



Cyberevolution - William Gibson's Evolutionary Ideas

Thorsten Felden

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Seminar paper from the year 2005 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 1,0, University of Cologne, course: Between Chance and Adaptation. Reverberations of the Theory of Evolution in Ethnology, Literature and History, 19 entries in the bibliography, language: English, abstract: Classic evolutionary theory always looks backwards. Darwin, his predecessors and successors put forward their theories by comparing present organic records with those of the past. Indeed some ideas of social evolution are imbued with a certain kind of perspective into the future, believing in an ongoing progression of human societies. Still, in order to prove the accuracy of those ideas, one had to rely on evidence taken from history or from cultures which were believed to be primitive and thus representing former states of societies. Science fiction's view goes quite in the opposite direction: Here, the present marks the point of view from where we look into the future of society, the future of mankind. The following paper examines the notions of evolution we can find in William Gibson's work. I will try to deal with the question how we can perceive an evolution of the human race in his novels and what other ideas of evolution Gibson incorporates into his work. Starting off with the query whether there is to find any sort of biological evolution in Gibson's work, the second chapter will deal with the picture of nature Gibson draws. How does he describe nature (meaning organic beings or biological environments), or to put it more correctly, how is nature conceived through the eyes of his protagonists? Then I will take a closer look at the dualistic relationship of nature and technology. What importance has technology for the societies Gibson sketches, and what effect has technology on their inventors? The main topic of this chapter will be the investigation of nature's and technology's evolutionary features in Gibson's work: How does the human species develop and which way doe

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