

Contextualizing Gender
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Lecture - 47

Cyborg and Feminism in Anne Balsamo's Technologies of the Gendered Body II

Welcome dear friends, in the previous module, we had looked at Balsamo's conceptualization of the Cyborg body. In this module, we will look at Balsamo's analysis of the constructed masculinities and femininities in female bodybuilding. According to Balsamo, bodies invade it through control over representation of the female body and through communicating the female body as an apparatus of control and marginalization.



Balsamo describes the condition of being represented as a woman rather than being a woman by forwarding Arthur Kroker's and Marshall McLuhan's understanding of technology and the submerged discourse of gender to manufacture gendered products, especially the manufacture of women in society.

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Arthur Kroker's
Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America (1987)

- In this collection of edited essays, Arthur Kroker seeks to intervene in the reproduction of a dominant discourse of the body that would define it as an organic, natural entity.
 - Introduced by theses on power and sexuality, this work analyzes the key theoretical contributions of Bataille, Foucault, Baudrillard and Kristeva, and ranges widely over the suppressions and obsessions which mark theoretical discourse and public policy in relation to sexual eroticism, fashion, reproduction and bodily decay.
 - He explores the fate of the body in the postmodern condition.

Other famous books include *SPASM: Virtual Reality, Android Music, and Electric Flesh* (1993), *Data Trash: Theory of the Virtual Class* (1994), and *Body Drift: Butler, Hayles, Haraway* (2012).

Source: goodreads.com Source: uvic.ca



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Balsamo has referred to an essay collection by Arthur Kroker, a Canadian philosopher with the title of 'Body Invaders: Panic Sex' in America published in 1987. Kroker seems to intervene in the reproduction of a dominant discourse of the body that would define it as an organic and natural entity.

Introduced by the thesis on power and sexuality, this work analyzes the key theoretical contributions of philosophers like Bataille, Foucault, Baudrillard and Kristeva and ranges widely over the suppressions and obsessions which mark theoretical discourse and public policy in relation to sexual eroticism, fashion, reproduction, and bodily decay.

He explores the fate of the body in the postmodern condition. His famous works include SPASM; Virtual Reality, Android Music and Electric Flesh; Data Trash, Theory of the Virtual Class and Body Drift, which is a comparison of the contribution of Butler, Hayles and Haraway. Balsamo notes echoing Kroker that the post 1980s body is technologically produced and has acquired a techno structure in popular discourse.

The body is technologically and materially produced and the natural body in the process has disappeared. Kroker draws on the media analysis of Marshall McLuhan, the famous Canadian media theorist to explicate his ideas of the postmodern body in more detail.

McLuhan's philosophy is a shift away from the mechanical focus of philosophies of technologies of the first part of the 20th century towards more postmodern approaches to the questions of the nature and effect of technology.

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- Marshall McLuhan's philosophy is a shift away from the mechanical focus of philosophies of technologies in the first part of the 20th century, towards more post modern approaches to the questions of the nature and effect of technology.
- The means of communication -- the medium -- dominates the content/message/communicated subject/the very essence of communication. *Medium is the message* (1967). Identity is constructed through technology, as "we have put our central nervous system outside us in electric technology".
- His working premise is that the "most insidious effect of technology" is "colonization of biology, of the body itself".

The medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology.

— Marshall McLuhan —

Source: sparkarchitects.com

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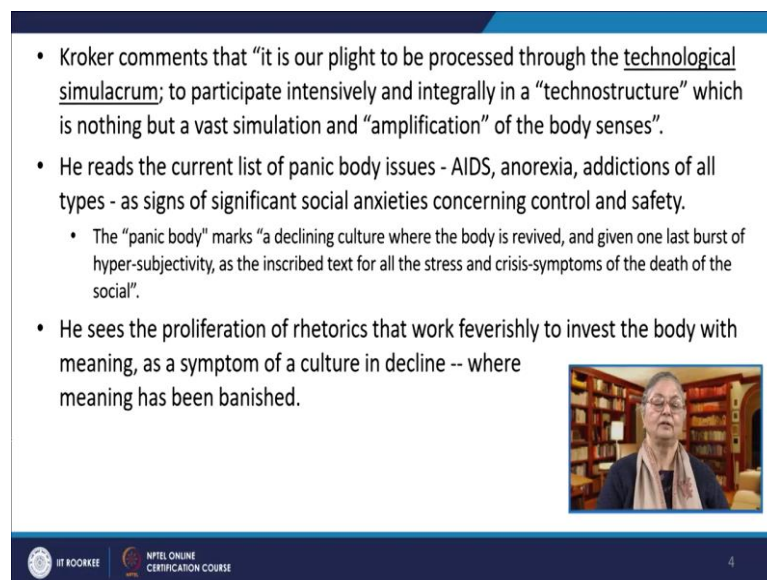
McLuhan is best known for his quote, "Medium is the message". He suggests that it is the means of communication, the medium which dominates the content or the message or the communicated subject. Identity is constructed through technology as according to

him and I quote, “we have put our central nervous system outside us in electric technology” unquote. His working premise is that, the most insidious effect of technology is colonization of biology of the body itself and it is this premise which Balsamo furthers in her own arguments.

McLuhan’s humanism seeks to evoke the creative possibilities that come from understanding the mind-numbing influence of new media. Kroker explores the fate of the body in the postmodern condition, arguing that the natural body has disappeared and has been replaced by a technologically produced simulacrum by numerous technological extensions of the sense.

Kroker reasserts the understanding of the famous British anthropologist Mary Douglas, that cultures think themselves through the body.

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- Kroker comments that “it is our plight to be processed through the technological simulacrum; to participate intensively and integrally in a “technostructure” which is nothing but a vast simulation and “amplification” of the body senses”.
- He reads the current list of panic body issues - AIDS, anorexia, addictions of all types - as signs of significant social anxieties concerning control and safety.
 - The “panic body” marks “a declining culture where the body is revived, and given one last burst of hyper-subjectivity, as the inscribed text for all the stress and crisis-symptoms of the death of the social”.
- He sees the proliferation of rhetorics that work feverishly to invest the body with meaning, as a symptom of a culture in decline -- where meaning has been banished.

Kroker comments that it is our plight to be processed through the technological simulacrum, to participate intensively and integrally in a techno structure, which is nothing but a vast simulation and amplification of the body senses.

He has presented a list of panic body issues as signs of significant social anxieties, concerning control and safety. His list includes AIDS, anorexia and addictions of all types. The panic body marks a declining culture where the body is reviewed and given one last burst of hyper subjectivity, as the inscribed text for all the stress and crisis


symptoms of the death of the social. Kroker sees the proliferation of rhetorics that work feverishly to invest the body with meaning, as a symptom of a culture in decline, where meaning has been banished.



The prevalence of the body rhetoric masks the disappearance of the natural body, which has now been replaced by technological devices in turn masks the disappearance of the social, which according to Kroker is the final death of social solidarity that comes from daily living with the apocalypse. Discourse, now objectified as communication technologies literally replaces the material body with simulated body senses. Foucault had considered the body as a modern apparatus.

However, recent scholarship suggests that the body is represented as a site of panic in postmodern discourses.

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- Whereas Foucault's project was to explicate how the discourses of modernity redefined the body as machine, in postmodernity what we discover is that technology now transforms the body into nothing more than a discourse.
- Kroker elaborates on language of body invaders as the conspicuous consumption of late capitalism, which turns all bodies into sign vehicles for fetishistic commodities.
- The compulsion to theorize the condition of postmodern bodies as something new or even exhausted is due to the novelty the male body experiences coming under this totalizing system for the first time; therefore, understandably, panic results.
- In Kroker's analysis, female bodies continue to mark gender; thus, they announce the deployment of a gendered opposition of bodies in postmodern theory.



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Whereas, Foucault had suggested that the discourses of modernity redefined the body as machine; in postmodernity what we discover is that technology has now transformed the body into nothing more than a discourse. Kroker elaborates on language of body invaders as the conspicuous consumption of late capitalism, which turns all bodies into sign vehicles for fetishist commodities.

The compulsion to theorize the condition of postmodern bodies as something new or even exhausted is due to the novelty the male body experiences coming under this

totalizing system for the first time, therefore understandably panic results. In Kroker's analysis, female bodies continue to mark gender; thus, they announce the deployment of a gendered opposition of bodies in postmodern theory. Female bodies are still constructed as the message bearing and silent form of earlier produced cultural imagery.

Now, the cultural imagery is expressed through the rhetoric of panic. Balsamo juxtaposes Kroker's 'The Capezio Woman' in McLuhan's analysis, to suggest that the female body is gendered as it is represented and does not claim its representation

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Source: mcluhangalaxy.wordpress.com Source: pinterest.com

- Balsamo juxtaposes McLuhan's *The Mechanical Bride* (1951) and Kroker's "The Capezio Woman"*
 - the Mechanical Bride symbolizes the female body of American media culture that is docile, traditional, and subjected to the "wager of old patriarchal power".
 - The Capezio Woman symbolizes the female body that is stylish, pleasure-anointed, and happy to find a snappy pair of new shoes.
- Both images testify to the persistence, and not obsolescence, of gender.
- Even when the body is reduced to a discursive effect, for Kroker, the female body functions as the privileged sign of the "body debased, humiliated, and inscribed to excess by all the signs of consumer culture".

*Capezio is an American manufacturer of dance shoes, apparel and accessories. The brand has earned itself an enviable reputation of making dancewear and dance shoes that have a nearly unbeatable level of performance. The company established the "Capezio Dance Award" in 1952 to recognize significant achievements in dance, and in 1953 it created the Capezio Foundation to administer the awards program and operate a grant program for non-profit organizations.

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In her work Balsamo has juxtaposed McLuhan's, 'The Mechanical Bride' published in 1951 and Kroker's, The Capezio Woman.


The Mechanical Bride symbolizes the female body of American media culture that is docile, traditional and subjected to the wager of old patriarchal power. The Capezio Woman symbolizes the female body that is stylish, pleasure oriented and happy to find a snappy pair of new shoes.

Interestingly, both images testify to the persistence and not obsolescence of gender. Even when the body is reduced to a discursive effect, for Kroker the female body functions as a privileged sign of the body debased, humiliated and inscribed to excess by all the signs of consumer culture.

However, despite so many technological changes, Balsamo notes that the female body is still a product of phallogentric approaches even within the fields of science and technology.

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- Following arguments emerge in Balsamo's reading of Kroker's discourse on "gender":
 - The reception of the female body hasn't changed drastically.
 - Kroker identifies the status of female body in postmodernity as always postmodern due to struggle, patriarchy, ideology, hegemonic masculinity. Posthumanism may be a starting point.
 - Balsamo argues that we need to de-essentialize the female body. Biological essentialism needs to be deconstructed.
- Balsamo quotes Alice Jardine's caution to feminist writers to explicate her idea:
- The "attempt to analyze, to separate ideological and cultural determinations of the 'feminine' from the 'real woman' - seemingly the most logical path for a feminist to follow - may also be the most interminable process, one in which women become not only figuratively but also literally possible" (*Gynesis: Configurations of Women and Modernity*, 1986).



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In Balsamo's reading of Kroker's discourse on gender certain points stand out.

Firstly, the reception of the female body has not changed drastically. Secondly, Kroker identifies the status of female body in postmodernity as always postmodern due to his struggle, patriarchy, ideology, hegemonic masculinity and therefore, post humanism may be a starting point.

Thirdly, Balsamo argues that we need to de essentialize the female body. Biological essentialism needs to be deconstructed. In this regard, Balsamo refers to the caution, which Alice Jardine has provided to feminist writers to explicate her idea further.

The attempt to analyze, to separate ideological and cultural determinations of the feminine from the real woman, seemingly the most logical path for a feminist to follow, may also be the most interminable process; one in which women become not only figuratively, but also literally possible.

Balsamo has given us this quote from Alice Jardine, as she suggests a reconstructive approach to reading the female body. She claims that the place of articulation is an effective signifier to understand female positionality. Jardine describes the paradoxical

situation of feminist criticism that, on one hand draws political strength from an essentialist identity of woman, and on the other has been convinced of the necessity to interrogate such an identity for the differences it obscures.

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- It is a mediation of the sharp, often antagonistic differences that separate the American feminists' version of "*woman as sexual identity*" from the French (women) theorists' view of "*woman as process*".
<http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/CStivale/Stivalerev/AJardineFRev86.html>
- Jardine ultimately advocates a reconstruction of our reading practices.
- She suggests that feminists should begin to write new fictions, written through "the continual attention - historical, ideological, and affective - to the place from which we speak".

Alice Jardine
Source: scholar.harvard.edu

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She suggests that feminists should begin to write new fictions; written through I quote "the continual attention historical, ideological, and affective to the place from which we speak" unquote. Balsamo also refers to the work of Ruth Bleier and Paula Treichler. By referring to these, Balsamo wants to demonstrate the gendered practices in science and technology in reconfiguring the diseases associated with the body and dictated by hetero social norms.


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Examining the *Gendered* Body and the *Cyborg*

- Balsamo analyses the work of Ruth Bleier and Paula Treichler.
- A neurophysiologist who is one of the first feminist scholars to explore how gender biases have shaped biology, Bleier's work demonstrates how gender, sexuality, and science, rather than being static and judgment-free, are constantly affected by sexism and cultural biases, and change in response to social values and ideas.
 - Bleier's ideas are summed up in her influential book *Science and Gender: A Critique of Biology and its Theories on Women* (1984).



Ruth Bleier (1923-1988)
Source: search.library.wisc.edu



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This book reviews the role of science in the creation of an elaborate mythology of women's biological inferiority as an explanation for their subordinate position in society.

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- Paula Treichler works to prepare cultural chronicles of epidemics and demonstrates the institutionalised practices and discourses of the production of gendered norms.
- She explicates that the medical discourse establishes the disease and the female body in relation to each other.
- Female body is considered to be inherently pathological, however it was excluded from the AIDS pandemic survey, to denote that AIDS is a male only disease and women are not at risk. ("AIDS, Homophobia, and Biomedical Discourse: An Epidemic of Signification", 1987).



Paula Treichler
Source: flickr.com



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As prey to gendered identities, the female body is a hybrid of biotechnology and control and this leads to the narrative of otherness defined by our techno cultural imaginaries. The female body is central to this observation. Cyborg bodies are to be referred to here as product of fears and desires that run deep within our cultural imaginary.

Balsamo discusses in this context, Donna Haraway who has developed a new reading practice in the form of cyborg in her 1985 work, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs'.

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- Balsamo observes that Bleier's work on neuroanatomy and Treichler's work on AIDS mark a standpoint which is identified by Haraway as "informatics of domination", from an order concerned with organic sex role specialization to one that redefines biology as inscription.
- Central to this transition is the emergence of communication technologies as the premier technologies of culture.
- For Haraway, [c]ommunication technologies and biotechnologies are the "crucial tools recrafting our bodies.... Technologies and scientific discourses can be partially understood as formalizations, i.e., as the frozen moments, of the fluid social interactions constituting them, but they should also be viewed as instruments for enforcing meanings" (82-83).



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From an order concerned with organic sex role specialization to one that redefines biology as inscription. Central to this transition is the emergence of communication technologies as the premier technologies of culture. For Haraway, communication technologies and biotechnologies are the crucial tools recrafting our bodies.

Technologies and scientific discourses can be partially understood as formalizations, that is as the frozen moments of the fluid social interactions constituting them; but they should also be viewed as instruments for enforcing meanings.

Communication sciences and modern biologies are constructed by a common move, the translation of the world into a problem of quoting. A search for a common language in which all heterogeneity can be summited to disassembly, reassembly, investment and exchange.

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- Cyborg bodies are constructed by communication networks and other hybrid discourses such as biotechnology and biopolitics.
- A product of fears and desires that run deep within our cultural imaginary, cyborgs are appropriate emblems of postmodern identity.
 - Since cyborg identity is predicated on transgressed boundaries, they represent unfamiliar "otherness," that challenges the denotative stability of human identity.
- Every cyborg image constructs an implicit opposition between machine and human, at once repressing similarities and highlighting distinctions.
 - In this way it defines the meaning of both terms: "human" and "artificial."



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Cyborg bodies are constructed by communication networks and other hybrid discourses such as biotechnology and biopolitics. A product of our fears and desires, cyborgs are appropriate emblems of postmodern identity. Since cyborg identity is predicated on transgressed boundaries, they represent unfamiliar otherness that challenges the denotative stability of human identity.


Every cyborg image constructs an implicit opposition between machine and human, at once repressing similarities and highlighting distinctions. In this way it defines the meaning of both terms human and the artificial.

The cyborg figuration is a counter argument to such narratives of control and dominant ideology, as it is neither a machine nor a human. Through technology as a means or as a context; for human hybridization, cyborgs represent unfamiliar otherness, one that challenges the denotative stability of human identity.

Science of humanness and alternatively, science of machine-ness function not only as markers of the essences of the dual natures of the hybrid; but also, as science of the inviolable opposition between 'humans' and 'machines'.

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- As the cyborg embodies both "natures" simultaneously, the resulting hybrid is neither purely human nor purely machine.
- A matter of fiction, and also a matter of lived experience, they dominate the postmodern culture.
- Balsamo suggests that the cyborg, "for Haraway, has the potential to disrupt the persistent dualisms (culture/nature, male/female, reality/appearance, real/artificial) that have been "systemic to the logics and practices of domination of women, people of color, nature, workers, animals." (33)
 - Haraway superimposes the woman onto the cyborg, as their bodies denote otherness like the female bodies.
 - This foregrounds the "ambiguous constitution of the female body – predicated on the blurred boundaries between the individual and the collective, the material and the discursive ..." (34).



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Haraway superimposes the woman onto the cyborg, as their bodies denote otherness like the female bodies. This foregrounds the ambiguous constitution of the female body, predicated on the blurred boundaries between the individual and the collective, the material and the discursive. Balsamo points out that the woman and cyborg are simultaneously symbolically and biologically produced and reproduced through social interactions; the self is one interactional product and the body is another.

The cyborg figuration will also be discussed in our later modules, while foregrounding the theorizations of Donna Haraway.

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- The body is not solely a matter of materiality; nor can it be reductively a matter of discourse. Its "nature" is culturally determined even when this nature is said to be discursively constructed.
 - Cyborg narrative is an alternative mode of storytelling, and raises the issue of possible new form(s) of gendered embodiment.
- Feminist scholarship by Haraway, Ruth Bleier and Paula Treichler, thus quoted by Balsamo elaborates that the female body functions as a marker of sexuality and reproduction in the domain of science, technology and medicine – institutionalized domains of socially constructed knowledge.
- Balsamo concludes that gender is a constructed effect at the level of the body.



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The body is not solely a matter of materiality, nor can it be reductively a matter of discourse. Its nature is culturally determined even when this nature is said to be discursively constructed. Cyborg narrative is an alternative mode of storytelling and raises the issue of possible new forms of gendered embodiment.


Feminist scholarship by Haraway, Ruth Bleier and Paula Treichler, thus quoted by Balsamo elaborates that the female body functions as a matter of sexuality and reproduction in the domain of science, technology and medicine; that is the institutionalized domain of socially constructed knowledge.

Balsamo concludes that gender is a constructed effect at the level of the body. Balsamo further attempts to rearticulate the cyborgian narrative on to the female body building and sports, to produce a techno motion picture of the female body in postmodern setting.

After analyzing the intersection of technology and gendered bodies, Balsamo analyzes the mechanical reconstruction of the gendered body through female body building as a discourse.

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- To quote Balsamo: “.... the body in feminist theory has never been simply a blank slate (or screen) upon which or about which to write. From a feminist perspective, attempts to write about the relationship between the contemporary social order and the body are ill-fated endeavours if they do not begin with a consideration of gender, or more explicitly, with a consideration of the gendering of bodies.”(40)
- She quotes the scholarship of Lynda Birke, Gail Vines (feminist sociologists), Patricia Vertinsky (History of Physical Culture and Sport), Helen Lenskyj (sports studies); to suggest the historical inaccuracies in the conceptualization of the female body and its participation in sports.



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To quote Balsamo, the body in feminist theory has never been simply a blank state or a screen upon which or about which to write. From a feminist perspective, attempts to write about the relationship between the contemporary social order and the body are ill fated endeavours, if they do not begin with a consideration of gender or more explicitly with a consideration of the gendering of bodies.

She quotes the scholarship of Lynda Birke, Gail Vines, who are feminist sociologist; Patricia Vertinsky who works in the area of History of Physical Culture and Sport, and Helen Lenskyj who works in the area of sports studies to suggest the historical inaccuracies in the conceptualization of the female body and its participation in sports.

Balsamo notes that the female bodybuilding practices are in sync with the cyborg dream , as they allow the transcendence from the heteronormative models of stereotypical femininities.

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• Balsamo takes the example of *Pumping Iron II: The Women*^{*}, to deconstruct the notions of femininity that it attempts to establish through its portrayal of female bodybuilding.

Source:picclick.com Source:clubdesfemmes.com

Source:amazon.com

**A 1985 documentary/non-fiction film about female bodybuilding, focusing on several women as they prepare for and compete in the 1983 Caesars World Cup, a contest created specifically for the film.*

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Balsamo takes the example of ‘Pumping Iron II: The Women’, which is a 1985 documentary or a nonfiction film about female bodybuilding.

Balsamo takes this example to deconstruct the notions of femininity that it attempts to establish through its portrayal of female bodybuilding. This non-fiction film focuses on several women as they prepare for and compete in the 1983 World Cup, a contest which has been specifically created for the film only.

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- The film highlights the practice and show of the female bodybuilding as a subculture^{*} which in turn attempts to reinforce the notion of “mechanical production” of the “gendered” bodies.
- The female bodybuilder represents cyborg identity, “perfectly attuned to contemporary culture, the female bodybuilder is a machine dream of cyborg identity, the female form that works to recreate the female form, using the science of weights, resistance, and kinesthetic labor”.

^{*}Term coined in the 1940s in the context of the liberal and pluralist assumptions of the Chicago School/Ecological School of Sociology. Usage and meanings have continued to shift. People of a subculture are a part of the larger culture, but also share a specific identity within a smaller group.

Subcultures Defined

- While small societies tend to be culturally uniform, large industrial societies are culturally diverse and involve numerous subcultures.
- Subcultures are values and norms distinct from those of the majority and are held by a group within a wider society.
- In Australia, subcultures might include hippies, Goths, fans of hip hop or heavy metal and even bikers – the examples are endless.

Source:slideplayer.com


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The film highlights the practice and show of the female bodybuilding as a subculture, which in turn attempts to reinforce the notion of mechanical production of the gendered bodies.

The female body builder represents cyborg identity, perfectly attuned to contemporary culture; the female body builder is a machine dream of cyborg identity, the female form that works to recreate the female form using the science of weights, resistance and kinaesthetic labour. However, the feminist narrative is not completely immune to its hegemonic constructions; as the female body builders and women in sports are still commodified and sexualized.

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- The cultural discourse of female bodybuilding emerged during the 1980s. It is in part constructed within a historical discourse focusing on women and sport.
- It subjected the athletic female body of the early 19th century, to various forms of medical and moral discipline.
 - “More contemporary text-images of popular female athletes illustrate how the sporting female body is both objectified and eroticized in ways that promote its sexual desirability over its athletic capabilities”.
- It also directs our attention to “how deviant constructions of the female body are staged and disciplined”.
- Michael Messner, Margaret Carlisle Duncan and Kerry Jensen: use of language in televised coverage and commentary of sports tournaments.



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The cultural discourse of female body building emerged during the 1980s. It is in part constructed within a historical discourse focusing on women and sport. It subjected the athletic female body of the early 19th century to various forms of medical and moral discipline. More contemporary text images of popular female athletes, illustrates how this sporting female body is both objectified and eroticized in ways that promote its sexual desirability over its athletic capabilities.

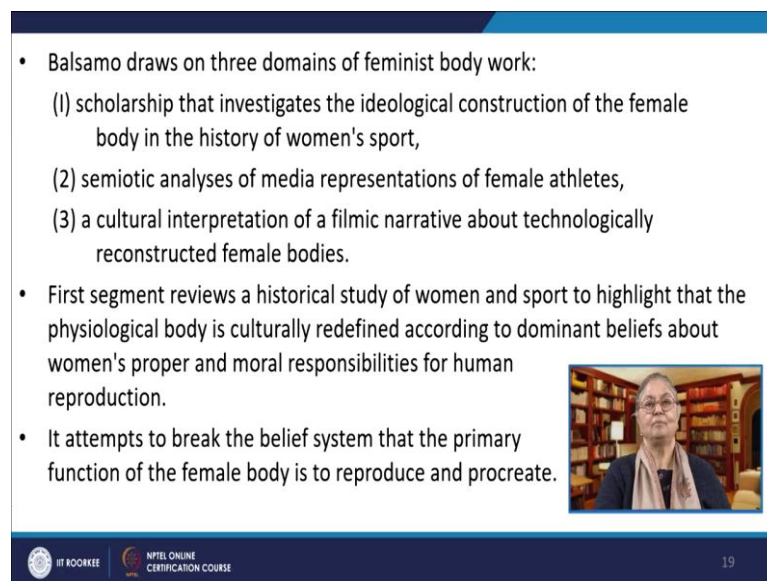
It also directs our attention to how deviant constructions of the female body are staged and disciplined. Michael Messner, Margaret Duncan and Kerry Jensen have researched about the use of language in televised coverage and commentary of sports tournament.

They tell us that women professionals and athletes continue to be underrepresented in news coverage and even when they are included, they are often stereotypically portrayed.

They highlighted gender marking and a hierarchy of naming by gender and race. And concluded that televised sports commentary contributes to the construction of gender and racial hierarchies by marking women's sports and women athletes as other, by infantilizing women athletes and by framing the accomplishments of women athletes in an ambivalent manner.

The body is constructed and conceptualized within the feminist discourse in multiple ways.

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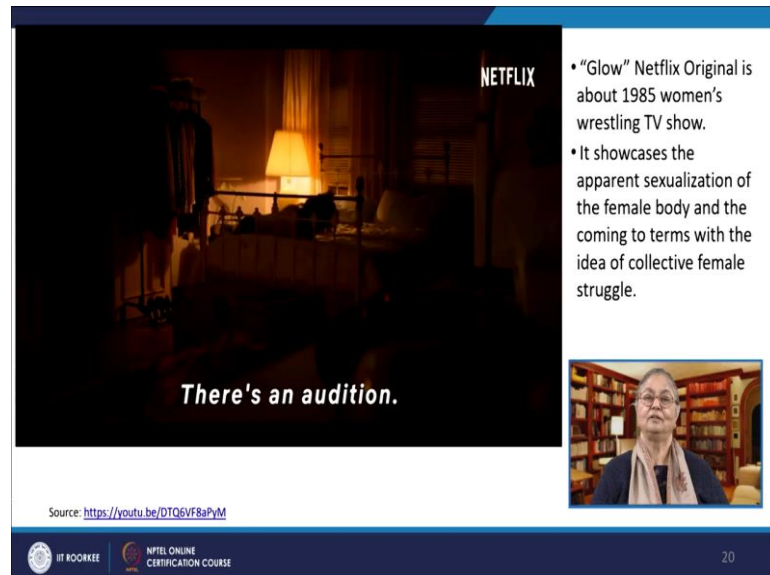
- Balsamo draws on three domains of feminist body work:
 - (1) scholarship that investigates the ideological construction of the female body in the history of women's sport,
 - (2) semiotic analyses of media representations of female athletes,
 - (3) a cultural interpretation of a filmic narrative about technologically reconstructed female bodies.
- First segment reviews a historical study of women and sport to highlight that the physiological body is culturally redefined according to dominant beliefs about women's proper and moral responsibilities for human reproduction.
- It attempts to break the belief system that the primary function of the female body is to reproduce and procreate.

Balsamo in her work has drawn on three domains of feminist body work; first scholarship that investigates the ideological construction of the female body in the history of women's sport, second semiotic analysis of media representations of female athletes, third a cultural interpretation of a filmic narrative about technologically reconstructed female bodies.

The first segment reviews a historical study of women and sports to highlight that the physiological body is culturally redefined according to dominant beliefs about women's proper and moral responsibilities for human reproduction. It attempts to break the belief system that the primary function of the female body is to reproduce and procreate.

In the next slide we have a video; it is an excerpt from Netflix ‘Glow’, a television show on women’s wrestling in the 1980s.

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- “Glow” Netflix Original is about 1985 women’s wrestling TV show.
- It showcases the apparent sexualization of the female body and the coming to terms with the idea of collective female struggle.

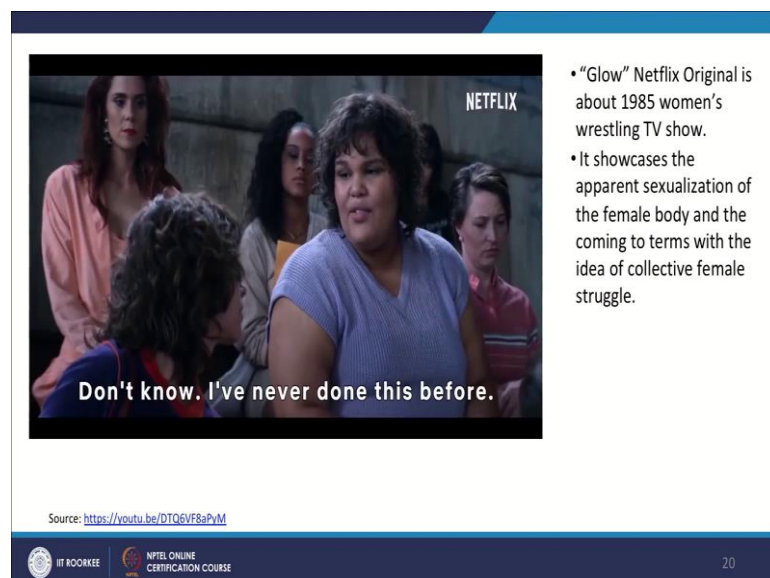
Source: <https://youtu.be/DTQ6VF8aPyM>

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The Netflix original show ‘Glow’ showcases, the apparent sexualization of the female body and the coming to terms with the idea of collective female struggle.

“There is an audition. Have they started yet?”

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- “Glow” Netflix Original is about 1985 women’s wrestling TV show.
- It showcases the apparent sexualization of the female body and the coming to terms with the idea of collective female struggle.

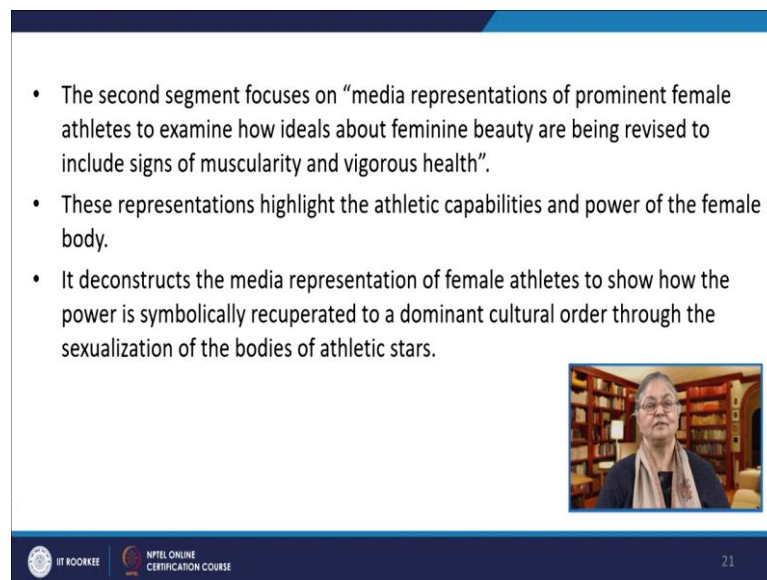
Source: <https://youtu.be/DTQ6VF8aPyM>

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I do not know. I have actually never done one of these before. Hello ladies. Hi. I am Sam Sylvia and this is GLOW. Sorry, what is GLOW? Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling. Ok. Who are you people? Ruth Wilder. I am a real actress. Sorry to interrupt, your wife is on line two. Sheila. Justine Victoria. Hi, I am Melanie. I am not boring. I can kick, I can punch. But can you act? I am Carmen. I have never done anything in front of an audience before. People respect me here We are empowered, we are the heroes. Why bother trying to make anything that you really care about? Because that is what you do. Most people call me a freak. What I put on, what I wear, it is not for you. It is for me. You want to grab a drink? No. We are not there”.

The show depicts the sexualization of bodies in wrestling and paints a narrative similar to ‘Pumping Iron II: The Women’. At a deeper level, the show is about reinvention of women, it depicts female bonding beyond sexualization of bodies.

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- The second segment focuses on “media representations of prominent female athletes to examine how ideals about feminine beauty are being revised to include signs of muscularity and vigorous health”.
- These representations highlight the athletic capabilities and power of the female body.
- It deconstructs the media representation of female athletes to show how the power is symbolically recuperated to a dominant cultural order through the sexualization of the bodies of athletic stars.


The second segment focuses on media representations of prominent female athletes to examine how ideals about feminine beauty are being revised to include signs of muscularity and vigorous health.

These representations highlight the athletic capabilities and power of the female body . It also deconstructs the media representation of female athletes to show how the power is symbolically recuperated to a dominant cultural order through the sexualization of the bodies of athletic stars.

Balsamo also finds that normalizing power of media representation establish new ideals for the female body, such that muscularity and physical development are heralded as women's new sex appeal.

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- The final segment reads the film *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, which examines a symbolic contest, organized to provide the proper definition of femininity; as the winner of the filmic bodybuilding contest would also be the preferred form of female embodiment.
- Balsamo illuminates the way in which the "naturally" female body is culturally reconstructed according to dominant codes of femininity and racial identity.
- Balsamo's reading exposes sexualization of the female, athletic body. It deconstructs dominant binary codes by demolishing the constructed notions of bodybuilding as "cults of masculinity".



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The final segment reads the film 'Pumping Iron II: The Women', which examines the symbolic contest organized to provide the proper definition of femininity.



As the winner of the filmic bodybuilding contest, would also be the preferred form of female embodiment. Balsamo illuminates the way in which the naturally female body is culturally constructed, according to dominant codes of femininity and racial identity. Balsamo's reading also exposes sexualization of the female, athletic body. It deconstructs dominant binary codes by demolishing the constructed notions of bodybuilding as cults of masculinity.

To conclude we can say that the gendered body though technologically produced, highlights, on the one hand the masculinization in the popular domain and on the other hand, it develops a narrative of change and hope with the cyborgian narrative. In the next module, while developing critical insights into the female bodybuilding practices; we will also look at the idea of humanizing the female body in sports and mechanically reproducing the female body.

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Thank you.