

Metaphors of molecular colonisation

This talk, based on the findings of my thesis, investigates a very recent phenomenon, the geneticisation of human conception using discourse analysis (following Foucault) but also an analysis of metaphors. The geneticisation of conception is analysed as a clash of international, mainly US-American, scenarios of genetics, biomedicine and reproductive medicine with local, very different scenarios and contexts in reputable German print media between 1995-2003. The study shows that the geneticisation in reproduction amalgamates contraception and conception in a general laboratory fertilization thereby normalising infertility as well as the wish to have a child of non-coupled or non-heterosexual persons or other 'abject bodies' (Butler).

By configuring new users of laboratory conception as well as by broadening its usages experts gain more access to human genome(s) by linking techniques such as IVF, ICSI and PID as well as by claims of the potentials of future gene therapy or cloning. The same applies to the geneticists experts' talk on issues of ethics in the investigated material which aims at securing the experts position in a field beyond their expertise which is existential to their work (Ettorre). Also the analysis of metaphors shows experts' access to be of central importance in the discourse with colonial metaphors of exploration and exploitation suggesting references to idealist fictions by scientific writers of the early colonial times such as Francis Bacon.