

The Posthuman Imagination:

*Literature at the Edge
of the Human*

Edited by

Tanmoy Kundu and Saikat Sarkar

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“WE ARE ALL CYBORGS NOW”¹:
DISRUPTING GENDER IDENTITY THROUGH
A CYBORG IN THE POST-APOCALYPTIC WORLD
OF MARGE PIERCY’S *HE, SHE AND IT*²

INDRAJIT MUKHERJEE

Introduction

“The world I imagine, the world that AI will make possible, will not be a world of labels - and that includes binaries like male and female, black and white, rich and poor”

—Winterson (79)

Winterson’s observation, in her reworking of Mary Shelley’s *magnum opus*, entitled *Frankissstein* (2019), takes us to the 21st-century problem of negotiating the relationships between human ontology and technological materiality, between organic consciousness and Artificial Intelligence (AI), between human mortality and digital immortality in this era of globalization. In the last two hundred years, various philosophical discourses about the innate connection between nature and culture in the structural binaries of man-animal dichotomy, man-machine dichotomy and mind-body dichotomy, have “become figured at the site of kinship” (Butler 126). From the early days of Mary Shelley’s classic horror fiction *Frankenstein* (1818) to the present day scenario, the robot/cyborg has been looked upon as an analogy for human-machine interaction (HMI) in order to illustrate how the impact of the unprecedented developments of modern science and technology caters the basic essence of human life, taking us into a dystopian world of the impossible and often leading us to tragic catastrophes. However, over the last two decades, in particular, the cyborg as an important illustration of the ‘cultural figure’ (Clarke and Rossini, xi), has emerged as a postmodernist tool of undermining and negotiating the so-called notions of traditional gender stereotypes in a patriarchal setting, to make a critique about the progress of a post-capitalist, futuristic, and partly dystopic, society through repeating and differentiating popular stories. This paper seeks to deal with

INTERFACE

**A NATIONAL RESEARCH ANTHOLOGY ON INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE**



(Edited Volume)

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A NATIONAL RESEARCH ANTHOLOGY ON INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE, LITERATURE & CULTURE



PATRONS

- Dr. Milorai Modi, Principal, J.N. College, Pasighat (A.P.)**
**Dr. Saktibrata Bhowmik, Principal, A.P.C. College, New
Barrackpur (W.B.)**
Dr. Indrani Deb, Principal, Nistarini College, Purulia (W.B.)

EDITORS

- Dr. Dipankar Patra, A.P.C. College, New Barrackpore (W.B.)**
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Ms. Sharmistha Karmakar, Nistarini College, Purulia (W.B.)
Ms. Zenny Kamsi, J.N. College, Pasighat (A.P.)

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