**Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto**

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| Donna Haraway attempts to construct a basis for collective consciousness by mapping vibrant parallels between the structure of current economic and technological practices and human actors' fictional capability to comprehend and interact with a changing ideological structure. Elements of her argument can be traced to her role as a theorist working in the established traditions of feminism and socialism. I believe it is her commitment to an ongoing dialogue with other feminists that provides the impetus for her denunciation of a future entrenched in the teleology of traditional Western myths. Her critique of arguments which depend on the image of the female as part of a splintered and idealized other which awaits ultimate reunification leads her to name the cyborg as a potent conceptual bastard of white humanism.    The cyborg is central, both to her own thesis and to those attempting to schematize her argument. The cyborg, as she defines it, is a germane metaphor for the implicit assumptions which guide her mission. The cyborg is both a product of social reality and of fictionalized encryption. The cyborg presents a being of agency which has the potential to coherently assemble political confrontations outside of the myths of the original Garden, where woman is seen as a body with an organic and intuitive grasp of Nature. It does so as a synthesized creature whose very presence casts traditional dichotomies into doubt. Three central pairs which the cyborg directly confronts are the distinctions between human and animal, man and machine, and the physical and non- physical. At this point, I would like to comment on how Haraway is attempting simultaneously to describe and inscribe the condition of contemporary technology. As we have witnessed in Andrew Pickering's book on the parallels between human and material agency, the scientist¹s intentions and her capacity to imaginatively construct the future is an essential point of differentiation between human and machine. He sees symmetry and mutual affectation, but not a literal consummation. In this sense, the cyborg of Haraway is an intensely sexual creature which can create its own conditions for existence. The dichotomy between man and animal in other established philosophies, such as Buddhism and Hinduism (generic terms which aren¹t without their share of contentions as to meaning and potential multiplicity), has been an issue of degree, not kind. This simply implies that for several centuries humans have had a world view which didn't necessarily delineate sharp contrasts between man and animal. I say this to point to an implicit maneuver by Haraway. By her act of interpreting current and historically recognizable social structures though the construct of a cyborg, she is attempting to create a directed and engaged consciousness. She prioritizes the myth of economic theory (her homework economy analysis) by organizing the possible dissolution of dichotomies as a subsidiary achievement of contemporary technological forces. The cyborg is the fundamental unit for an origin myth, which as Haraway insists, is imbued with the atemporality of a utopia beyond the linear and fractionalized totality of Aristotelian teleology. The cyborg is not a search for a new fragmentation, or of creating a new dichotomy, but a biological process that has all the indifference of evolutionary development within a complicated and dynamic system. As Ghost in the Shell implies, life itself arises from complexity.    The importance of myth to Haraway incorporates both her belief in the cyborg as a fictional element that asserts the capacity to define consciousness and its relationship with the development of social conditions which expose the weaknesses and accessibility of previous ideologies. This social phenomenon, the homework economy, in which the work force is becoming increasingly feminized and destabilized, is a potential basis for collaboration. Identity has both literally and creatively become "contradictory, partial, and strategic." Her understanding of science as a formal embodiment of contingent social practices is here a useful metaphor for examining the dialectics of an emergent and liminal space for collective identity. As she emphasizes the structural role of design (informed by her biology background) over the strangulating totality of an organic unit, the necessary and causal correlation between social reality and the formalization of an affiliated community is not assured. She believes in a certain reality, but is more interested in the process of shaping and directing that reality, of creating a polyphony from a cacophony. It is not enough that disparate conditions that destabilize traditional notions of self and other exist. The creation of a community of affinity demand that the "logic of repression" be exposed as myth. It is this sense of directed creativity which I believe justifies her denouncement of merely "naming" objects and her subsequent elevation of the literal tradition. The act of naming is an exclusionary practice, whose perceived value originates from the Western preoccupation with the primitive tribe's alleged unity with mother/nature. By allowing women to reorient themselves with literary acts, she is recognizing the productive power of myth in shaping consciousness. She does not elaborate what the fundamental basis for the ambiguity of writing is, or how it is necessarily less totalizing and organic than naming. One may infer that the dissolution between categories of humans and encoded languages, such as machines, is an apt enough description of the melding of narrative and reality. Science fiction, then, has the role of being an appropriate mythic response to current international developments. To create a sense of community without boxing in an absolute identity requires the fictional potential of the cyborg. |