

No Shortcuts to Posthuman Utopia: Religion, Technology, and Society in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

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Abstract: While many scholars draw on Deleuzian vital materialism to make the case for the ethical being of posthuman existence, there is a need to address the implications of completely relinquishing human agency. The posthuman utopia seems within reach through the transformative potential of technology, but what happens when the spiritual human finds himself at the crossroads of embodiment, hybridity, and the implications of transcending human limitations? This merging of the technological and the spiritual raises questions about the nature of religious experience and the potential for alternative modes of transcendence in a posthuman context. This research paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the themes of religion and technology in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*, highlighting the nuanced relationship between these domains. I contend in my paper that Ghosh's fiction provides an epistemological and ontological framework that differs from Western positivist approaches to scientific investigation, while avoiding simplistic distinctions. Ghosh's work dives into the cyborg myth, presenting a picture of the future that questions traditional concepts of potential and frees the myth from the limits of a society based on oppressive information systems.

Keywords: Posthuman, spirituality, religion, artificial intelligence, Haraway, cyborg

Amitav Ghosh, in his novel, *The Calcutta Chromosome: A Novel of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery* (1995), explores the latent perils inherent in contemporary scientific advancements. Through his narrative, Ghosh sheds light on the persistent hazards that permeate a futuristic society characterised by emerging technologies and postcolonial cybernetic conflict. The book amplifies apprehensions over the potential of modern technology to incorporate within its consequential framework the myriad dystopian atrocities. The novel is a work of science fiction (SF) that challenges the traditional concepts of human agency and subjectivity through ideas of artificial intelligence, religion, posthumanism, genetics, and bio-information. SF, as a genre, has a troubled relationship with colonial and postcolonial studies. It is often critiqued for propagating imperialistic designs and discourses behind the veneer of westernised rationalism. The responsibility to discover the extent of the imperialistic import in the works of science fiction then lies with the readers. *The Calcutta Chromosome*, a science-fiction work, is often read along the lines of deconstructing colonial designs. According to Nudrat Kamal, the novel “deftly utilises and then subverts science fiction motifs, conventions, and tropes to deconstruct and move beyond the simplistic binary oppositions between the Global North and Global South that underpin colonial ideologies” (13). Many critics have imagined Ghosh constructing a “postcolonial cyborg” to combat the totalisation and universalisation of “western rationality.” In this paper, I argue that this postcolonial cyborg, who subverts and undermines the colonising western scientific community by emphasising the relevance and importance of alternate forms of eastern knowledge, draws its potential from spirituality and religion. Without acknowledging spirituality's visionary tools, the posthuman cyborg of the western imagination and the postcolonial

cyborg of the eastern sensibility would not be able to achieve the promised utopia. By exploring the novel's depiction of spirituality, scientific inquiry, and the consequences of their convergence, this paper contributes to the ongoing discourse on the intersection of religion and technology and invites readers to reflect on the implications of this convergence in contemporary society. Furthermore, this paper engages with broader philosophical and ethical implications arising from the fusion of religion and technology, considering issues such as the dehumanising potential of technology and the existential dilemmas posed by scientific advancements, and hence critically engaging with the utopic desires of a posthuman world. It examines the novel's critique of a reductionist worldview and the interconnectedness of human experience, emphasising the importance of embracing complexity and the unknown. The paper begins with an exploration of the scientific and technological elements presented in the story, such as genetic research, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, analysing their impact on characters and the society they inhabit. It then proceeds to examine the novel's portrayal of religious beliefs and practices, highlighting the role of spirituality, mysticism, and divination within the narrative. It delves into the characters' navigation of the blurred boundaries between the spiritual and the scientific, examining their struggles, quests for meaning, and the consequences of their actions in a posthuman context.

The *Calcutta Chromosome* begins with Antar, an Egyptian employee of the International Water Council, discovering the story of Murugan, a former colleague. Antar chances upon Murugan's ID card on his computer AVA during a routine inventory check and begins investigating Murugan's disappearance in Calcutta in 1995. Antar, with the help of Ava, discovers that Murugan had asked his company to fund his project to study the history of malarial discovery by Ronald Ross, who won the Nobel Prize for his work in 1902. Ghosh then merges the narrative timelines of Antar's twentieth-century world, Murugan's 1990s Calcutta, and Ronald Ross's nineteenth-century British India. Murugan believes that a "counter-science" group nudged Ronald Ross towards his malarial discovery. Mangala, who works as a "sweeper woman" (142) in D.D. Cunningham's laboratory, picks up the malarial research and, using her own methodology of "counter-science" and religion of silence, begins researching on her own. Once she and a group of other natives become involved in the research, she gently encourages Ronald Ross to make the necessary discoveries using his own tools. Ultimately, they discover what Murugan calls the "Calcutta Chromosome." This chromosome allows immortality and the transmigration of souls. The plot then reveals several reincarnated characters—Mangala reincarnates as Tara, Urmila reincarnates as Mrs. Aratounian, and Lutchman, another member of the counter-science group, reincarnates as Romen Halder and ultimately as Lucky.

Dehumanised Identities

The Calcutta Chromosome uses tropes that merge the organic with the machine, the science with the mysticism, and the reality with the imagination. One such trope is the cyborg gaze, in which we witness the dystopian interference of technology in organic life. Antar's computer, Ava, watches her surroundings and reports back to the organisation via her "eye," which is "a laser-guided surveillance camera" (7). Once, Ava finds Antar reading a book at work, and a week later, she informs him about his salary reduction:

Ava didn't notice the first time but it happened again with the correcting fluid: he was reading, staring at the wall when she went deadly quiet. Then suddenly warnings began to flash on his screen. He whisked the book away but she already knew something was up. At the end of the week, he received a notice from his employer, the International Water Council, telling him that his pay had been docked because of "declining productivity," warning him that a further decline could entail a reduction in his retirement benefits. (5)

This cyborg gaze appears to be akin to a panopticon cyberspace, in which machines wield absolute power. Michel Foucault uses the term 'panopticon' to describe how society has shifted from military

and economic control to self-surveillance. He describes how the “panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognise immediately” (200). The “supervisor” is able to see “better than darkness”, and “visibility is a trap” (200). The technological panopticon dream of increasing surveillance on citizens through monitors, cameras, and motion sensors is to maintain the dominant order and to sabotage any free-playing discourse. In another instance in the novel, Ava manages to project a live holographic projection of the director of the council, while he is showering. The incredible breach of privacy catches the director in utter disbelief. “When he saw what was happening, his hands flew down to cup his genitals. He began to scream, his voice rising. He began crawling furiously, dripping soap and water on the floor” (239). The panopticon tools, which masquerade as essential safety and reliability measures, actually undermine the assurance of security. The technology, which initially promises to protect citizens, ultimately turns into a tool that dehumanises multiple identities.

The Heideggerian philosophy of technology claims that technology mutates and develops beyond human control and gets in the way of human thinking, which ultimately results in people becoming resources for optimisation. “Again, we ask: Does this revealing happen somewhere beyond all human doing? No. But neither does it happen exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man,” he states (24). The dynamics of the relationship that Antar and his computer Ava share, are not far from the Heideggerian philosophy of technology. Antar is not in control of Ava, and he knows it— “He stopped trying to get the better of Ava after that. He went back to his job . . . wondering what it was all for” (5). Rather, it is Ava that keeps a watch on Antar and controls his actions through surveillance. Antar then becomes an optimisable resource and a dehumanised entity for the corporation he works for.

The panoptican metaphor that *The Calcutta Chromosome* highlights is not the only literary instance where digital society motivates self-determination and constant surveillance. Big Brother in Orwell's *1984* shares the panoptican vision of a society with self-control and surveillance, as does Kafka's *The Trial*, where people have lost any control over their information and are at the mercy of invisible bureaucratic processes at all times. We need to ask ourselves. What does all this mean for a spiritual individual? Would Haraway's cyborg really “not recognise the Garden of Eden” (9)? Would it also fail to “re-member the cosmos” (9)?

Speaking of displaced identities, the novel also explores how artificial intelligence makes fun of accents and cultures that are not part of the hegemonic order. What might be an attempt to create a familiar environment to enhance the efficiency of the employees proves to be a deceitful imitation at most. In the novel, when Antar simply asks Ava the time, Ava resorts to a disingenuous mimicry, “calling out the hour in the style of a village watchman in Egypt, perfect in every detail, down to the tapping of the wooden staff” (19). Ava, in appropriating the time-telling practice in the villages of Egypt, crosses the line between creating familiarity for Antar and mockery of his identity. This mimicry is symptomatic of the power relations that exist between the coloniser and the colonised nations as discussed by Homi Bhabha in his famous essay, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse”. He talks about the role of mimicry in the colonial strategy, which relies on the colonisers' construction of the identity of the colonized. According to Bhabha, mimicry functions as a partial gaze of the coloniser, displacing the observed and thereby “rearticulating the entire notion of identity and alienating it from its essence” (129). For many critics, the western technology in the novel is representative of a neo-colonial, capitalistic patriarchy that exerts its supremacy over the indigenous population. Kamal, in her analysis of the novel, makes a similar argument: “The International Water Council, the megacorporation Antar works for (and is monitored by), signifies a tool for control in the neo-colonial order—an order where corporate empires have replaced colonial ones, where Antar and other non-Western subjects' labour is yoked to the global machinations of corporate enterprise” (204). The cyborg ontology, then, appears to be nothing short of a dystopic science-fiction nightmare in which machines and technology reproduce colonial power

relations and oppress certain identities. Bhabha asserts, “The discourse of post- Enlightenment English colonialism often speaks in a tongue that is forked, not false. If colonialism takes power in the name of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce” (126). The figures of farce in the post-colonial, neo-capitalistic world become the tools of artificial intelligence. By mimicry, mockery, and appropriation of certain identities, it is clear that the posthumanist utopia is not all-inclusive.

Ghosh’s novel depicts a kind of silence that engulfs the lives of the characters. This silence is also the religion of the natives and the “most secret of deities” (33). Many critics have interpreted the novel’s focus on silence as the subaltern reclaiming its voice through “counter-science”. We can understand this religion of silence as a form of solace from the isolation that colonial sabotage of alternative knowledge and the encroachment of technology bring. Multiple characters suffer from this isolation, including Antar, who works from home and gets all his communication from his office through AVA. His wife dies in childbirth, and so he lives alone in his New York apartment. Even though Ava impersonates human voices, it is not enough for Antar, who clearly seeks the relief of the doughnut place, whose owner is also Egyptian. “Antar desires the comfort and familiarity of the doughnut place because the owner of the franchise was an Egyptian, like himself. Not that he missed speaking Arabic—far from it. He got plenty of that all day long, from AVA” (14). Antar yearns for connections beyond artificial intelligence, and the novel provides a reconciliation for that yearning through the religion of silence. The religion of silence that manifests itself in the form of “counter-science” is not only a solace from modern-day technology-induced isolation, but also a form of protest against the totalising science and technology of the west.

Like Antar, Phulboni, a famous author in the novel, searches for and yearns for this reconciliation. In many of his speeches, Phulboni talks about his quest for reunion with the deity of silence: “For more years than I can count, I have wandered the darkness of these streets, searching for the unseen presence that reigns over this silence, striving to be taken in, begging to be taken across before my time runs out” (32). The characters seek community and want the refuge of the *bonhomie* of religion, manifested in the form of silence and “counter-science”. The religion of silence, which guides Ronnie Ross towards the discovery of the malarial parasite, also leads Antar towards immortality. The “counter-science” group of the locals in British India extends their concept of reincarnation and transmigration of souls, a.k.a. the Calcutta Chromosome, and influences the technology of the westerners for the purpose of human evolution. It is clear that the natives are desperate to find their voices, which are muted by the technological isolation and totality. And this voice is found in the religion of silence. The posthumanist utopia, then, not only fails to accommodate the sensibilities that are not part of the hegemonic order but, it also remains unachievable without the knowledge of concepts silenced as savage and unscientific. It is only ironic that the silence that is imposed on the “alternate” forms of knowledge becomes the guiding light and religion for the natives in the novel, which ultimately leads to the discovery of the Calcutta Chromosome, a chromosome that transcends and immortalises human bodies and furthers human evolution.

Religious Cyborgs

Clive Lawson, in his book *Technology and Isolation*, summarises how Greek philosophers generally held the belief that while technical knowledge is indispensable to human existence, it has inherent negative qualities and potential hazards (4). He gives an example of the stories and myths of Prometheus, Icarus, and the Tower of Babel. He goes on to say that “each of these stories embodies the idea that a preoccupation with technological matters involves a turning away from something good (usually faith in God and nature) and an undermining of individual striving for excellence” (4). An utter belief in the supremacy of western thought soon replaces this ancient scepticism about technical knowledge. Since the onset of the European Enlightenment in the 18th century, individuals from Western societies have consistently had a strong conviction in the notion of human development.

People commonly saw progress as the enhancement of individuals' quality of life. The concept of scientific advancement is commonly perceived as a gradual and iterative process of discovering and comprehending objective truths within the realm of the physical universe. According to Lori Branch, "Perhaps our most paradigmatic text for understanding the tensions between literature and belief in Western cultures is Plato's *Republic*" (11). For her, the parables of the cave and the sun are the quintessential metaphors of western epistemology that set up the stage for the prioritisation of knowledge, or "episteme", maths and sciences, and the "truth" which reflects "what is" in opposition to ignorance or "what is not" (11). With this shift in the perception of "knowledge" and "ignorance", different and various forms of knowing begin to be discarded as backward and savage.

In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Ross exploits the indigenous population in his research endeavours due to the perceived intellectual dominance of science without appropriately acknowledging their significant contributions. In the novel, the indigenous tradition eventually manifests itself as a type of counter-science. This "counter-science" group, whose religion is silence, knows that nothing is an end in itself, and that no form of knowledge entails negation of other forms of knowing. For Murugan, this group:

Maybe...started with the idea that knowledge is self-contradictory: maybe they believed that to know something is to change it, therefore in knowing something, you've already changed what you think you know so you don't really know it at all: you only know its history. Maybe they thought that knowledge couldn't begin without acknowledging that impossibility of knowledge. (105)

Ghosh constructs the knowledge of the local people, such as Lutchman and Mangala, as something that is aware of the limitations of prioritising one form of knowledge over the other. There is no question about the superiority of western science over local knowledge, but rather how the hybridisation of both brings society closer to the imagined posthuman utopia. This hybridisation of religion and technology is what Ghosh seems to be propagating. According to Nudrat Kamal, "In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Ghosh places this tension between rationality and spirituality at the centre of the novel, attempting to move beyond this simplistic dichotomy by questioning whether the two are really so incompatible after all" (13). Spirituality, or "counter-science" in the novel, is the combative ontology towards the determinism of science. This determinism not only promotes a movement away from organic life, but also re-restricts human desires and thoughts, redirecting them to the benefit of the dominant order. I propose that the dismantling of western technological supremacy tropes occurs through the hybridisation of religion and technology in science fiction. The "counter-science" group consisting of Mangala, Lutchman, and others was able to discover the DNA for immortality because Murugan believes "someone who's completely out of the loop, scientifically speaking, would be able to find it—even if she didn't know what it was and didn't even have a name for it" (250). Ghosh, through his science fiction, clearly emphasises how deterministic science is detrimental to furthering knowledge. Only, a discipline like "counter-science" or the religion of silence could have chanced upon such a discovery in Ghosh's fiction. Raymond Williams, addressing the deterministic propensities of technology, said, "How the technology develops from now on is then not only a matter of some autonomous process directed by remote engineers. It is a matter of social and cultural definition, according to the ends sought" (134). In this light, the imperialistic and supremacist attitude of the dominant order is indistinguishable from the technology it seems to promote. Technology is not an autonomous body, but rather an application of science that itself is not immune to biases. "Traditional" and "alternate" forms of knowledge which do not adhere to the western "logos", derive their interpretations of reality in terms of religious, mythical, and metaphysical understanding of the cosmos and society as a whole. Patriarchal capitalism and neo-colonialism adopt the methodology of marginalising these interpretations in favour of "western technology".

Amitav Ghosh seems to be debunking this fascist and colonial supremacy through his postcolonial fiction and the character of Murugan, who seems to be Ghosh's mouthpiece. Murugan, when talking

about Ronald, remarks, “Here’s Ronnie, right? He thinks he’s doing experiments on the malaria parasite. And all the time it’s him who *is* the experiment on the malaria parasite. But Ronnie never gets it; not to the end of his life” (79). Ronnie remains a puppet at the hands of a subterranean Indian organisation led by the enigmatic figure known as Mangala, which had already made noteworthy advancements in this particular area of study, surpassing their European counterparts. The aforementioned group successfully cultivates a distinct strain of malaria that is capable of being grown in pigeons. Murugan first discovers evidence of the activities of this group in the notes of a bacteriologist, Elijah Farley—“From Farley’s account it seems there was an underground network of people who believed that she possessed a cure” (247). One of the primary objectives pursued by Mangala was to investigate a potential remedy for syphilis, a sexually transmitted infection, by means of introducing the malarial microorganism into the patient via avian transmission. But “somewhere down the line Mangala began to notice that her treatment often produced weird side effects” (249). Following an extensive series of tests, Mangala reached an impasse in her research endeavours in the year 1897. Consequently, she felt a pressing need for a capable individual to assume responsibility for the continuation of this project. At this particular juncture, she fortuitously encountered Ronald Ross, a scientist renowned for his association with the identification of the malaria parasite. After a series of futile attempts, she arrived at the conclusion that the current strains of malaria provide a significant obstacle to making any progress in the desired direction. She then purposefully incorporates the essential hints and details into Ross’s mindset and proceeds to tactfully manipulate his experiments in order to influence his behaviour according to her desires. This leads to the discovery of a DNA that Murugan calls “the Calcutta Chromosome”.

Mangala, who leads the “counter-science” group and manipulates Ross into discovering the chromosome, is a living metaphor for a goddess; her name is also an alternative term for Kali or Durga. She represents the religious mythology of Mangala-Bibi. The novel features a reiterative symbol of a clay idol, which we later learn is the idol of Mangala-bibi, a goddess that reincarnates. Thus, in the novel, the cyborgization of corporeal bodies and identities is done through the appropriation of not only science but also religious myths and legends. What is Ghosh trying to achieve through this unique hybridisation, where Mangala is both a metaphor for religious myth and the perpetrator of scientific discoveries? I contend that he does so to offer an epistemological and ontological framework through his fiction that diverges from Western, positivist conceptions of scientific inquiry while simultaneously avoiding the reinforcement of oversimplified binaries of religion and technology. In his work, Ghosh delves into the cyborg myth in order to present a vision of the future that not only challenges conventional notions of possibility, but also liberates the myth from the confines of a society built around repressive and all-encompassing systems of knowledge. Ghosh, through the narrative of Murugan, “shatters the superiority complex of the West through falsifying Ross’ belief in himself as the conductor of the research” (Mishra and Kumar 81).

Ghosh, at multiple points in the novel, gives elaborate details of religious tantric rites. The fiction moves along, intertwining both scientific facts and cult practices in the form of quasi-religious experiments, ultimately resulting in the discovery of “the Calcutta Chromosome”. Sonali, a staff member at the *Calcutta Magazine*, inadvertently witnesses one such experiment, where Lutchman’s soul was being transferred into the body of Roman (Sonali’s boyfriend), by Mangala, who was herself operating within the body of Mrs. Aratounian:

Sonali forced herself to look down again. A figure had come out of the shadows: it was a woman and she was dressed very plainly. . . . She arranged the plates and the scalpel in front of her, on a piece of cloth, and reached into her bag again. She took out a small clay figure and touched it to her forehead, before setting it down beside her. . . . Raising her voice, the woman said to the crows, in archaic rustic Bengali: “The time is here, pray that all goes well for our Laakhan, once again”. (166–167)

Ghosh’s fiction, which hybridises the cyborg myth with the myths of religion, demonstrates that one does not need to choose between the cyborg ontology and religion. Choosing one over the other is

totalising and dismissive and a colonising endeavour nonetheless. The imagery above invokes not only a religious ceremony but also uses scientific tools like “scalpel,” “slides”, etc. Once more, the novel’s exploration of the science–religion hybrid is underscored by the extensive use of Western scientific equipment with Eastern iconic deities.

Back to the Future: Posthuman Utopia

Pramod K. Nayar, in his book *Posthumanism*, gives multiple definitions that branch out from the concept of posthumanism. He starts by elaborating on transhumanism. According to him, “Transhumanists believe in the perfectibility of the human, seeing the limitations of the human body (biology) as something that might be transcended through technology so that faster, more intelligent, less disease-prone, long-living human bodies might one day exist on Earth” (16). He further elaborates on how this seems like a white man’s fantasy by reiterating the belief in the supremacy of western technology and science. Ghosh too sees through the chimaera of Western supremacist belief and through his science fiction, counters the methodology of transhumanism. His fiction offers a paradigmatic shift in the very concept of transhumanism through different forms of knowing. In fact, the concept of transcendence did not originate from technology or transhumanist vision. Susan George remarks, “Most religions have a similar concept of “overcoming”. Ghosh knows this and tactfully employs quasi-religious experiments to aid Ronald Ross in the discovery of something that was beyond Ross’s imagination. The belief in the hegemony of western knowledge is overturned by a group of “untrained and uneducated” (146) natives through their religion of “counter-science”. The next terminology dealt with in Nayar’s book, *Posthumanism*, is critical posthumanism. “Critical posthumanism calls attention to the ways in which the machine and the organic body and the human and other life forms are now more or less seamlessly articulated, mutually dependent, and co-evolving”, he says (19). Christopher Shinn, in his analysis of Ghosh’s novel, talks about a similar kind of critical posthumanism where technology is an aid to human evolution and does not control organic life:

Ghosh’s novel promotes an alternative conceptual possibility for an understanding of our post-human futures; it posits that the human system computes the machine—not vice versa—into its own evolutionary design. Through the human–computer interface (HCI), the computer acts as a catalyst and a carrier to set in motion a process that furthers the growth of biological and organic life. Ghosh’s novel therefore emphasizes the primacy of evolutionary organicism rather than the quest for cyborg ontology.” (146)

Shinn also invokes Foucault’s “biopower” and tries to reconsider the term as a return to organic life. For him, biopower is not something in which “technology, scientific discourse, and corporate power” (147) overtake sexuality and ultimately result in the annihilation of organic life. Instead, Shinn reimagines biopower as “larger evolutionary processes in which technology does not control nature but nature controls itself” (147). For Shinn, computers only serve as a catalyst for human evolution, which eventually results in the reversal of organic life. Shinn’s arguments are among the many that criticise the interpretations of the novel along the lines of transhumanism, which revels in the supremacy of Western machines and knowledge in a twisted Cyborgian ontology. I concur with Shinn’s arguments because even though, as I mentioned in the first part of my paper, the machines in the novel keep an eye on the people in a panopticon sense and create dehumanised identities, they do ultimately become the instruments for human reincarnation and human evolution. However, I firmly believe that Shinn’s “evolutionary organicism” materialises in the novel only through the hybridisation of technology and religion.

The Calcutta Chromosome tells the story of cyborgs who not only dismantle the colonial framework that prioritises western knowledge over indigenous knowledge but also utilise the tools of western technology to further the science of traditional knowledge ultimately resulting in human evolution. Ghosh thus creates a fiction that advances a kind of critical posthumanism which offers the hybridisation of machine and organic life through both technology and religion. Even though

Haraway's cyborg myth "is about transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities" (14), she ultimately limits the potentialities of this myth by stating that she would rather be a "cyborg than a goddess" (68). I contend that Haraway's cyborg myth takes many of its utopic idealistic fantasies from the myths, fantasies, and metaphors of religion and spirituality. Haraway's cyborg does not participate in rebirth or reproductive sex but envisions participation in regeneration, into a world that ultimately becomes sexless and genderless because of similar multiple regenerations. Mangala's discovery of the "Calcutta Chromosome" which "is not transmitted from generation to generation by sexual reproduction" (250) is in a way Haraway's cyborg myth that comes true in Ghosh's fiction. The only difference is that this chromosome is found by the religious cult of "counter-science," which utilises the tools of western technology for its research. Haraway is against "anti-science metaphysics, a demonology of technology" (67), yet her conceptualisation of the Cyborgian myth takes from the metaphors of religion. She considers "the production of universal, totalizing theory a major mistake" (67), and yet calls the dreamer of the cyborg myth a "powerful infidel" (68).

Ghosh's fiction thus becomes an effort towards a paradigmatic shift in posthumanism, an acknowledgement of the hybridity of western science and traditional knowledge to further human evolution. The story critically examines the prevailing notion that the advancement of mankind can solely be achieved through scientific means and provides insights into alternate perspectives and potential avenues for emancipation. By the end of the novel, it becomes clear that the narrative is not about machines taking over organic life but rather about challenging the deterministic and positivist tendencies of science. The novel achieves this by combining the tools of western technology with the spirituality of the natives, a concept known as "counter-science," to create a new cyborg myth. The myth rejects the dominance of technology and strives to realise the posthumanist vision by incorporating various forms of knowledge. Mangala's counter-science group employs Western scientific methodologies while also incorporating elements of mysticism, presenting a synthesis of both approaches. This amalgamation does not adhere to the Orientalist notion of irrational superstition as the antithesis of Western science. Instead, it transcends the constraints of conventional Western science, thereby expanding its potential. There would be no posthuman utopia without this hybridisation of conventional science and "alternate" forms of knowledge.

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