue and elements of science fiction to create a future in which a gigantic wall is built to safeguard a city-state. The main theme of the book is the desire for freedom and being confined. There are a lot of recurring themes of revolt and struggle against authoritarian rule. It examines the dynamics of control and power as well as people's and groups' attempts to fight against oppression. The story's central theme is the fight for independence and self-determination. Other themes include social stratification, scientific stagnation and advancement, the pursuit of knowledge and truth, confined societies and isolation, and the mismanagement of natural resources.

The Wall (2020) by Gautam Bhatia broadens the scope of Indian speculative fiction by transforming philosophical investigation into a protracted allegory of imprisonment and curiosity. It depicts Sumer, a closed society encircled by a huge, impenetrable wall that both protects and confines its inhabitants. The story's imaginative premise, a whole world enclosed by buildings, becomes a tool for Bhatia to examine surveillance, epistemic closure, and the morality of knowledge. As opposed to S. B. Divya's *Machinehood*, which focuses on technological futurism, Bhatia locates the posthuman condition in the social and cognitive architectures that define the boundaries of imagination. His wall is a material and ideological construct that dramatises Michel Foucault's (1977) idea of a disciplinary society, in which enclosures, both symbolic and physical, control behaviour and thought through internalised power instead of direct coercion.

The walled city of Sumer is used as an analogy for both psychological and structural obstacles. They divided the society within the wall into fifteen circles, the Mandalas, or the fifteen tributaries of the river (Rasa). The characters struggle between wanting to see what's outside the wall and their constrained existence. The value of curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge is emphasized throughout the book. Characters such as Mithila question the wall's purpose and origins, therefore challenging the existing quo. The story revolves around this quest for knowledge and the need to reveal unspoken facts. It also shows the theme of isolation, in both ways, physical and emotional ways. In addition to representing Sumerian internal differences, the wall represents the country's isolation from the outside world. The plot explores the individuals' difficulties relating to one another and their surrounding circumstances.

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) theory of the production of space, according to which every spatial arrangement embodies social relations and ideologies, is reflected in Bhatia's architectural world. The wall is a lived system of meaning, a social contract enshrined in stone, rather than just a physical boundary. *The city inside, The wall*, is a metaphor for an internalised control mechanism that depends on epistemological obedience, the conviction that some questions should never be asked, rather than surveillance technologies, as in Samit Basu's *The City Inside*. Thus, the materiality of the wall translates into the psychology of limits, and the novel turns space into discourse. The query of what is beyond the wall turns into a metaphor for the human desire to go beyond inherited knowledge systems, or epistemological expansion. Readers are forced to consider the moral cost of certainty as a result of Mithila's curiosity, which upends the comfort of ignorance. According to Rosi Braidotti (2013), the posthuman subject must balance the conflict between personal agency and structural constraints. Mithila's rebellion is a cognitive evolution, a desire to reimagine life beyond established boundaries, rather than a valiant act of destruction. The novel reflects the Indian philosophical tradition of inquiry (jijnasa) and liberation (moksha) by fusing the epistemic and the emotional, the rational and the mystical.

Freedom is paradoxical in Sumer, where people live in abundance and peace but are forbidden from exploring what is outside the wall due to rigid taboos. Myths of peril and divine protection are used to defend this containment, making ignorance a virtue of the state. A calm claustrophobia is created by Bhatia's narrative voice, which alternates between lyrical introspection and bureaucratic satire. The protagonist Mithila, a young rebel who doubts the wall's sanctity, is the quintessential intellectual dissenter, the one who, like Plato's fugitive prisoner, tries to confirm the shadows on the cave wall. The title of the book itself raises an ontological query: is the wall a defence against chaos or the pinnacle of people's fear of the unknown? According to Fredric Jameson (2005), the primary paradox of utopian fiction is the simultaneous yearning for order and transgression, which is rearticulated in *The Wall*.

The Wall explores the nature of progress and utopia from a thematic standpoint. Bhatia creates a society that seems ideal, clean, well-structured, and just, but its perfection is dependent on the repression of creativity. In this way, the book is reminiscent of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), in which the elimination of dissent is necessary for stability. Bhatia's method, however, is more dialectical than dystopian: the wall represents what Žižek (2008) refers to as the "obscene underside of utopia", acting as both the oppressor and the protector. By doing this, Bhatia encourages contemplation of the paradox of civilisation in general, that all forms of safety come with a corresponding loss of freedom.

The Wall defies linear progression at the narrative structure level. Bhatia enacts what Darko Suvin (2016) refers to as cognitive estrangement, a method that results in defamiliarization while maintaining internal rationality, by fusing philosophical discussions, legal proceedings, and speculative historiography. The reader encounters a meticulously ordered world that prohibits inquiry, and like the people of Sumer, they feel bewildered and in awe. The novel's theoretical ambition is strengthened by this stylistic device, which maintains estrangement as a way of thinking rather than providing a resolution.

To sum up, *The Wall* is a prime example of the philosophical development of Indian speculative fiction. It turns the architectural metaphor into a reflection on the material, ideological, and cognitive structures that obstruct people's desire for transcendence. Bhatia transforms science fiction into a mirror of the intellectual confinement of modern society by placing the pursuit of knowledge inside a closed utopia. Braidotti's posthuman optimism for renewal through rupture, Jameson's thoughts on utopian paradox, and Foucault's cautions about internalised discipline all find resonance in his book. In the end, Bhatia challenges readers to face their inner walls, the boundaries of their belief, empathy, and imagination, and to understand that every barrier can be opened once it is questioned.

Vandana Singh's collection of short stories, "Ambiguity Machines: An Examination," Time, Space, and a Parallel World

The title story of Vandana Singh's 2018 collection, *"Ambiguity Machines: An Examination,"* is a prime example of her distinctive blend of poetic ambiguity, philosophical investigation, and scientific imagination. It is narrated as a strange test with three questions on ambiguity machines, which are administered to an unnamed applicant by an unnamed official. All the questions are told as stories or parables that describe a scientific mystery or invention, yet the stories cannot be easily interpreted. With this form, Singh transforms the genre of the scientific test, the embodiment of objective reason, into a metafictional commentary on the limits of human understanding and truth.

The story starts with questions, instructions, and thought-leading questions, enumerated in numbers just as in an exam. However, the "questions" themselves take the form of fantastical stories about unidentified technologies that defy common sense and logic. In the first, a woman creates a machine that can sense several realities at once; in the second, a man traverses space in search of a missing love interest; and in the third, an inventor builds a machine whose function is unclear. These nested narratives serve as case studies of machines that resist reduction to a single meaning or epistemic uncertainty. "Every answer to this question will be wrong," the narrator-instructor cautions. This paradox lays out the main idea of the narrative, which is that ambiguity is a necessary part of life rather than a defect of knowledge.

Assuming that reality can be objectively measured, categorised, and mastered, the authoritarian nature of exams and institutional science is parodied by the structure itself. This epistemic authority is reversed in Singh's format. Who has the authority to define knowledge is called into question as the examination turns into an epistemological allegory. A reader who is invited to participate in the act of interpretation is also the "student" being tested. This reflexive methodology turns the story into the sort of so-called speculative epistemology, fictional literature, which makes the author question how knowledge is constructed and deconstructed in the scientific field (Vint, 2019).

The key theme of the story is how Singh tries to unravel ambiguity by Singh as a scientific and moral entity. Singh is a physicist herself who often argues that the uncertainty is actually the nature of science and not its adversary. In her 2016 essay, *Science, Fiction, and the Path to the Real*, she says that we need to have wonder, doubt, and multiplicity in our understanding of the universe. In "Ambiguity Machines," that belief is dramatised. The machines in the story are metaphors of imagination per se, giving rise to a multiplicity of equally possible unfinished facts. Singh's story is consistent with Karen Barad's (2007) quantum epistemology, which rejects binary logic and deterministic causality and contends that matter and meaning are co-produced through "intra-action" as opposed to merely observation.

According to posthumanist theory, the narrative challenges the Enlightenment presumption that humans are superior to other species in terms of knowledge and technology. Singh's machines are independent agents of uncertainty rather than obedient instruments. They oppose ownership, classification, and use. In line with Rosi Braidotti's (2013) idea of the posthuman subject as "embedded and relational rather than transcendental and unitary," this opposes the anthropocentric urge to control nature. This relational ontology is reflected in the ambiguity machines, which conflate the concepts of knowing and being, creator and creation, and human and non-human.

The story's criticism of scientific authority also has a decidedly decolonial bent. The "exam" format is reminiscent of colonial educational systems that valued Western rationalism over indigenous storytelling and knowledge systems. By incorporating myth, emotion, and plurality, knowledge that is frequently written off as non-scientific, Singh reclaims that institutional structure. Indian epistemological traditions have long embraced paradox, such as the coexistence of maya (illusion) and satya (truth), and this weaving together of the scientific and the mythic speaks to those traditions. Thus, Singh's work is a prime example of what academic Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay (2018) refers to as the "plural epistemologies of Indian science fiction", a mode that rejects totalising worldviews and accepts multiplicity as the basis for truth.

The tone of the story alternates between wonder and irony, between science and religion. Singh encourages the reader to embrace uncertainty as a mode of engagement by declining to provide closure. There are interpretive holes left by each vignette that cannot be filled by reasoning alone. For example, neither the identity of the examiner nor the true function of the ambiguity machine is ever disclosed to the reader. Because of these intentional omissions, reading is transformed into a collaborative act of co-creation, an "examination" in which each interpretation contributes to the text's development. The quantum poetics of Singh's fiction, in which several realities coexist and observation itself modifies the phenomenon being observed, is reflected in this.

Ecofeminist ethics also have the ecological seeds in "Ambiguity Machines." The same concerns as ecofeminist critiques of dominance can be found in the focus of the story on relationality, humility, and human control limits. The machines operate under the principles of complexity and interdependence, as natural systems do, which cannot be mastered or predicted. Singh views knowledge as a dynamic and continuous process instead of a triumph by stating that ambiguity is a life-giver. This stance is comparable to that offered by Vandana Shiva (1988) of plural and situated knowledge and an ethic of mutuality between human and non-human as proposed by Val Plumwood (1993). These philosophical concepts are also depicted in narratives in the science fiction by Singh.

The philosophical vision of Singh is summarized in the last line of the story, which implies that the machine is the very process of examination. She claims that knowledge is an unceasing dialogue between a subject and the universe, and it is not a set of solutions. The ambiguity machine is a tool of wonder and has the capacity to perceive, imagine, and multiplicity, thus making it a metaphor for human consciousness itself. The story by Singh is a rejection of the reductionism trend that dominates much of the contemporary techno-science fiction in favor of the glorification of the poetic and the unknown as important elements of the human pursuit of knowledge.

In conclusion, the article *Ambiguity Machines: An Examination* is one of the most elaborate philosophical works of Vandana Singh. It makes questioning a moral and artistic process with its recursive form, mythic images, and scientific metaphors. Ambiguity, as shown in the story, is not anarchy but a creative order, which splits the boundaries of science and narrative, logic and love, intellect and imagination. It shows uncertainty as the same situation that allows knowledge and humanity to progress, and not as an indication of the failure of reason. The ambiguity is taken to the highest level by Singh.

Vandana Singh's short story "The Woman Who Thought She Was a Planet": Theory of Alienation and feminism

Vandana Singh *The Woman Who Thought She was a Planet*, published in her 2008 collection of that title, is an in-depth exploration of identity and embodiment and cosmic consciousness that challenges the anthropocentrism of science as well as fiction. In the story, Kamala who is seemingly a normal Indian housewife is subjected to a metamorphosis and begins to view herself as a heavenly object. Her hallucinations, or awakenings, grew steadily, planetary, disturbing the household tranquillity of her old-fashioned home. Through this extraordinary permanence of metamorphosis, Singh re-invigorates womanhood as a field of relational energy in which the personal and the planetary, the human and the cosmic, are dissolved through a reinvention of womanhood. It is a brilliant representation of posthumanist and ecofeminist concepts melting in Indian science fiction. This metamorphosis is a subversion of anthropocentric conceptions of consciousness and self and subversion of the patriarchal structures of her domestic life. Therefore, the story by Singh rewrites the connection between self, body, and universe and at the same time, serves as an ecological allegory and an act of feminist epistemic defiance.

The struggle of anthropocentrism against Cosmo-centrism, patriarchy to self-realization and rationalism against intuition is the main theme of the story by Singh. Although the transformation of Kamala marking the transition to the so-called holistic epistemology is symbolized by the husband of Kamala, Ramnath, the embodiment of the conventional male rationality, with its preoccupation with social decency and empirical reasoning, the former is associated with the traditional male order of things, the latter with the new one. The mechanistic view of Western modernity, which Vandana Shiva (1988) and Carolyn Merchant (1980) argued long ago forms the ideological basis of the oppression of women and the domination of nature, is the argument of ecofeminists. The awakening of Kamala explicitly contradicts that opinion: her planetary awareness can be seen as an advantage of what Shiva (1988) calls the ecology of the self, where the knowledge is not extractive but relational.

Being a planetary being, the bodily awareness of Kamala is a symbol of interconnectedness that eliminates the difference between spirit and matter, human and nonhuman, subject and environment. This relational ontology is comparable to the insights provided by the posthuman theory by Rosi Braidotti who believes that humans are an embodied and

embedded entity, entangled in non-human networks of forces (Braidotti, 2013). Although it is based on a very Indian cosmological system, the fictional universe created by Singh echoes this point. The concept of *Tat Tvam Asi*, or Thou art that, of the Chandogya Upanishad describes how Kamala comes to the realization that the self and the universe are constitutive of one another. Her revelation is not madness, but her ontological revelation to a planetary conscience, which lies out of the reach of Western rationalism.

Eco feminist criticism makes the multi-layered critique of patriarchy, as present in the story, more apparent. The home life of Kamala which is a miniature of the patriarchal world limits the bodies and emotions of women by social rules. The process of what Susan Bordo (1993) is describing as the disciplining of the female body by institutional power is reflected in the efforts of her husband to rationalize her situation with the help of science or medicine. Singhal weakens this authority by allowing the consciousness of Kamala to go beyond any reasonable distance. The home becomes a cosmic stage through making women embodied as the source of power and knowledge, lost since men took it away through body and brain. To protest the systems of dominance, it is crucial to reclaim the feminine and the natural as mutually dependent components of life, which is highlighted by ecofeminist Val Plumwood (1993), and Kamala does so through the awareness of the planet.

The metamorphosis of Kamala can also be defined as an ecocritical/ posthumanist allegorical interpretation of Gaian consciousness. Her understanding of being a host to other forms of life is in line with Gaia hypothesis (1979) by James Lovelock, who believes that the earth is a living organism that can self-regulate itself. As her heart beats out the rhythm of the planets, the body of Kamala literally becomes such an organism. By arguing that the Earth is an intelligent part of the body of the woman, Singh erases the distinction between the microcosm and the macrocosm. Through this, the stories give an ecologically unifying narrative that traverses across disciplinary and cultural borders. Kamala being a planetary is a literal understanding of what Karen Barad (2007) in her philosophy claims matter to be not passive but an active participant in the becoming of the world.

The story is a feminist rewriting of nature that Donna Haraway (1991) explains. By denying the experience of Kamala as madness or delusion, Singh reclaims mythic imagination as one of the valid ways of knowing. Here the idea of situated knowledges (1991) by Haraway is articulated; the knowledge of Kamala is gained through her connection with body, through a lived experience of being a part of the world, not through abstract thought. In an essay, *Science, Fiction, and the Path to the Real* (2016), Vandana Singh asserts that science and story have in common their basis on wonder and curiosity. This is an epistemic revolution against patriarchal knowledge hierarchies. Singh practices a comprehensive epistemology whereby affect and reason exist in a blend through the fusion of scientific allusions and the mythical language. The story can be viewed as a mildly critical analysis of modern alienation. This sense of alienation in the modern city life is presented through the early detachment of Kamala into the world and her move into the strange interiority. Rather than abandoning her, however, her alienation becomes her launching point of reconnection--a journey deep within herself which results in ecological belonging. Singh thereby turns the alienation course towards isolation into cosmic assimilation. Her portrayal of the self-discovery of Kamala confirms what ecofeminist theologian Rosemary Ruether (1993) calls the spiritual aspect of ecological consciousness, when personal development can be viewed as a concern of planet healing.

Singh develops a decolonial, feminist, and ecological posthuman theme in *Kamala* at once. The narrative introduces an organic, affective posthumanism that is founded on the ideas of South Asian cosmology and challenges Western technocentric posthumanism that is premised on cybernetics and artificial intelligence. *Kamala* provides a moral substitute to the techno-capitalist futures: a post-human identity based on care, reciprocity, and ecological empathy instead of transcendence through machinery. Her planetary consciousness redefines power as a participatory type, not as a way of control, but as coexisting. An affirmative posthuman ethics, as Braidotti (2013) claims, reinvestigates the currency in the life itself; the story of Singh dramatizes this idea with the help of the small miracle of the awakening of *Kamala*.

In conclusion, *The Woman Who Thought She Was a Planet* is a novel form of posthumanism-ecofeminist Indian science fiction. Through the metamorphosis of *Kamala*, Singh is challenging anthropocentric conceit and mechanistic science as well as patriarchal reason. The story propagates a form of knowing that is rooted on embodied knowing, ecological interdependence, and empathy. It envisions a world where the boundary between self and the planet disappears and suggests that it is moral re-enchantment of our association with the living planet, as opposed to technological transcendence, which is the path to human survival. In this way, it transforms the Indian housewife into the planetary consciousness presented by Singh, a prototype of posthuman awakening and ecofeminist persistence.

CONCLUSION

Discovering New Frontiers: Topical Themes in Contemporary Indian Science Fiction Literature explores the diversity and richness of the Indian science fiction literature. According to this review, the genre can tackle the problems of society, technological progress, and existential concerns through the discussion of several thematic motifs. The science fiction literature of India offers a curious concept upon which the complexity of the human condition can be examined and other futures imagined. Themes include AI, identity, social inequality, environmentalism, futuristic worlds and fantastic storytelling. Another aspect is the need to value the unique visions and cultural contribution of Indian science fiction writers that is highlighted in this review. The novels of Samit Basu, Vandana Singh, S.B. Divya and others reveal the abundance of Indian civilization and its encounter with the tradition, development and new technology. The Indian science fiction is brilliant in imagination and intelligence. Discovery is the promise that drives the creation of *Discovering New Frontiers*, which desires to glorify Indian imagination. In a way, Indian science fiction will make people interested in critically the advent of a dystopian society where the opportunities and challenges facing humankind are wonderfully approached. This is an indication of the importance of Indian science fiction in the acknowledgement of the genre development in parallelism with the literary innovations in science and technology. The combination of science fiction and thriller successfully appeals to the audience whose curiosity is in the dystopian areas. The selected books to carry out the analysis led to the emergence of a thought process during the current literature where artificial intelligence and new technologies are appealing, therefore, inspiring a new generation.

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