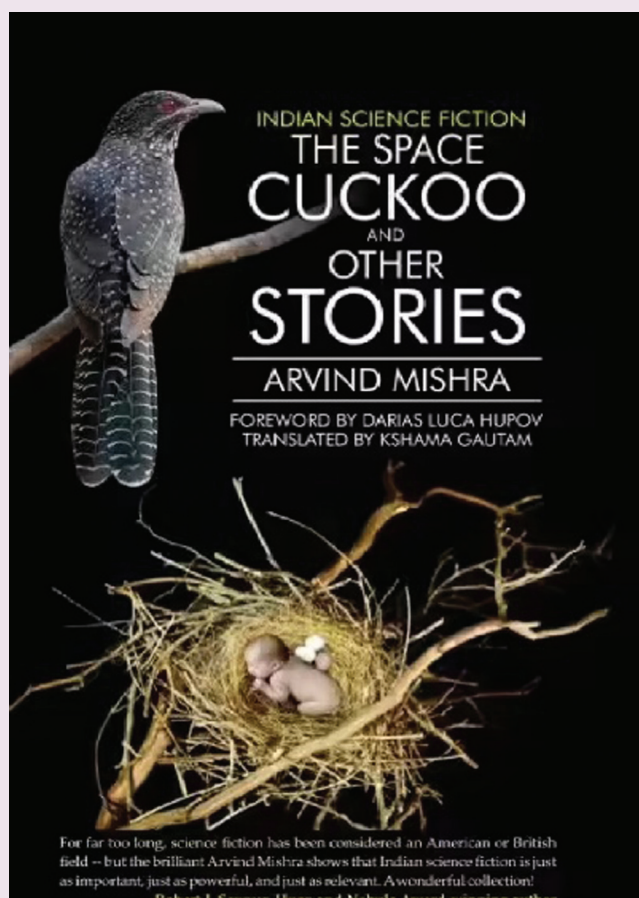


BOOK REVIEW

Science Fiction Imagining the Future

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INDIAN SCIENCE FICTION THE SPACE CUCKOO AND OTHER STORIES

POPULAR science fiction has been mostly written in the West or the European region. Science storytellers have imagined the world through different perspectives – often laced with horror or fantasy, etc. often such science fiction stories imagine a great future for humans. However, often it becomes hard to categorise a story as a science fiction or simply fiction.

There are also debates about which story can be considered as the first science fiction story. In English, some

Title: *Indian Science Fiction: The Space Cuckoo and Other Stories*

Author: Arvind Mishra

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experts believe that *Frankenstein* of Merry Shelly (Publishing Year 1818) should be considered as the first science fiction novel while a few experts think that *The Chemical Wedding* of Johann Valentin Andreae (Publishing Year 1616) is the first science fiction.

The writer of this book Arvind Mishra contends that the present collection of stories represents Indian Science Fiction. The collection *Indian Science Fiction: The Space Cuckoo and Other Stories* by Dr Arvind Mishra contains 15 science fiction stories. These stories cover various scientific and technological disciplines such as robots, artificial intelligence, biological transformations, life on other planets and other technical advancements.

The language of the text is simple and communicative. The style is captivating and readers would enjoy the peculiar sense of thriller at some places in the stories. The stories are written beautifully in literary style. Interestingly, many stories in the book were originally written almost 20 years back but the content and idea of the stories is still relevant. The stories depict concerns about Indian society and society in general.

The first story “The Space Cuckoo” is based on the idea of aliens from a planet where they had become incapable of producing the next generation babies and to nurture them due to lack of interest in childcare. So, they come to the earth and start using human babies to further their race. The author’s style of story-telling and presentation make this idea interesting.

While the story, “Robots Shall Rule” is about the idea of a flaw in the rule of robots, “The Last Wish” deals with the idea of cryogenic sleep, sleeping for several years and delaying the death. Through the story, the author imagines the future after around 100 years. The protagonist of the story is astonished with the advances in the world.

The story “The Last Scene” uses the idea of quantum teleportation to tell the readers about the complexities and after effects of the invention. This story is a thriller and ends with a shock to the readers. Similarly, the “Adopted Son” is based on memory transfer and poses a few important ethical questions relating memory transfer in humans. Another story “The Agreement” imagines the evolution of ethics in robots. Ethics in machines would be the advanced state of the evolution of machines.

The stories in the book are originally written in Hindi and translated into English by Kshama Gautam.