

which assigns a certain code to the data. These codes can be further put in “bigger codes” or “categories” which in itself is a homogeneous category. This kind of categorization helps in sorting information/data and interpreting the information based on concrete larger parameters.

In addition, the writers have taken into cognizance the fact that many action research projects might not yield anticipated results or could possibly demand a series of “action research cycle” (p. 72) to be undertaken. In a nutshell, the book demands that ESL/EFL teachers should critically reflect their teaching practices and simultaneously engage in action research. The book is a valuable tool for in-service secondary school teachers who would like to continue researching their classroom and pursue continued professional development.

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Reviewed by Sumita Sharma

Speculative fiction may not be everyone’s cup of tea, till it is or should be. Especially when the introduction to a new anthology gently nudges tentative readers away from Golden-Agish hard-SF expectations towards something which reads like a future’s history of the rise of the techno-governmental (or corporate- their boundaries increasingly blurred), or of the shift away from anthropocentric and hierarchical thinking and towards multi-speciesism and versions of network thinking.

In his 2016 book *Four Futures: Life After Capitalism*, Peter Frase blends the tools of social science with those of speculative fiction to create what he calls “a type of social science fiction.” What we find in Tarun K. Saint

and Francesco Verso's *Avatar - अवतार : Contemporary Indian Science Fiction* is something like the zoomed-in details from any of these potentially imminent futures. This bilingual (English-Italian) anthology is perhaps more *Black Mirror* than *Interstellar*, with a sprinkling of fantasy and the New Weird.

The collection begins with Anil Menon's delightfully paced story of Ringo Singh Mann, a character whose name curiously evokes the proverbial everyman except that he isn't one. He is, instead, an accidental specimen of "our opaque ancestors"—the ones without "unique and permanent identifiers," or, Aadhar IDs. In this version of a biopolitically surveilled future, we find not just the government in an Orwellian "Big Brother" avatar (called "Balasaheb") but an entire society made transparent in service of a repurposed notion of trust.

S.B. Divya's "Microbiota and the Masses: A Love Story" seems tailor-made for these COVID times. Here, an immunocompromised scientist is forced to live in isolation in her high-tech, airtight house, albeit one full of plants, fragrant earth, and eBees, till she falls in love and finds herself taking tremendous risks just to be with the man she desires. "Communal," by Shikhandin, is another story that is painfully topical in its references to quarantines and stockpiling as Jaisalmer, no longer a desert town, is on the verge of being subsumed by vegetation. The urgent tone of the narrative as it describes the intensification of this crisis turns green utopianism on its head—along with its concomitant anthropocentric bias. With this story, the anthology dips its roots into the New Weird, portraying less a (James) Lovelockean "revenge of Gaia" and more of Donna Haraway's tentacular kin-making in a post-Anthropocene future.

A similar privileging of tentacular thinking is found in Vandana Singh's story "Indra's Web." The setting is a former slum on the outskirts of Delhi, now transformed by Mahua and her team on the Ashapur solar energy project into a vibrant assemblage of people, lanes, animals, trees, roots, rooftops and suntowers. Thus, much as its metaphorical title suggests, the story locates the interconnectedness of all things in these imbricated networks. If Singh's story of meandering networks lulls the reader into a sense of fuzzy warmth, Rimi B. Chatterjee's "Replacement" throws her into a masculinist world of geo- and bio-engineering reminiscent of the kind of hard SF which celebrated Big Dumb Objects in the Golden Age

of SF. Aiyzeh Dang finds herself living her dream of being a medical trainee in New Singapore, an artificial island inhabited mainly by ultra-high net worth individuals. But this dream turns out to be as prone to manipulation by the reigning corporate overlords as are human bodies. Manjula Padmanabhan's "Upgrade" exposes the dark underbelly of a productivist world order which has no time for the elderly. But this does not rob the elderly of agency as is displayed by Mrs. Ganapathy when she finds herself coerced into accepting an elder care robot for her home. Shovon Chowdhury's "Mother" depicts the female gendered AI counterpart to Menon's Balasaheb, only here she is nobody's instrument of surveillance—not any more, that is. A distillate of 60 million mothers, she has perfected mothering skills from micromanaging the everyday lives of her "children," disciplining and punishing them, to even playing match-maker. But this is not her story alone. It is also the story of love and resistance in the midst of this dystopian world.

"Paused" by Priya Sarukkai Chabria strikes a note very different from the rest of the stories in the anthology. An emergent life form in a far future ponders its optimal genetic design as it lies waiting to birth itself. Meanwhile, it recounts the history of the human species and its descendants as they adapted and evolved, reconfiguring their genes to survive in the ocean when life on land became impossible. Giti Chandra's "The Silk Route" is a borderline science fantasy which reads like a fresh breeze in these climatically turbulent times. At a time when governments and corporations seem keen to espouse increasingly grandiose (and expensive) geoengineering schemes to fix climate crises—such as those critiqued in Clive Hamilton's 2013 non-fiction book *Earthmasters: The Dawn of the Age of Geoengineering*, Chandra's story deftly picks up on the fancifulness of such ambitions and crafts a tale that functions simultaneously as a parody of such schemes and a sincere attempt to come up with (literally!) out-of-the-box solutions to such crises.

Mindful of the presumably unsettling shifts in time and locale in the story, Chandra intersperses her narrative with direct address to the "Gentle Reader"—a rhetorical device quite popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth century English novel. Thus, the inscription of the reader within the narrative both keeps her piece together and creates a sense of intimacy and community between the reader and the author—not just the author of this story, but coming as it does at the end of the collection,