

Reading response

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



A Cyborg Manifesto In the essay d A Cyborg Manifesto, Donna Haraway focuses on technology and culture, and how both influence individuals, particularly women. Written in 1986, the essay basically explores the cyborg not only as a technological but also as an ideological concept, which has implications for the future. That is, Haraway attempts to come up with a basis for a collective consciousness by finding lively parallels between the latest economic as well as technological practices and humans' fictional capability to understand and then interact with an evolving ideological structure. Speaking of ideological structure, she mainly focuses on feminism. In that direction, she uses the metaphor of a cyborg to urge women including feminists to transcend beyond the limitations and also as the main example to explain the power of the cyborgs.

In that direction, A Cyborg Manifesto can be considered as a socialist-feminist analysis of women's condition in the contemporary and advanced technological world. At the outset itself, Haraway criticizes the established notions of feminism, particularly how feminist movements and feminists focus mainly on identity politics. So, as above-mentioned, she suggests the feminists to overcome the limitations brought on by traditional gender roles, inflexible feminism, and identity politics. Instead, she proposes an acceptable model of cyborg or cybernetic woman, in which machine and woman combine. Under this techno-social assemblage or combination, women can transcend the polarizing binary concepts of gender. Instead of discussing it as a conceptual model, Haraway provides real-life aspects to show how this combination or cyborg is a possibility. For example, she talks about how certain technologies such as virtual avatars, sex-change medical

procedures, and others can blur the traditional markers that are used to determine gender. So, when these traditional markers of gender, particularly that of women, collapse and new fusion forms of sexuality emerges, then the above-mentioned cyborgs are a possibility. In a way, Haraway seems to have given a technological and political solution for a seemingly difficult socio-feminist issue. “ We are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs” (Haraway 291). Apart from her main focus on the women issues, Haraway also criticizes Oedipal narratives and Christian origin myths, particularly regarding the Genesis. Taking a critical stance regarding Genesis and Garden of Eden, Haraway states, “ The cyborg would not recognize the Garden of Eden; it is not made of mud and cannot dream of returning to dust” (Haraway 292)

Based on the above summation of the essay, questions that are critical of the particular perspective proposed in the text emerge. The particular perspective which is focused is the development of cyborgs or cybernetic women who can erode the boundary between humans or women and machines. The question that emerges is that how much of liberation the women can get from old patriarchal norms when they evolve into cyborgs? Whether they can be liberated in a more effective manner through this mode than compared with other traditional feminist movements?

Work Cited

Haraway, Donna. “ A Cyborg Manifesto.” *The Cybercultures Reader*. Eds. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy. London: Routledge, 2000. 291-324. Print.