

Birgit Pretzsch

Paper title "Exploring Cyborgian questions – biotechnology, subjectivity and gender. "

Coming from a feminist philosophical/cultural studies background I begin my paper by exploring the complex relationship between 'body' and 'subjectivity'. The central focus will then be on the question of how technology – and especially biotechnology – interacts with this already complex system. I will not discuss concrete, currently existing technologies but rather stay on a meta-level, sketching the theoretical implications of technologies interacting with bodies. Here the cyborg will enter the discussion, both as a concrete creature of – arguably – both the present and the future and as symbolic figuration in a Harawayian sense. What does it mean for our sense of self if we enhance, modify or 'normalise' our bodies with the help of technology? How does this influence society's idea of what is 'normal', what is a 'disease', what is 'monstrous' and what is 'beautiful'? These, and other, questions will be discussed against the backdrop of a gender awareness that implies that the answers to these questions are highly dependent on the gender of all people involved (scientists, doctors, cients, etc) and on the concepts of 'male' and 'female' prevalent in the respective society. While I realise that race, ability, age, ethnicity and many other factors are at least as influential as gender, the timeframe will not enable me to more than touch upon these issues.

Biography

Birgit Pretzsch has a Master in Women's Studies from Trinity College, Dublin, and is currently finishing her doctoral thesis with the working title *Feminisms, Bodies and Cyberpunk: Embodiment and Subjectivity in Bruce Sterling's Novel Holy Fire*. She is teaching English literature and cultural studies at the University Koblenz-Landau, Campus Landau, Germany. She has published on Lara Croft and the topics body, feminism and technology

.Affiliation

University Koblenz-Landau

Campus Landau

Dept. of Foreign Languages – English

Fortstr. 7

D-76829 Landau/Pfalz

Area of discussion: Bodies, Cultures and Scientific Metaphors