

# Feeling the Future: Text World Theory, Emotions and Reader Response in Indian Science Fiction Short Stories

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## Abstract

Indian science fiction is a complex literary domain that attracts and puzzles readers, in particular in light of its hybrid origins, at the interface between Indian and western cultures. In this article, I focus on the challenging nature of some Indian science fiction short stories to investigate the textual mechanics that produce involvement and reaction in readers. For this purpose, I adopt and adapt an interdisciplinary approach drawing on the theoretical framework of postcolonial studies and cognitive stylistics, and I address three overlapping aspects, namely the multi-layered presence of text-worlds in Indian SF, the emotional effect of the language and the response from readers. I examine “Upgrade” by Manjula Padmanabhan and “Mother” by Shovon Chowdhury, both from the volume *Avatar. Indian Science Fiction* (2019). However, since Indian science fiction is a narrow and porous arena, I also consider the stories contained in *Cyberabad Days* (2009) by Ian McDonald, a British author, who contributes to, and endorses, the emerging canon of Indian SF.