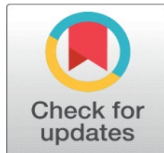
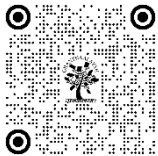


A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CYBORG REBELLION IN EEKHOUT'S *COG* AND PULLMAN'S *THE GOLDEN COMPASS*

Liliane Maria Yvette ¹✉ , Dr. J. Sripadmadevi ¹✉ 

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar (F.T.), Department of English, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India



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Corresponding Author

Liliane Maria Yvette,
lilianence@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Cyborgs, a relatively groundbreaking aspect of Donna Haraway's manifesto, is carefully termed to denote modern civilisation as a whole. The upholding of militarism and patriarchal capitalism parallelly undermining and marginalising of novel diversity is of debate in Haraway's Manifesto. Eekhout's *Cog* and Pullman's *The Golden Compass* testify to Haraway's idea of Cyborg in a collective and distinguishing way. Derived from Science Fiction, Cyborgs tend to be viewed as creatures of Dystopian value. Haraway, on the other hand, wittily phrases the word denoting each and every civilian of the present day. The novels *Cog* and *The Golden Compass*, portray Haraway's concept of illegitimate offspring being exceedingly unfaithful to their origin. According to this idea, Cyborgs, have the tendency to rebel, in order to find utopian values in a dystopian forefront. The present paper deals with the concept of Cyborg as the new human and attempts a comparative analysis of Cyborg instituted rebellion through the eyes of Cog and Lyra the protagonists of *Cog* and *The Golden Compass* respectively.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Cyborg, Science Fiction, New Human, Transgressed Boundaries, Fusions and Dangerous Possibilities

1. INTRODUCTION

As stated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in *Science for Society* (2021) [Unesco \(2021\)](#), Science today is of great importance as it helps generate solutions to everyday major and minor problems tending to make life more productive and comfortable. Science has its fair share of boons and banes merging with daily life which is an aspect of irregular footing. Science changes with life, upgrading itself time and again to fit cultural

expansions and evolving mindsets of the people it entails. Then and now science is of value as it adapts and grows with change. [Behdad & Thomas \(2011\)](#)

Science has the capacity to expand itself to all fields of study, merging itself with day-to-day life. The all-embracing style of Literature parallels with the ever-growing facet of science making their amalgamation an inevitable spectacle. This unification has brought forth the exemplary genre of Science Fiction, an interesting and thought-provoking feature in the broad field of Literature. Thomas Huxley, an English biologist and anthropologist, states that 'Science and literature are not two things, but two sides of one thing'. The impact of Science on Literature has expanded to a great extent seemingly influencing Children's Literature which is without a doubt the genesis of Literature.

1.1. SCIENCE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE CONJURING THE ADVENT OF CYBORGS

Children's literature consists of easy read stories for children up to the age of twelve. These stories are embedded with timeless characters that appeal to young minds. As Nikki Gamble in *Exploring Children's literature* (2008) [Gamble & Yates \(2008\)](#), proposes children to be beings who do not have perfect judgement, the writer takes up the duty of helping children navigate moral codes, by imprinting their regard of situations through the characters. This helps children find solutions either from the author's experience or by alternating the author's point of view. The effect of science on Children's literature nonetheless provides children with enhanced cognitive development giving them an insight of an uncertain future, painting utopia over the underlying dystopia.

The induction of scientifically grounded characters in children's books and novels not only give rise to cognitive development in children but also inculcate the values of Cyborgs. Formulated by [Clynes & Kline \(1960\)](#), the term 'Cyborg' is a portmanteau of the words cybernetic and organism. When Clynes and Kline first proposed the term Cyborg in their collectively published paper at the Psychological Space Flight Symposium, conducted by New York Times, they had in mind an enhanced human being who could survive severe conditions in extra-terrestrial environments. Donna Haraway, an American History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies professor Emerita in her work *The Cyborg Manifesto*, takes up the term Cyborg and expresses it in a different light. [Fadiman \(2022\)](#)

Haraway uses the ground breaking term called 'Cyborg' to denote modern civilization. According to her the new humans are not just dystopian creatures of science fiction, they are what live and exist today, a present wilfully neglected phenomenon. They are vivid existing representations of social reality. As Haraway portrays they are illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism. She further states that the illegitimate offspring is to a great extent unfaithful to its origin.

Cyborgs are victims of militarism and patriarchal capitalism. The present generation naturally slip into being cyborgs based on the vanished barrier between human machine interaction. The breach of distinctions between man, machine and animal makes every individual of today a cyborg. It enhances the new human's tendency to question and rebel against existing norms that are of militant and patriarchal value. Rigidity and narrow mindedness have no underlying value in the cyborg world, as portrayed by Haraway in *A Cyborg Manifesto* (2016):

This is a dream not of a common language, but of a powerful, infidel heteroglossia... It means both building and destroying machines, identities,

categories, relationships, space stories. Though both are bound in the spiral dance, I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. [Haraway \(2016\)](#), 67-68

1.1.1. IMPORTANCE OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Comparative Literature with its all binding attribute helps expand the range of study to a broader spectrum. It throws light on understanding, comparing, and contrasting varied cultures and their works of art and heritage. Comparative literature can be processed in two ways. While describing the two methods of Comparative literature in his work *Comparative Literature*, Totosy de Zepetnek (1999) declares:

The discipline of Comparative Literature is in toto a method in the study of literature in at least two ways. First, Comparative Literature means the knowledge of more than one national language and literature...and second, Comparative Literature has an ideology of inclusion of the Other,...Comparative Literature has intrinsically a content and form, which facilitate the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature and it has a history that substantiated this content and form. [Zepetnek \(1999\)](#), 608

A Comparative study of varied cultures and their works of art beneficially help understand, negotiate and enhance the values of the said cultures and lifestyles. It broadens the view of the researcher, widening the scope of study. To supplement the value of Cyborg rebellion, Pullman and Eekhout's novels *The Golden Compass* [Pullman \(1995\)](#) and [Eekhout \(2019\)](#) respectively play a predominant part. The comparison of the select novels provide a crystalline view of the ideology at hand.

1.1.1.1. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CYBORG REBELLION

Philip Pullman's novel, *The Golden Compass* (1995) [Pullman \(1995\)](#) sketches the life of a twelve-year-old girl named Lyra Belacqua who lives in a parallel world where the souls of people take the form of animal companions that shift according to the situations and feelings of their humans. These companions called Daemons live for their humans and perish with them but with the death of the animal, the human it belonged to can live on as soulless beings. Lyra's world is plagued by dark forces who kidnap children. The gobblers kidnap Lyra's friend Roger. Lyra sets out on a quest to find her friend who provides her a home when her own mother fails to do so. [J \(2018\)](#)

The novel [Eekhout \(2019\)](#) by Greg Van Eekhout, tells the story of a twelve-year-old cognitive development AI named Cog. The main purpose of Cog's existence is to learn the ways of man and live like a human with extraordinary abilities and unrivalled sustenance. Cog and his sister, ADA, live with a lab scientist named Gina, whom they consider their own mother. All goes well till Cog gets into an accident and wakes up in an unknown lab. He finds himself surrounded by scientists who try to study him and try to remove his brain which carries all the learned and adapted memories and emotions that Gina imbibed in him. Cog recruits five other robots inclusive of his sister and sets out to find his way back to Gina. [J \(2018\)](#)

The protagonists of the select novels share a number of similarities. Both Cog and Lyra are twelve-year-old children. The aspect of age is significant because at such a young age children are still undergoing cognitive growth trying to navigate the various morals in life. They tend to depend on adults around them and through children's books that are compositions of experienced individuals. Here, though Cog and Lyra identify as children, possess the qualities of a grown individual, who has freedom of thought and action. [Paniagua \(2012\)](#)

Cog and Lyra perfectly fit the characterisation of cyborg as both the characters diffuse the distinction between man and machine and man and animal respectively. Cog is a distinctly vivid man and machine product that believes to be a real child. Lyra on the other hand living in a parallel universe is part of a community who are still in touch with their inner instincts, which are dust extensions expressing themselves as animals. Cog and Lyra testify to Haraway's transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities. [Pohl \(2018\)](#)

The protagonists of the select novels set out on a quest to find their loved ones. Cog sets out on a quest with his sister ADA and four other robots to find Gina who was his caregiver before his accident. Cog being a child humanoid through the quest attains self-realisation of him not being a real human rather a by-product of militant and patriarchal capitalism. He realises that his sister ADA was not just created to learn and grow as him and other children around him. ADA was created to be the reason of war and ruin in the future. He understands that they were both manufactured for different reasons, which they both fail to carry out. Their quest towards finding Gina turns tables as both the robots rebel against their origin. They rebel against what they were made to be, the very origin of their existence and perambulate chaos to find what they truly want, which is to be children loved by their motherly figure Gina and not creatures of dystopian semblance.

On the other hand, Lyra, who is the daughter of a rich lord is denied parental love after her father sets out on a journey from which he never returns. Lyra's aunt takes the child into her custody but never truly cares for her the way Lyra's dad did. This longing for affection and care leads Lyra to befriend a commoner named Roger. Roger, though a child himself gives Lyra the security and love that she always yearned for. Lyra's secret friendship with Roger is what keeps her sane through the day as she lives her life as prescribed to her by the patriarchal society around. Roger's disappearance leaves Lyra helpless. She finds out that he had been kidnapped by the dark forces called Gobblers. Lyra leaves everything behind rebelling against the system that grounds her and sets out to find her true source of happiness, that had been taken from her. Lyra and her spirit animal Pan work hand in hand trusting each other to find Roger. [Shaw \(2000\)](#)

Both the protagonists Cog and Lyra, though setting out on a quest to find different people are bound by many other similarities. The first aspect being longing for the love that was lost in between. The second being risking it all to find what they truly need. The reasoning though made simple holds greater value when looked into more deeply., [Weitz \(2007\)](#)

Negating a system, which is the main grounding aspect of one's lifestyle leads to chaos. Culture is the art and manifestation of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. With regard to this definition culture possesses the ability to transform with the shift in collective mentality. The advent of social media and the rigorous development of Science and Technology have impacted culture to a great extent. This in turn affects lifestyle, mirroring itself in language and literature. The very defiance of patriarchal influenced culture gives rise to a trans being called Cyborg. The out of ordinary new human becomes a Cyborg or an illegitimate offspring, a rebel in the eyes of militarism and patriarchy. Donna Haraway clearly states this in her *A Cyborg Manifesto* (2016):

The main trouble with cyborgs, of course, is that they are the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism. But illegitimate offspring are often exceedingly unfaithful to their origins. Their fathers, after all, are inessential. [Haraway \(2016\), 9-10](#)

Lyra and Cog are perfect illustrations Cyborgs that rebel against a system that does not serve them. The protagonists face numerous trials and tribulations throughout the quest which for both Lyra and Cog conclude to be fruitful. This fruitful endeavour comes with a cost. Lyra saves Roger from the gobblers who she later finds to be her aunt's workers. She discovers that the person who she trusted to be her aunt was in actuality her own mother. Roger though saved ends up losing his spirit animal which is part of Lyra's mother's plan. Parallely, Cog learns that he is not human rather a cognitive intelligence AI (Artificial Intelligence), who's main duty is to learn and expand his knowledge of human wants and emotions. He gets to know that his sister ADA, was created to do worse things and bring ruin over potential enemies. In pursuit of finding Gina and protecting ADA, Cog finds himself being pursued by the scientists who want possession over his superhuman brain.

2. CONCLUSION

The characters Cog and Lyra are victims of militant ideals and patriarchy. They strive to be themselves by going on a quest to find what they really want and end up attaining their goal despite facing perplexing situations along the path of attaining their desired resolve. All this at the cost of rebelling against their source and origin. The father, symbolically considered, the root of patriarchy of any form becomes inessential or irrelevant as Cog and Lyra become willing cyborgs in a militant society.

The emergence of Cyborg in the present society, are just humble surfacing of a cardinal futurological phenomenon that is yet to unravel. The study of Cyborg unsnarls diverse ideologies that rise with modernisation and amelioration of science and technology in a progressive society, providing an extensive scope of study in this refreshing and thought-provoking field of study.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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