

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,"

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AN IRONIC DREAM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE FOR WOMEN IN THE
INTEGRATED CIRCUIT

The traditional society has male and female with a certain role. Man has been the dominant power in the society and female has been connected in the homework economy. An origin story in the 'Western', humanist sense depends on the myth of original unity, fullness, bliss and terror, represented by the phallic mother. The traditions of 'Western' science and politics are the tradition of racist and male-dominant capitalism.

Donna Haraway attempts to create what she calls "an ironic political myth" which combines postmodernism with socialist feminism. Central to her myth is the image of the cyborg, which is "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction." She is a scientist, socialist, deconstructionist critic combining post structuralism and socialism making "cyborg myth". She suggests that development of technology gives a society of cyborg. The cyborg for Haraway is both a metaphor for the postmodernist and political play of identity as well as a lived reality of new technology.

Late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural/artificial, mind/body, self-developing/externally designed, and many other distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. The boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion. The cyborg is a creature in a post-

gender world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labors, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert. In short, we are cyborgs.

She takes that hi-tech culture challenges and breaks down the old dualisms of Western thinking like the mind/body split, Self/Other, male/female, reality/appearance, and truth/illusion. She holds that we are no longer able to think of ourselves in these terms, or even strictly speaking, as biological entities. Instead, we have become cyborgs, mixtures of human and machine, where the biological side and the mechanical/electrical side become so inextricably entwined that they can't be split.

FRACTURED IDENTITIES

Haraway thinks that there are three major boundary breakdowns in the formation of the cyborg. The first is between human and animal. The cyborg appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. Biological and evolutionary theory over the past two centuries have simultaneously produced modern organisms as objects of knowledge and reduced the line between humans and animals to a faint trace re-etched in ideological struggle or professional disputes between life and social science. Within the development of transgenic organisms, the idea of genetic integrity/unity of the organism is called into question. The second leaky distinction is between animal-human (organism) and machine. Not only are our familiar machines becoming more lifelike, but also humans are coupling with machines such as pacemakers, dialysis, artificial limbs and joints, hearing aids. The third boundary between physical

and non-physical is very imprecise for us. Modern machines are quintessentially microelectronic devices: they are everywhere and they are invisible. People are nowhere near so fluid, being both material and opaque. Today's machines carry almost infinite amounts of information on a tiny chip hidden somewhere behind an attractive facade.

THE INFORMATICS OF DOMINATION

Simultaneously material and ideological, the dichotomies may be expressed in the following chart of transitions from the comfortable old hierarchical dominations to the new networks I have called the informatics of domination:

Organism	Biotic Component
Bourgeois novel, realism	Science fiction, postmodernism
Reproduction	Replication
Mind	Artificial Intelligence

(The Informatics of Domination)

The objects on the right-hand side cannot be coded as 'natural', a realization which subverts naturalistic coding for the left-hand side as well. She lets us think same think differently as cyborgs..

Communications technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools recrafting our bodies. These tools embody and enforce new social relations for women worldwide. Technologies and scientific discourses can be partially understood as formalizations, i.e., as frozen moments, of the fluid social interactions constituting them, but they should also be viewed as instruments for enforcing meanings. The boundary is permeable between tool and myth, instrument and concept, historical systems of social relations and

historical anatomies of possible bodies, including objects of knowledge. Indeed, myth and tool mutually constitute each other. Some of the rearrangements of race, sex, and class rooted in high-tech-facilitated social relations can make socialist-feminism more relevant to effective progressive politics.

THE 'HOMEWORK ECONOMY' OUTSIDE 'THE HOME'

Richard Gordon has called the 'homework economy' to the characteristics formerly ascribed to female jobs, jobs literally done only by women. For example, on US black women, who have achieved an escape from (barely) paid dogmatic service and who now hold clerical and similar jobs in large numbers, has large implications for continued enforced black poverty with employment. Teenage women in industrializing areas of the Third World increasingly find themselves the sole or major source of a cash wage for their families, while access to land is ever more problematic.

WOMEN IN THE INTEGRATED CIRCUIT

I want to suggest the impact of the social relations mediated and enforced by the new technologies in order to help formulate needed analysis and practical work. However, there is no 'place' for women in these networks, only geometries of difference and contradiction crucial to women's cyborg identities. If we learn how to read these webs of power and social life, we might learn new couplings, new coalitions. She picks familiar vocabularies such as home, market. Those concepts get closer easy for us and to use normal words has much powerful effect than to use unaware ones.

CYBORGS: A MYTH OF POLITICAL IDENTITY

This is not to endorse the cyborg heartily as a utopia vision. She is very clear that we must enter the cyborg politic with eyes wide open, and be aware of its agenda. By trying to construct and deconstruct the binaries between machine/human, man/woman, white/black and revolutionary/conservative, she is trying to give ways to think differently about the balance of power in human systems. Donna Haraway's influence is felt widely in cultural studies, women's studies, political theory, literature, and philosophy. Perhaps, ironically, we can learn from our fusions with animals and machines how not to be Man, the embodiment of Western logos. I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess. As cyborg artists, what will we do and what will we think about?