

Interrogating the Past and Speculating the Posthuman Future in *Generation 14*

Manali Karmakar

Postcolonial science fiction is a complex genre of literature that appropriates the apparatus of Western science fiction for the purpose of interrogating the issues relevant to postcolonial societies. This discursively complex genre enables us to examine the concept of culture from the margins and to develop critical strategies of interrogation and deconstruction. This paper will focus on the Indian writer Priya Sarukkai Chabria's *Generation 14* (2008) in order to throw light on how the writer has appropriated as well as deliberately misappropriated the Western science fiction model for the purpose of introducing Indian world views into it, using a strategy of subversion that seems to correspond to Homi Bhabha's notion of performative mimicry.¹ Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) argues that mimicry is an effective strategy for countering colonial power and knowledge, in the process of appropriating the dominant culture of the colonizers, mimicry becomes a mode of resistance for the colonized. "The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence," it does not represent the dominant culture rather it repeats the cultural forms thereby producing a notion of slippage, excess and difference (122). The concept of mimicry is aptly captured in Chabria's *Generation 14*. The novel focuses on a dystopian future and interrogates the notion of history in a postcolonial context. In fact an intertextual relationship can be drawn between the plot structure and content of the novel and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) as both novels investigate the relationship between history and the ruling class but what makes *Generation 14* unique, is its effort to recover the subaltern voices in the unacknowledged histories of India. The paper will examine the identity crisis of the central character Clone 14/54/G who remembers her original's past life that made it possible for her to revisit different temporalities of Indian history, thereby raising a fundamental existential question: What does it mean to be a fully feeling human being?

A hybrid genre in form and content, postcolonial science fiction captures the tension related to science, technology and modernity that emerge as the epiphenomena of Eurocentric imperialist ideologies. It offers an alternative understanding that provides

scope to decolonize the inherited imperial epistemic order of scientific knowledge. Nalo Hopkinson in her anthology *Whispers from the Cotton Tree Root: Caribbean Fabulist Fiction* (2000) states that science fiction and fantasy written by postcolonial writers offer an inclusive understanding of the world because their works are the product of intertwining of embodied and inexplicable orders with scientific and mundane events of our life. In the process of adopting and appropriating the genre, writers like Vandana Singh, Anil Menon, Rimi B. Chatterjee and Priya Sarukkai Chabria have drawn a great deal from indigenous folk literature, local mythology and oral history in order to articulate the socio-political and cultural changes that the postcolonial nation and its marginalia historically went through during the colonial and postcolonial period. Postcolonial science fiction writers' approach to science fiction deviates from the prescriptive definition of science fiction that was proposed by Darko Suvin in his article *On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre* (1972). In his article Suvin defines science fiction as a literary genre of cognitive estrangement, he extends his argument by stating that although alien world is to an extent different from the empirical world, it has to be governed by strict rationality and scientific laws that correspond to the empirical environment. The term 'estrangement' correlates to the artistic technique Viktor Shklovsky termed *ostranenie* in "Art as Technique" (1916); such estrangement allows the representation of a familiar object in a strange and unfamiliar mode. This creates a sense of defamiliarization or detachment in the readers. Suvin opines that science fiction is a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient condition is the "presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition" (375).

Postcolonial science fiction writers like Jessica Langer's *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (2011) and Ericka Hoagland and Reema Sarwal's *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World* (2011) have used the term 'postcolonial science fiction' in order to categorize science fiction written outside US and European countries that speculates upon the continuing effects of colonial socio-political and economic culture in the era of neo-imperial/globalization in the non-European nations. It accommodates diverse expressions of peoples' lived experience of race, culture, class, sexuality, social structure and genre. Postcolonial science fiction attempts to revise the past and decolonize the future. Langer discusses the potentiality of postcolonial science fiction to provide a deconstructive reading of science fiction that can offer a radical reversal of colonial gaze. She writes:

Postcolonial science fiction utilizes the same generic convention in a radically different way: to explore the ways in which Western scientific discourse, both in terms of technology and in terms of culture (both real cultural effects and effects on cultural production), has interacted with colonialism, and the cultural production of colonized peoples. It also foregrounds the concept that indigenous and other colonized systems of knowledge are not only valid but are, at times, more scientifically valid than is Western scientific thought. (8)

Langer's definition of postcolonial science fiction echoes Edward Said's idea of 'cultural resistance' expressed in his book *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).² In that work, Said states that a cultural artefact like the novel is the product of the bourgeois ideology and is efficiently used by the authors to propagate and perpetuate dominant ideologies of imperialism, it proselytizes the ideas of explorers and novelists about strange regions of the world but the same cultural artefact is used by the colonized people to assert their identity and the existence of their own history. Said's discussion of the novel as a cultural artefact can be further explained by drawing on John Rieder's study of science fiction as a product of colonial history. Rieder's *Colonialism and Emergence of Science Fiction* (2010) focuses on the utopian and satirical representations of the encounter between European and non-Europeans depicted in novels like Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1792) to foreground the similarities that are identified between science fiction and the colonial mission. Indian science fiction writers like Chabria on the contrary exploit the plot structure of Western science fiction to weave it with contemporary issues that are crucial to postcolonial nations like India.

Drawing on Gyan Prakash's³ socio-cultural study of colonial science, it can be argued that the genre just like medical practice in India is inevitably "contaminated by the object in which it inhered and the mode of its staging" (34), postcolonial science fiction mimics the western science fiction model. Hence, the genre emerges as an 'uncanny double'⁴ not a copy of the European original, it is a hybrid product that "reverses the effects of colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' orders of knowledge enter the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority-its rule of recognition" (162). Bhabha's reference to English book as a 'metaphoric writing of the West' is appropriate to understand the significance of the writing of postcolonial science fiction in postcolonial nations (149). Bhabha says:

The immediate vision of the book figures those ideological correlatives of the Western sign-empiricism, idealism, mimeticism, monoculturalism (to use Edward Said's term) that sustain a tradition of English cultural authority. They create a revisionary narrative that sustains the discipline of Commonwealth history and its epigone, Commonwealth literature. The conflictual moment of colonialist intervention is turned into that constitutive discourse of exemplum and imitation that Friedrich Nietzsche describes as the monumental history beloved of 'gifted egoists and visionary scoundrels'. For despite the accident of discovery, the repetition of the emergence of the book represents important moments in the historical transformation and discursive transfiguration of the colonial text and context. (150)

The process of hybridization is reflected in both the form and content of postcolonial science fiction which displaces and renegotiates the Western science fiction model. It attempts to unpack an alternative epistemic structure that is reflective of the entanglements that characterize imperial and post-imperial relationship of power,

production and knowledge. Drawing on Rieder, postcolonial science fiction can be defined as an “epistemological riddle”, a literature of imagination that is grounded in the logic of science, an ethical enterprise packaged as entertainment and forward looking project that is frequently rooted in the anxieties about the present (63). The negotiation between past, present and the possible future underline the complexities characterizing science fiction and postcolonial literature.

The notion of postcolonial science fiction appropriating as well as problematizing the Western science fiction model is explored in Chabria’s *Generation 14*. The novel portrays an estranged world in order to sensitize the reader to the possible consequences of a posthuman future and the present cultural amnesia that is the result of British imperialism and globalization. Chabria adopts the plot structure of Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and appropriates it in order to offer an alternative understanding of history. The depiction of a technocratic era in *Generation 14* enables a revision of our notion of the human by refusing to offer any presupposed privilege to the ontology of pure or organic humanness. In the above brief discussion of postcolonial science fiction it is stated that the genre is an entanglement of empirical knowledge and aporia of rationality and uncertainty. *Generation 14* offers an example of the merging of facts and fiction. The Clone 14/54/G because of an inexplicable reason embodies her original’s past life that problematizes our understanding of ‘human’ and the cyborg, as the clone says:

I am a fourteenth generation Clone and something has gone wrong with me. Not that my DNA is altered, not that I am a mutant, Not that any function need be eliminated. It’s nothing obvious. It’s terminal, and secret.
(11)

Retrieving the Unheard Voices from the Past

Drawing on Dipesh Chakrabarty’s argument in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000)⁵ it is argued that Chabria’s novel is a critique of the European historiography that is also followed by the Indian historian for writing the history of the nation. History as a monolithic version of the ruling body that is foregrounded in *Generation 14* can be further discussed by drawing analogy with Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). Orwell’s novel is a critique of a totalitarian regime where citizens are subjugated to a panoptic order of surveillance, each and every aspect of individuals’ life like family, friends, sex, emotions and the cultural artefacts are strictly controlled. The novel offers a dystopian picture of a futuristic nation where technology acts as an oppressive force to regulate the mind and body of upper and middle class people. Orwell adopts a third person narrative style in order to describe how the protagonist of the novel, Winston Smith’s life is controlled by the machines like telescreen, speakwrite, memory hole, and helicopter that encircle him and have disturbed his notion of time, memory and history.

In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle and darted away again with a curving light, it was the police patrol snooping into people's window. The patrols did not matter, however only the thought police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made above the level of very low whisper would be picked up by it, moreover so long remained within the field of vision which the metal plague commanded he could be seen as well as heard. (2)

Winston works in the Ministry of Truth at the Records Department where his job is to rewrite the history of Oceania that matches the ideology of the state. In the midst of this oppressive environment Winston expressed his thoughts about the erased past of pre-Revolutionary Oceania in a diary with an awareness that if detected by the agents of the state "he will be punished by death, or at least by twenty five years in a forced labour camp (4)".

By foregrounding the work of Winston in the record department, Orwell raises a few fundamental questions like: What is past and how do we come to know it? What is history and what is the significance of personal memory? *Nineteen Eighty-Four* depicts a war-torn community where the totalitarian government created a homogenous community with individuals who are "flat mimesis⁶ of the state ideologies that undermines any form of plurality. Theo Finigan's article "'Into the Memory Hole': Totalitarianism and *Mal d'Archive* in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *The Handmaid's Tale*" (2011) drawing on Hannah Arendt's argument of totalitarianism discusses the ways in which totalitarian regimes ensure the continued domination of their subjects by the manipulation of their relation to time. The propaganda characteristic of such regime consists in "monstrous forgeries in historiography" (332). The historiographer provides a monolithic form to the past by erasing any form of heterogeneity that does not comply with state ideology. Totalitarian domination in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is clearly premised on the control of the experience of temporality. Chabria's depiction of the Global Community and the denial of memory to clones in *Generation 14* correspond to Orwell's novel. *Generation 14*'s Global Community is a renewed version of the totalitarian regime portrayed in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a parallel can be drawn between Winston Smith and Clone 14/54/G, who like Smith maintains a diary that she hides from the agents of the Global Community. The clone says:

It's not pleasant to have so much of 'memory' and no one to share with. I don't dare. Which is why I've decided to keep a diary hidden as a cellchip in my system. So far undetected; so far, so good. (11)

The controlled regime dramatized in Chabria's novel throws light on the enmeshing of biopolitics and biomedicine which impose a pre-ordained socio-political model upon the

cloned community that is sustained by strict surveillance. The Global Community ensures total domination by enforcing a version of reality upon its subjects and turning them into, as Michael Mack in his *How Literature Changes the Way we Think* (2012) opines, the “flat mimesis” of the ruling system (28).

Hannah Arendt in her book *Origin of Totalitarianism* (1951) argues that “total domination strives to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual...each and every person can be reduced to a never-changing identity of reaction, so that each of these bundles of reaction can be exchanged at random for any other” (565). The ruling system of the Global Community echoes Foucault’s notion of biopolitics that depends on the internalization of the norms by the people⁷ that turns them as Mack defines “copies that confirm and conform to the representation of the world which governs the mindset of the torturer” (28). The Global Community undermines any form of plurality and the clones and zombies that are depicted in the novel symbolize the homogenous identity that is enforced on them which facilitates easy categorization by their numerical code. The global community replicates the tension that is experienced by people with the dawn of economic and technological globalization. Writers like Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr. in “What Do We Mean When We Say ‘Global Science Fiction?’ Reflection on a New Nexus” (2012) have articulated the anxiety of marginalized groups in the global village. Csicsery-Ronay states:

Economic and technological globalization has undermined many of the material conditions for most claims of communal sovereignty. The ideals of traditional group autonomy have been weakened by transnational movements and missions. “Global culture,” however, remains a shaky and inchoate idea. We know one side of it very well: the attraction of all previous ethnic and national culture into the economic web of hypermodern capitalism, and the substitution of diverse local chronotopes with a single value-paradigm throughout the world: speculative capital. (478)

Homi Bhabha’s discussion of global cosmopolitanism foregrounds how the notion of globalization which apparently celebrates the idea of plural culture and giving space to people located at the periphery in reality is ruled by the notion of utility, homogeneity and productivity. It excludes the sections of people who do not comply with the prescribed paradigm.

An economic world-order based on such practices of ‘conditionality’ facilitates peremptory postures of political power that conduct global politics by setting ‘conditions’ to the rest of the world-‘you are with us or against us’-that are in danger of being unilateral and may not comply with International law or seek consensus amongst representative bodies of the International community. (xvi)

Bhabha appeals for the reconfiguration of globalization that ensures freedom and equality to the marginalized people but Chabria's *Generation 14* offers a bleak prospect about acknowledging plurality in the growing globalized world. The progenitor of the Clone 14/54/G, Aa-Aa states that globalization is the reincarnation of imperialism which sustains itself by gradually allowing people to forget "what made them be. All shreds of dissent were torn, thrown into winds of the past, and jettisoned forever beyond the horizon. We become better and better at suppressing our histories and ourselves" (133). Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* throws light on the cultural amnesic stage of the people of Oceania because of the forced manipulation of time, memory and history by the state agents in order to ensure the continuation of the totalitarian regime. Orwell taking into consideration the totalitarian regime says that "all history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and re-inscribed exactly as often as was necessary. In no case would it have been possible, once the deed was done, to prove that any falsification had taken place" (42-43).

Chabria's *Generation 14* reflects on the issue of falsification of history but she speculates on the nature of history writing in relation to the impact of colonization and the effects of globalization in postcolonial India. Bhagabat Nath's *Cultural Amnesia in Amit Chaudhuri's A New World* (2007, found in Khan and Das) argues that cultural amnesia is an inevitable consequence of colonialism as cultures of colonies are always in threat of being wiped out. In *Wretched of the Earth* (1968), Frantz Fanon discusses the deterioration of historical consciousness of the colonized. He states that:

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. This work of devaluing precolonial history takes a dialectical significance today. (found in Ashcroft et al 120)

Dennis Walder's *Postcolonial Nostalgias: Writing, Representation, and Memory* (2011) discusses the causal relationship of European colonialism, migration and displacement and its impact on the personal memory and history of the colonized. Walder focuses on the issue of multiple pasts that construct our identity. He states that, although our present is marked by the end of colonialism, it is influenced by globalization which is a reincarnation of imperialism. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2000) defines the present time as the regime of globalization that is enveloped with Eurocentric ideologies which efface local and regional histories and memories. Retracing the historical past has become inevitable in the postcolonial era but the retrieval of the past is associated with the revising of the historical approach that follows a Eurocentric framework.

Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* urges for a departure from the accepted ontologies of European Historicism and to acknowledge the "plural normative horizons" (20-21) that, according to Eric Smith in *Globalization, Utopia and Postcolonial*

Science Fiction (2012) “emerge from globally diverse ways of being in the world” (98). The notion of ‘heterotemporality’ discussed by Chakrabarty in order to reflect on the people from the margins that constitute an integral part of the nation’s past is crucial for understanding of the pasts that are foregrounded in *Generation 14*. The notion of heterotemporality acknowledges the range of alternative worlds that are not captured by the state archive because of its objectifying procedure of history writing. Chakrabarty argues that the analytical procedure of the secular and rational scholars working on ‘Indian History’ is regulated by the binary of rationalism and irrationalism. Their observation of the life and political activities of subalterns like peasants are always considered as replete with practices that are considered superstitious. The analytical approach that is influenced by European ideologies have created a separation between the subject and the observer, in contrast to this approach Chakrabarty argues that in order to capture the complexities of postcolonial culture and political modernity it is necessary to adopt a pluralistic perspective that acknowledges the globally diverse ways of being in the world. By reclaiming different temporalities of the nation *Generation 14* foregrounds the voices from the margins that offer alternative understanding of the pasts. When the clone 14/54/G is tortured by the agents of the Global Community to reveal the secret stories that her progenitor is researching, the clone interrogates the agents by asking:

Which bloody Kurukshetra do you wish
To speak of? Come on tell me...
All right. Do you mean the tribals’ Kurukshetra?
Or the blind beggar’s? But it is indecent to speak
Of the unfortunate. We are speaking of war,
Weren’t we? Of stakes. Blood. Death. (106)

India (*Bharatavarsha*)⁸ has witnessed many furious battles, our archives have spoken gloriously about the kings, princes and emperors but the commoners who are ravaged by wars have never been acknowledged in the histories of the nation. Chabria appropriates the narrative style of fables like Panchatantra⁹ to draw attention to the plurality of voices that are hidden in Indian history, recalled pasts are narrated from the perspective of a wolf, a parrot, a fish, a palace guard, a monk and a disconsolate mother in order to throw light on the lives at the periphery. The wolf Trichaisma narrated the story of his master Vikrama a charioteer who later became the chief of a tribal community. He with his warriors crossed the rivers of Sapta-Sindhu and broke the dams of the Dasyu settlers, looted the beautiful and flourishing town Narmini and set the town on fire. The past narrated by Trichaisma reminds us of 1500 BCE when the Indus valley was invaded by ‘Aryan-speakers’ who came from Central Asia and gradually settled down on the banks of the Gangetic valley.

The madwoman of Dauli retells the story of the battle of Kalinga; her young son died in the battlefield but no one knows about it because his dead body was buried

under another boy's body, hence his death remained unacknowledged, unarticulated and unreported. The woman says:

In penitence grave and gracious, you have proclaimed in undying stone that one hundred thousand died in the Battle of Kalinga. But who was our son? The one hundred-thousandth and one. The one uncounth. His dreams were small, Lord. He would have remained small throughout his life. He was a boy given to small joys. (206)

The madwoman interrogates Ashoka's overarching ideology of non-violence by stating that it is not possible to preach 'dharma' when one's past is stained in blood. "The origin of good action should lie elsewhere" (208). *Generation 14* weaves a network of Indian history that encompasses the Aryan invasion of the Indus valley, the influence of Buddhism in India, the spread of the Hindu religion in Benaras, 'City of Light', and the rise of the different strands of faith like the bhakti tradition that acknowledges alternate modes of worship. It also focuses on the 17th-century royals and their atrocities, the inception and fall of the Mughal Empire, the colonization of the people, and the freedom movement under the leadership of Gandhi. The nation evolves as a mosaic of religious beliefs and cultural practices with the layers of the past that construct it. The spectrum of temporalities that are depicted in the novel are narrated from the margins, and characters from the marginalia like the madwoman of Dauli, the palace guard, the little fish named Vidya-Shakti, and the parrot of Khan Sahib's third Begum challenge, subvert the monolithic version of history that is officially acknowledged by the nation.

In the hours before his execution, the palace guard, for instance, narrates the atrocities of the Kings of the Vijayanagar Empire who in the name of ritual slaughter hundreds of animals; in their regime innocents are convicted of theft and are executed under the veil of justice. The palace guard says that the country is known for its executioner, he offers a vivid picture of the slaughtering days of the Mahanavami Festival. The guard says:

One hundred and fifty sheep, twenty-four buffaloes. This goes on for all the eight days. On the ninth and final day, the numbers are doubled. While the King of Kings watches the axe come down, reclining on his throne strewn with rubies and seed pearls...Blood drops leap like rubies in the air, the sweat flies off the arms of butchers like seed pearls, each time. There's never a false stroke. (167)

The palace guard portrays an alternative picture of the glorious Vijayanagara empire that is smeared with blood stains of innocent subjects and harmless animals. The multiple phases of Indian history that are depicted in the novel and are narrated from the periphery capture the notion of minority histories discussed by Chakrabarty in his essay "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts" (1998). Chakrabarty opines that from the 1960s more and more voices from subaltern social groups like former slaves, working

classes, convicts and women that were excluded from the nation's histories are acknowledged. Chabria's portrayal of multiple pasts that are voiced by minor characters correlate to Chakrabarty's discussion of histories from below that received critical attention in the 1970s.

Interrogating Biological Essentialism as the Ontology of Humanness

So far the focus has been placed on the distortion of the pasts of the colonized nation through the influence of dominant cultures, but with the advent of globalization it is necessary to speculate that the future is being structured and restructured by technology. The novel is a critique of globalization and the idea of a posthuman world which celebrates scientific revolution like biotechnology that promises to efface the hierarchical relationship between man, animal and machine. Mack discusses the present time as an "aged age", the different alternatives to a better and flourishing future of humanity have given birth to a sense of futility, cynicism, anger and depression (13). *Generation 14*, set in the 24th century, brings to life the existing tension that is roused by the growing discrepancies between the biomedical and techno-scientific revolution of increased longevity and the dreary prospects of our lives. It depicts a dehumanized world where, as Salman Rushdie has commented in his novel *Fury* (2001), the Global Community depicts the "final victory of the numerate over the literate". All the human and nonhuman entities have turned into digitized information that are endlessly encoded, transformed, transmitted and in the process are decoded by advanced machines (8). The Clone 14/54/G stands as an example of technocratic perfection where an entity is considered as a "little parcel of digitized information". The futuristic world of the novel shows how the pre-ordained socio-political model restores a strict binary between the humans and nonhumans (8).

The posthuman world of the Global Community ironically re-establishes the hierarchical relationship between human and other animate and inanimate objects. The diary maintained by the progenitor of the Clone 14/54/G offers a vivid description of the bleak landscape that is controlled by the Global Community.

The second Great War changed the world forever, spinning it into a future that we named Trans-Species Epoch. The unofficial name for the conflict is 'The War against the Earth'; the official one, 'The First Age of the Global Community'. I learnt of multitudes who had died beating, as it were, on the security domes of our new cities, for the earth could no longer support such a large stock of human and other life-forms. The powerful formed the Global Community. The rest—humans, animals, and vegetal—perished. (132)

The school scene where the Clone 14/54/G goes to see her progenitor's children listens to the school song that sensitizes her to the politics of the Global Community restoring the hierarchy between man, machine and animal. The clone hears the students singing:

We are Originals, we're the Best.
We're kind, we rule at other's behest.
Firehearts are liars we suppress...
Strong zombies we keep in check...
"Children, repeat the lesson you have learnt today," she said.
"Yes, Teacher," they called in unison.
"The only truth is..."
"What the Global Community says." The children shouted
"Everything else..."
"Must die, die, die!" (236)

Chabria's *Generation 14* foregrounds the governing principles of the Global Community which correspond to our contemporary technocratic global society that is structured by the humanist ideologies of human perfectibility, rationality and agency inherited from Renaissance Humanism and Enlightenment.

The novel problematizes this notion of the human embedded in the Humanist epistemological framework through the character of Clone 14/54/G who fulfils all the criteria of humanness. Donna Haraway in her essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1991) defines the 20th century as a mythic time, she says "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs" (150). Posthumanism interrogates biological ontology as a qualifying criterion for being a human, it is a philosophical movement that sensitizes us to the fact that we are standing on the threshold or as Bhabha says we are living "border lives"¹⁰ and are in constant negotiation between organic and technological non-humans that configure our ontology (1). Posthumanism problematizes the binary between nature and culture and decentres man from the privileged position of being the sole possessor of language and agency. *Generation 14* aptly brings to light the blurring of the binary between humans and non-humans. Although initially shown as a copy of the Global Community, Clone 14/54/G although deviates from prescribed norms when she resists being controlled by the agents of the Global Community. The clone has a memory and a sense of past that transforms her into the creative embodiment of her progenitor; she becomes a liminal being as she establishes a dialogic relationship between her original's past and her existence as a clone. Her liminal existence raises the fundamental question: What does it mean to be a human? Her blurring of the nature and culture binary makes it inevitable to revise the notion of the human that has dominated our understanding since the Enlightenment. The novel establishes a non-hierarchical relationship between humans, animals and artificially-engineered beings. In the last section, the writer Aa-Aa says, "whether dog or tree, fish or bird, woman, man and child, whatever beast we are-we are all the same" (254). Clone 14/54/G reiterates the words of her progenitor when she says, "The secret is that I am human. Each one of us is human; we still have the capacity to live as humans" (272).

Rosi Braidotti's *The Posthuman* (2013) throws light on the historical construction of the human, drawing on the anti-humanist criticism of 'human' as a political construct

that is allied with Eurocentric and andocentric ideologies like masculinity, racial supremacy, scientific rationality and universality Braidotti says that the scientific and technological innovation demands a qualitative shift in our understanding of the human. The globalized and technologically-mediated society disrupts “the centuries-old beliefs about human nature” (2). Judith Butler’s *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004) argues against tying humanity to any form of certainty and sovereignty, she says that “we make a mistake, therefore, if we take a single definition of the human, or a single model of rationality, to be the defining feature of the human and then to extrapolate from that established understanding of the human to all of its various cultural forms” (90). Butler opines that the notion of human is a cultural construct and for this reason instead of copying the established notion of human, our understanding should be subjected to reconfiguration based on social and cultural contexts which are always in a state of flux. Posthumanism reshapes humanistic practices by emphasizing heteronomy and multifaceted relationality. In the context of bio-genetic and digital trans-disciplinary discursive fronts a post-anthropocentric perspective helps us form a new theoretical model which converges organic and inorganic entities thereby decentring human from any privileged position in relation to meaning, information or cognition. Chabria’s novel throws light on the emotive ability as the qualifying criterion for being human. It is not only the physical attributes that qualify a being as human, in this dehumanized world it is the ability to empathize with other creatures in the universe that makes one human. In the concluding section of the novel, the Clone 14/54/G says:

What we are made of? Are we only what is seen, and known? What of the spaces of thought and emotion, and that something else that makes us human, that something else that makes us grieve with others? What is that which makes us feel thankful precisely because we are, in the end, not different, but governed by the same vast laws of life? (280)

Conclusion

Generation 14 serves as a yardstick to rethink about the forgotten past and to speculate the consequences of new scientific advances like biotechnology. In the present era postcolonial science fiction enables us to reflect on the politics of science, scientific knowledge, and control. It explores, extends and critiques the social as well as the philosophical implications of scientific creation and both their immediate as well as permanent impact on shared imagination. In so doing, it frequently emerges as a revision of the reductionist approach to scientific knowledge that aims to optimize utility and productivity which had been historically and ideologically informed by imperialist ideologies. Set in postcolonial India and appropriating the apparatus of the Western science fiction model, *Generation 14* interrogates the Eurocentric ideologies informing historiography and historical knowledge by revising the past and exposing the darker aspects of a transhumanist future. The notion of transhumanism is embedded

in the ideology of humanism. Cary Wolfe in *What is Posthumanism?* (2010) defines transhumanism as “an intensification of humanism”, posthumanism on the contrary supports the notion of “embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technological world” (xv). Emphasizing the coevolution of man, animal and technology within the complex socio-cultural and political structure of society, *Generation 14* promotes the notion of posthumanism by projecting the lacunas embedded in the ideology of a transhumanist world.

The nation’s multiple temporalities voiced from the margins validate the definition of postcolonial science fiction as a model that captures the diverse lived experiences of people from different segments of society as discussed in the beginning of this essay. Clone 14/54/G’s ability to revisit the multiple pasts studied by her progenitor and her gift of storytelling problematize the binary between man/machine and rationality/irrationality that are the fundamental principles of the Enlightenment. The clone’s hunt for identity leads her to the conclusion that humanness is an attribute which can be assigned to any animate and inanimate entity that has the emotive ability. In an oppressive environment, the clone realizes that it is the ability to feel pain and to delve deep into one’s inner self in order to understand the inherent connection with other entities both animate and inanimate that will enable us to rejuvenate “tenderness and human dignity” (281).

Manali Karmakar is a Ph.D Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (Assam) India. Her area of research interest encompasses Indian science fiction and dystopian literature. She completed her M.Phil at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad with a specialization in vocabulary development and material production.

Notes

¹ See Bhabha, especially chapter 4, for a detailed study of the notion of mimicry.

² On the issue of cultural artefact and colonialism, see Said xi-xiviii for an analysis of colonial resistance.

³ See Prakash’s chapter 2, for insight on science in colonial India.

⁴ For a better understanding of the notion of the uncanny, see Bhabha 145-174.

⁵ On the issue of historicism and voices from the margins, see Chakrabarty 287-255 on European historiography and its impact on the analytical framework of postcolonial nations.

⁶ See Mack’s chapter 1 on the entanglement of biotechnology and biopolitics.

⁷ See Foucault, especially his lecture delivered on 10th January 1979, on biopolitics.

⁸ See Chatterjee's chapter 5 on the politics of historiography and interrogation of the past of India (*Bharatavarsha*).

⁹ The Panchatantra is a compilation of interwoven series of tales in prose, poetry and animal fable, see Sharma xv-xxxiv on the oral storytelling tradition.

¹⁰ On the notion of border lives, see Bhabha 1-27.

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