

I. INTRODUCTION

The foundation of Western intellectual structuring is in ordinary certainties, and ever since ancient Greek philosophizing, it was clear that ordinary categories of meaning play a crucial role in holding that structure together. What other reason for Plato's Socrates to argue that speech, a more direct category, is far superior to merely necessary writing - or for later ancient and medieval thinkers to bother themselves so much with defining interpretation? What must have been fascinating to the modern man was that, in spite of all that effort, people still managed to derive totally opposing interpretations of same texts, and one such divergence was the cause of the schism between the Catholic and Protestant churches. So it isn't unsurprising that Protestant theologians were the first representatives of the philosophical discipline of hermeneutics, the science of textual interpretation. The thesis of Donna Haraway, however, dismisses all such effort as futile and even banal: "All readings are also mis-readings, re-readings, partial readings, imposed readings, and imagined readings of a text that is originally and finally never simply there. Just as the world is originally fallen apart, the text is always already enmeshed in contending practices and hopes".

In this essay I plan to examine her radical and "iconoclastic" assertion. This short introductory paragraph is needed to make a few notes about the method and the structure of the examination. I plan on avoiding violently inscribing meaning on Haraway's quote and then examining contending meta-philosophical positions, because, far from being a wrong reading of the quote, it wouldn't be a meaningful reading at all - for that reason I have tried, in the introduction already, to envelop both positions as they appear in time, on the same level, as much as that is possible, and that is also the reason why I plan to accommodate the structure of the essay to the text being examined. I plan on reading the quote as an utterance on its own, and to allow every term's meaning to appear within the quote itself. The structure can also be described using time-related terms: the first part will deal with Haraway's conditions of agreeability, that which comes "before" the text in a way, the second part will examine the text itself in its "presence", while the third part plays the most responsible role of working out that which comes "after" the text in question - that is, this text about the text.

II. THE FIRST MOVEMENT

In the first sentence, Haraway proposes that all readings are "mis-readings", "re-readings", "partial readings", "imposed readings" and "imagined readings". The thesis implies absoluteness, so it is worth examining each of the characterizations more closely.

1. A mis-reading is a reading which gets something wrong about the text. In order for that to happen there has to be something "right" about the text. When talking about such wrongs and rights, we are usually referring to authorial intent - so, unless we are ourselves the authors of texts, it is true that we cannot retrieve the intent of the text in its completeness - and even if we are, our subjectivity has proven itself too fragile for us to be able to count on our intentional certainty. So, this seems like a fair point.

2. Re-readings are "second readings", and we can admit that we resort to second readings if we feel like there is something we have missed on our first encounter with the text. The assertion that all readings are re-readings seems radical, but is in fact in line with basic tenets of hermeneutics, namely the famous "hermeneutic circle" - the knowledge we derive from a text depends on what knowledge we have before reading the text, and that is ever-changing. Even if we were to read the same text twice in a row, our knowledge would be different the second time around - enriched by the knowledge we gained the first time. Thus, all acquire of knowledge is just re-reading, just how all new knowledge is just re-arrangement of existing terms in language. This, too, is a fair point.

3. In line with point (2), no reading is ever complete, in sense of knowledge acquire.

4. Also in line with hermeneutics, we approach every text limited by our knowledge, and its finitude always causes us to "prefer" something in the text - every reading is, therefore, an imposed one.

5. Finally, our wishes play a role in our reading, just like human unconscious plays a role in the game of authorial intent - every reading is, in part, what we want it to be - therefore, a uniquely "imagined" reading.

Factually, we can now agree with Haraway - but, if we do so, have we really examined the text in its agreeability as we set out to do? The text's agreeability lies in more than the coherence of its (always so fragile) facts - agreeability of a text is its eventful fact in itself. If a text is agreeable it is objectively so, in the sense of a social fact. Haraway is agreeable with because she is a published philosopher, but we need to examine why - what makes us accept her thesis? One thing is very noticeable about her quote - the aporetic quality inherent to much of linguistic expression is direct in Haraway's thesis because of its meta-quality: it says something about text, but itself in the form of text. That is hardly the source of the text's agreeability, but it is what we should focus on if we wish to find out more.

As we noticed already, the capital weight of the first sentence is in the word that isn't first without reason - "ALL", a word which implies absoluteness in itself; uttered on its own, "all" bears a sublime aura - it is a word one wishes to say. What does "all" do within the sentence in which it is uttered? It magically liberates - going beyond the limits of language, it announces that texts are "empty", they aren't wore down by hardly extractable meaning. This liberation is made possible by a reader who is immersed in text - such a thesis does nothing to liberate a person who always only speaks. That is the source of Haraway's distinctly philosophical quality. A philosopher is likely a person who dwells in text. Therefore, the liberation of text from meaning is also the philosopher's liberation in dwelling. When one acknowledges Haraway's thesis, all words become a smooth surface on which anything is allowed. Before anything else, the thesis' agreeability is in its freedom.

However, that is merely one out of four theses which make up the given text. The first sentence continues even after the "liberation", and tells us that text is "originally and finally never really there". This second part is crucial, as it unavoidably adds a layer of meaning to what is delivered in the beginning. The first thesis reveals merely the text's instability - a closer examination reveals that it is this second thesis which is truly radical, and which plays a bigger role in the formation of the image of text as a smooth surface. The second thesis assures. It covers the two critical points one will most likely worry about, the beginning and the end. Meaning has no "origin" and it is never "final". We have done away with it almost entirely. The question we must ask ourselves is: why do we have to be assured of that? The reason is, if it was possible for a text to have an origin, and to be finalized, it would be possible for it to set itself in a comfortable point in time - it would make itself present. Presence is a concept that is truly fearful because it is eliminative. A dynamic thing has an opportunity to be again, or to turn out to have been something more. Presence is absolute in a worrying way - that which is present is only now, and then it will be no more. A text with set meaning is worrying precisely because we are sure to lose it. Again, we merely want freedom - a thing which isn't tied to presence isn't forced to go away.

However, the conditions of agreeability which we have set out here need to be re-examined for two reasons. First and foremost, as philosophers, we have a duty to go deeper than such surface examination (it is only now that we will read the quote as it is). But it is obvious that category of fear is an unstable and a risky one - perhaps Haraway's agreeability needs to be inverted, if it is guaranteed only by such a negative category like fear of finitude?

III. THE SECOND MOVEMENT

For a deep examination of meaning, we must presume that any and every utterance is totally independent, not only of obvious agents like interpreters and authors, but also of readers. Although we are unable to completely abandon subjectivity, we must make it as minimal as possible, because subjectivity always violates text. "Language doesn't belong to us, we belong to language", as Martin Heidegger formulated it in his deconstructive-hermeneutic phase of work. Therefore, let's try to conceive of Haraway's quote as autonomous as possible. How does it even occur, and what is its source? What is there of a "pure event" in her text?

We must return again to the key, opening word, but now we will look for something else in it. We have examined "all" to see how it affects the reader, but now we will consider how it "affects", without an object. "All" turns Haraway's quote into a declamatory utterance which wants to be active. An absolute term like "all" isn't merely descriptive, it wills, and in our case it wants to envelop the texts it talks about. This envelopment isn't necessarily violence - perhaps Haraway sees the need for her utterance to mix itself with other texts in order to achieve some change which may very well be needed. But if we focus ourselves on a subtle element of her quote, we will be disappointed by the time we finish the first sentence. Haraway mentions different types of readings, but she stays at that - jumping between readings, but still hovering above the text. Moreover, Haraway keeps herself away from text. Her thesis doesn't display envelopment, but instead a duality. In writing out her utterance without respect for the implications it has for the text itself, Haraway is alienating text from meaning. Paradoxically, she considers the instability of meaning sayable. What does this mean for our examination so far? Perhaps this duality doesn't affect the aforementioned conditions which drive us to agree with the thesis - it still is liberating - but it is very important for concrete analysis of the utterance itself. We have mentioned that Haraway creates a smooth surface of text to work with - but she doesn't do so by smoothing out the text, the smooth surface is created somewhere additionally, above or below the text.

When we ask ourselves about the source of her utterance, we are not asking about a factual source, such as the title of a book, or the exact time when the utterance was written down. Instead, we are asking about the apriori conditions in our hermeneutic approach that cause the utterance to appear as it does. What is the space we create for the image of the utterance to appear? Let us examine the second part of the first sentence: the text is "originally and finally never simply there". The word "originally" is interesting because it appears twice, despite appearing as a negative term. The world is, also, "originally fallen apart". Here, Haraway goes a step further than any of her previous (carefully intensifying) assertions - everything must end, so every origin implies a "falling apart". This is, unfortunately, the point at which alienation is complete, as the idea of time is devalued completely. It's not only that we shouldn't set texts in a set point in time out of ethical reasons, but it is also pointless, even if we want to, according to Haraway. The "space" in which Haraway's thesis appears is an artificial, and a peculiarly small one, once the roughness of both text and time is removed out of skepticism. When we focus on that which remained silent in Haraway's utterance, we find out that its silence isn't a sacred silence, which ensures that something which shouldn't be said remains silent, but instead a silence which hides certain deficiencies.

Therefore, there is no need to disagree with the points we agreed with in the first movement, but merely to accept the limits of Haraway's claims which we might mistake for being descriptive in nature. The truth about meaning is that it is ungraspable, and the best we can do is try to demonstrate its ungraspability when we attempt to write about it. Haraway's formulation reveals itself to be too mechanic. Sentences serve to hold each other together, her utterance is almost like a closed system - we can easily figure out what is being said, so it itself suffers from the presence it criticises. It isn't open to possibilities, and instead it is trying to tie down an idea.

IV. THE THIRD MOVEMENT

The third movement is the post-analysis in which we touch upon what may be the most important part of the quote, and that is the fourth thesis, on the very end. "The text is always already enmeshed in contending practices and hopes". That thesis is certainly in line with the hermeneutic principles which we have laid out in the first movement, and its importance is probably equivalent to its function. At the very end of the quote, the fourth thesis preemptively answers criticism. As such, it has potential even to disregard the entire second movement of this essay. What if the reading of the quote presented in this essay was already finished before the essay was even started, perhaps even before the quote was already seen, due to prejudice and intentions and limited knowledge? Moreover, we have more reason to trust Haraway, a published philosopher, than this arbitrary work of writing. Indeed, if all this is the case, Haraway's point will prove to be superior to any point that could possibly be brought up in this text. We just have to forget about the warmed-over romanticism of the small and lonely space from which Haraway's utterance is coming from, and we will easily accept that her empty and smooth surfaces of text are better than interpretations, which may be wrong, while her position has a certain immunity towards criticism. But I will attempt to show how that view would have to misunderstand the points brought up in this essay, and how it is driven by an erroneous and undemocratic conception of philosophy.

The second movement of this text is not an attempt to criticize, negate or eliminate Haraway's position, as philosophy shouldn't be driven by the ideas of "negation" and "elimination". If there is still any worth to be had in the label of the "philosopher", we have to agree on the good nature of philosophizing and to even set a standard for good-natured philosophizing. Therefore, philosophy shouldn't be about competition of contending texts - the connection of text and philosophy is there precisely because of the dialogic nature of writing things down. Philosophy should instead be a dialogue. By first examining the undisputable agreeability of Haraway's points, I attempted to make my reading of her quote not a dissection, but a "gentle shaking" which attempts to extract something more out of that which was said - to reveal something of that which the text stays silent about. It could be said that in this essay, Haraway's text is treated as a staircase which is used to reach something, but which then needs to be thrown away - we do not wish to say that our position is better by doing that, but instead we are presenting a new staircase that is also to be thrown away once the reader reaches a new level. This does put us at odds with Haraway's last thesis, but for that reason I have tried to avoid countering her utterance with normative and authoritative claims, and that does mark the point where I believe one should stay silent.

V. CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have attempted to perform a deconstructive reading of Donna Haraway's quote. In the first movement, I have examined what makes her quote agreeable, and pointed out to the liberating, but also the fearful element of her formulation. In the second movement, I have considered her thesis as it is, and pointed out to a contradiction between what is implied and what we agree on in the quote, and in the last one, I considered possible criticism and reflected on my reading of her text.