

7th European Feminist Research Conference
4.-7- June
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Conference paper

Virtual embodiment and real life imagery – processes of subjectification across real and virtual agencies

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Computer gaming takes up a substantial part of children's spare time activities and creates a space for social interaction as well as for processes of subjectification. Moving across real and virtual agency children embody material-discursive experiences and emotional-cognitive takes on life. Computer games like Counter Strike and World of Warcraft do, however, offer different kinds of interaction and subjectification possibilities. Counter Strike being a first person shooter game invites cyborgian weaponhood, a weapon-human-masculinity-merger, as 'being'- and killing, flight or dying as 'agency'. Whereas World of Warcraft involves a more varied repertoire of (gendered) 'beings' and 'agencies', however still based on fight, competition, life and death, gains and losses as the fundamental logics of movement. Taking up concepts from Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and in particular Karen Barad this paper raises questions about the character of circulation, about the open-ended intra-activity between real and virtual life discourse-materiality and about how this intra-activity effects real life bodily-material subjectivities and agencies. The analytic interest will involve questions like: What effects may the human derealisation (Butler: Precarious Life) cultivated in virtual life produce in its intra-activity with exclusion practices among children in real life contexts pervaded by social angst and bullying? Which repertoires of embodied imagery may be produced and taken up by kids positioned in which ways? And what kinds of re-workings (ironic, humoristic, resisting, exaggerating counter-productions), may occur in the children's real-virtual encounter? The analyses build on a multi-source informed body of data containing interviews, drawings, and writings from pre- and early teenage children, and observations in school and youth centre contexts among kids same age.