

MA-Arbeit: Sophie Huber

A Cult of Technoscience? Rhetorical Devices, Narratives, and Sociotechnical Visions in Transhumanist Political Party Programs

Abstract

In the last decade, the world has seen an increasing prominence of the transhumanist movement. Whereas Silicon Valley has proven to be a center for the movement's visionaries, transhumanist political parties have risen as a global trend. As a philosophy that promotes the technoscientific transformation of the human, transhumanism strives to go beyond the limits of nature. While frequently criticized on a theoretical level, case studies about transhumanism are rare within and outside of Science and Technology Studies. The research at hand approaches this gap by focusing on the linguistic production of sociotechnical visions in two transhumanist documents: the constitution of the U.S. Transhumanist Party and the party program of the German Transhumanist Party. Two sociotechnical visions became visible: the vision of Technology = Magic and the vision of Paradise (Lost). While a proneness for prestigious culture and a romanticization of the Enlightenment era produced the vision of a paradise that was lost in a different time, technology was mystified as a magical fix and universal remedy for solving human problems. On the background of these findings, this thesis does not only elaborate on transhumanist understandings of culture – rather than nature – but also proposes that transhumanism can be conceptualized as a 'cult of technoscience'.