

**Contextualizing Gender**  
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**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

**Lecture - 60**  
**A Gender Perspective on COVID-19 Pandemic**

Dear participants, welcome to our final lecture. In our 12th week, we have discussed the literary post human narrative as we elaborated on Donna Haraway 'Cyborgca' Figuration as a post gender icon in the 21st century. We have also discussed Rosi Braidotti's post anthropocentric nomadic subjectivities.


We touched upon Ferrando's idea of post woman and post human. In this final lecture we will focus on the impact of the COVID- 19 pandemic on gender equality to portray the idea of nowness and our current situatedness amidst the pandemic in terms of gender .

It would help us to establish the role and relevance of gender in the pandemic and possibly in the post pandemic era as well. The unprecedented disruptions caused by the global pandemic has exaggerated gender-based inequalities in our sociocultural existence. Therefore, there is a need to understand the ramifications of being gendered in the midst of an almost apocalyptic reality that the pandemic is today .


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### Gender and COVID- 19 Pandemic


- Katherine Hayles has suggested that the novel coronavirus is posthuman in at least two senses:
- First, because it is oblivious to human intentions, desires, and motives.
- Second, she suggests that in evolutionary terms, humans and viruses have adopted diametrically opposed strategies.
  - Whereas humans have achieved dominance within their evolutionary niche by evolving toward increased cognitive complexity; viruses, by contrast, have evolved toward increased simplicity.
    - They replicate by hijacking a cell's machinery and using it to proliferate.



Source: medium.com








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Katherine Hayles has suggested that the novel corona virus is post human in at least two senses: First, because it is oblivious to human intentions, desires and motives. And, second she suggests that in terms, of evolution humans in viruses have adopted diametrically opposed strategies.

Whereas human beings have achieved dominance within their evolutionary niche by evolving towards increased cognitive complexity; by contrast, viruses have evolved towards increased simplicity. They replicate by hijacking a cell's machinery and using it to proliferate.

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- According to N. Katherine Hayles,
  - the novel coronavirus is posthuman in at least two senses. First, and most obviously, because it is oblivious to human intentions, desires, and motives. The second sense is .... in evolutionary terms, humans and viruses have adopted diametrically opposed strategies...Humans have achieved dominance within their evolutionary niche by evolving toward increased cognitive complexity, developing language with associated changes in brain and body, evolving elaborate social structures, and, in very recent human history, augmenting their capacities with advanced technical devices, including artificial intelligence. Viruses, by contrast, have evolved toward increased simplicity. Viruses replicate by hijacking a cell's machinery and using it to proliferate....". (Hayles)



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The complete quote of Hayles is given in this slide. While noting Hayles remarkable theorization on the posthuman functioning of the virus we see that along with all other shared vulnerabilities experienced by humans in a global pandemic, gendering has become a prime concern. The possible reason perhaps is the violence associated with gendering in multiple forms such as domestic violence, verbal abuse, sexual harassment at home, marital rape and physical abuse.

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- According to World Health Organization, the pandemic has derailed the accelerated progress on gender equality as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs).
- The gendered impact of the pandemic includes:
  1. sex disaggregated statistics on COVID- 19 fatalities;
  2. the gendered economic and social impacts of the pandemic;
  3. domestic violence against girls and women;
  4. loss of employment in urban and rural centres;
  5. Difficulties faced by poor migrant women and women from marginalized racial/ethnic groups.

Source: ign.com

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According to the World Health Organization, the pandemic has derailed the accelerated progress on gender equality as a Sustainable Development Goal. The gendered impact of the pandemic includes: sex disaggregated statistics on COVID- 19 fatalities; the gendered economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

Domestic violence against girls and women; loss of employment especially for women in urban and rural centers. Difficulties faced by poor migrant women and women from marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

Recent scholarship suggests that the matter of gender-based violence requires the same effort and attention as it did in the pre COVID scenario. Therefore, there is a need to contextualize gender and its various social, cultural, economic, political and literary intersectionalities even within a global pandemic.

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- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities within countries and across geographies. It also reminded us how the world and its people are interconnected.
- Gender-based violence (GBV), which is an expression of gender inequality and toxic masculinity, is another pandemic that exists in all societies at varying degrees of prevalence and severity. (Dlamini)
- It requires the same effort and attention that governments globally have given to COVID-19. With half the world under lockdown for a considerable time, as a response to COVID-19, GBV increased significantly (UN Women, 2020a).



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The COVID- 19 pandemic has exposed existing inequalities within countries and across geographies. It has also reminded us how the world and its people are and remain to be interconnected.

Gender-based violence or GBV, as it is known, which is an expression of gender inequality and toxic masculinity, is another pandemic that exists in all societies at varying degrees of prevalence and severity. It requires the same effort and attention that governments globally have given to COVID-19.

With half the world under lock down for a considerable time as a response to COVID-19, GBV increased significantly. The idea of social vulnerability is a shared concept and so is the concept of gender inequality at all fronts.

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- The increase was a reminder of the need to have contingent mitigating mechanism to protect the marginalized, women and girls, against a co-existing pandemic, GBV.
- The intersection of marginalization and discrimination made certain groups of women more susceptible to GBV and COVID-19 pandemics.
- These intersecting social identities of vulnerability need equal attention in order to eradicate inequality (Simonovic, 2020).
- According to Graeme Reid, the Pandemic has rendered the LGBT: a “disposable” category as we have failed to acknowledge the vulnerabilities experienced by LGBT people and rejected their rights. (See “A queer approach to understanding LGBT vulnerability during the COVID- 19 pandemic” by Graeme Reid and S Ritholtz.)



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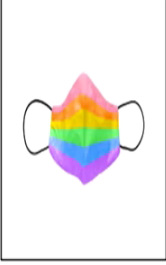
This increase was a reminder of the need to have contingent mitigating mechanism to protect the marginalized, women and girls, against a co-existing pandemic, that is GBV. The intersection of marginalization and discrimination made certain groups of women more susceptible to GBV and also to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These intersecting social identities of vulnerability need equal attention in order to eradicate inequality. It would be pertinent here to refer to Reid and Ritholtz. They have said that the pandemic has rendered the LGBT a disposable category as we have failed to acknowledge the vulnerabilities experienced by LGBT people and rejected their rights.


Reid and Ritholtz argue for the inclusion of LGBT plus individuals in the humanitarian response efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic. Contrary to popular belief the main stream discourse has appropriated a monolithic approach to LGBT plus identity groups which has compounded precarity during crisis.

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- The LGBT+ vulnerability is not a queer project and therefore sexual orientation cannot be the basis for differentiation amidst the global pandemic. Reid and Ritholtz present it as a “Human” project.
- To quote Elizabeth Grosz, the well-known Australian philosopher and feminist, an emphasis on inscribed sexual difference and differentiation is a crude approach towards “human” as a subject.
- The normative body is unsustainable till the binary markers of race, gender, sex and the Anthropos are associated with it. However it provides fertile grounds for theorization, especially in the pandemic to work through the consequences of systemic marginalization.



Source: bu.edu



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The normative body is unsustainable till the binary markers of race, gender, sex and Anthropos are associated with it. However, it provides fertile grounds for theorization, especially in the pandemic to work through the consequences of systematic marginalization.

Motivated by the assertion that centering LGBT experiences, during crisis reveals new insights into the logics of prejudicial violence othering and marginality by political actors Reid and Ritholtz suggest that the process of othering and death is not attuned with the viral contagion.

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- Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman* articulates that the pan human planetary bond is not based on life and shared vulnerability, but on hegemonized structures of power and control.
  - She suggests that “the bodies of the empirical subjects who signify difference (women/native/earth or natural others);[the LGBT, people of colour] have become “disposable bodies of the global economy”(111) especially in the times of crises.
- We are witnessing a one sided approach to the viral contagion as ‘us vs it’ (virus) narrative.
- In “Critical Inquiry: Posts from the Pandemic”, N. Katherine Hayles argues that “these complexities suggest that a simple binary of us versus them/humans versus viruses, is far too simple to be an adequate formulation for understanding our relation to each other and to the larger ecologies within which we are immersed”.

Source: amazon.in

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Rosi Braidotti in her work ‘the Posthuman’ articulates that the pan human planetary bond is not based on life and shared vulnerability, but on hegemonized structures of power and control. She suggests that “the bodies of the empirical subjects who signify difference that is women, native, earth or natural others”.

The LGBT of the people of color etcetera have become disposable bodies of the global economy especially in the times of crisis. We are witnessing a one-sided approach to the viral contagion as us versus it that is human beings versus the viral narrative.

Katherine Hayles has argued in this context that these complexities suggest that a simple binary of us versus them or humans versus the virus, is far too simple to be an adequate formulation for understanding our relation to each other and to the larger ecologies within which we are immersed.

LGBT individuals suffer from social stigmatization and gendering which showcases a fractured image of gender equity and equality as propagated by many in the pre COVID times.

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- Stay at home directives and isolation has increased psychological hate, suicidal tendencies and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in considering a homophobic home environment.
- LGBT persons are facing a disproportionate representation in the ranks of poverty, homelessness and health care facilities.
- LGBT people are also singled out, abused, violated and stigmatized as vectors of diseases in the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- These factors have contributed to an increase in gender based violence which is not limited to just women and girl child.



Source: theprint.com



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The social isolation forced by the pandemic as well as stay at home directives have increased psychological hate, suicidal tendencies and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in considering a homophobic home environment.


LGBT persons are facing a disproportionate representation in the ranks of poverty, homelessness and healthcare facilities. LGBT people are also singled out, abused, violated and stigmatized as vectors of diseases in the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors have contributed to an increase in gender-based violence which is not limited to just women and the girl child.

The intertwined nature of gender and various other discriminatory markers constituted by the mainstream discourse in the form of sexual orientation, life style or race etcetera makes gender-based violence a socially relevant category in dire need of attention.

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- Therefore, our current situation calls for a gender based, feminist response to the COVID- 19 Pandemic because:
  1. Gender discourse and feminism has recognized intersectional and paradigmatic inequalities with respect to class, region, language, ethnicity, income, lifestyle, geography, sexual orientation. These socio-cultural inequalities have become more real than ever by the pandemic.
  2. From an unsafe working environment, homelessness to unemployment, the pandemic has aggravated all crises for some people. Rosi Braidotti in *The Posthuman* said that, “some of us are more human than others”. (14)





Source: gn.ugc.com



Source: medium.org





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Our current situation therefore, calls for a gender based, and also a feminist response to the COVID-19 Pandemic because: Firstly, gender discourse and feminism have recognized intersectional and paradigmatic inequalities with respect to class, religion, language, ethnicity, income life is style, geography and sexual orientation. These sociocultural inequalities have become more real than ever by the pandemic.

Secondly, from an unsafe working environment homelessness to unemployment, the pandemic has aggravated all crises for some people. Rosi Braidotti in ‘The Posthuman’ set very aptly that some of us are more human than others.

We cannot afford to lose sight of gender justice and gender equality at all fronts, especially in the private domain. We require a gender plan for the future for a sustainable and empowered practical road map to achieve gender equality in performance and in practice. Jennifer Piscopo, Associate Professor of Politics at Occidental College Los Angeles has called such initiatives as the pathways to building back better.

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- According to Helen Lewis (writer at *The Atlantic*), the pandemic affects men and women differently:
- "... when people try to be cheerful about social distancing and working from home, noting that William Shakespeare and Isaac Newton did some of their best works while England was ravaged by the plague, there is an obvious response: *Neither of them had child-care responsibilities*".
  - For those with caring responsibilities, "an infectious-disease outbreak is unlikely to give them time to write *King Lear* or develop a *theory of optics*. A pandemic magnifies all existing inequalities.
- Working from home in a white-collar job is easier; self-isolation is less taxing in a spacious house than a cramped apartment. It is a privilege not enjoyed by all.



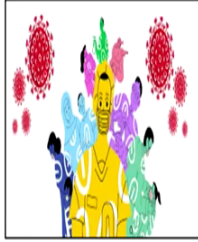
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According to Helen Lewis who is a writer at The Atlantic, the pandemic affects men and women differently: “when people try to be cheerful about social distancing and working from home, noting that William Shakespeare and Isaac Newton did some of their best works while England was ravaged by the plague, there is an obvious response: Neither of them had child-care responsibilities” unquote.


For those with caring responsibilities, an infectious-disease outbreak is unlikely to give them time to write *King Lear* or to develop a theory of optics. A pandemic magnifies all existing inequalities. Working from home in a white-collar job is easier; self-isolation is less taxing in a spacious house than a cramped apartment. It is a privilege not enjoyed by all.

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- Recent scholarship suggests that academic productivity is regulated by gender, race and parenthood; especially in the field of medicine, science and technology. (See: Giuliana Viglione, *Nature* 581).
- As the pandemic magnifies gender inequalities, women continue to be self-sacrificing and suffer disproportionately.
- There is a digital divide, income divide, increased work load that are further amplified in conflicts, domestic abuse and violence.



Source: viral.com



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Recent scholarships suggest that academic productivity is regulated by gender, race and parenthood; especially in the fields of medicine, science and technology. As the pandemic magnifies gender inequalities, women continue to be self-sacrificing and suffer disproportionately.

There is a digital divide, income divide, increased workload that are further amplified in conflicts, domestic abuse and violence. However, we are yet to produce a holistic picture of the ramifications of gender-based violence due to COVID-19 pandemic, as we are speaking through the pandemic it is not yet an afterthought.


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## Gender and Violence

- According to Miguel Lorente Acosta, the medico-legal study of Gender- Based- Violence under lockdown evolves into two phases: “during lockdown, with the increase in all its forms (physical, psychological and sexual), and after lockdown, focusing on fatality risk assessment, which increases due to perceived loss of control on the part of the perpetrator”.
- *Relationship Manager* by Falguni Thakore, *Listen to Her* by Nandita Das, *Day After Day* by Hubert Davis are some of the recent critically acclaimed short films on gender based violence during the COVID- 19 pandemic and the lockdown, cinematically depicting the abovementioned.



Source: medici.com



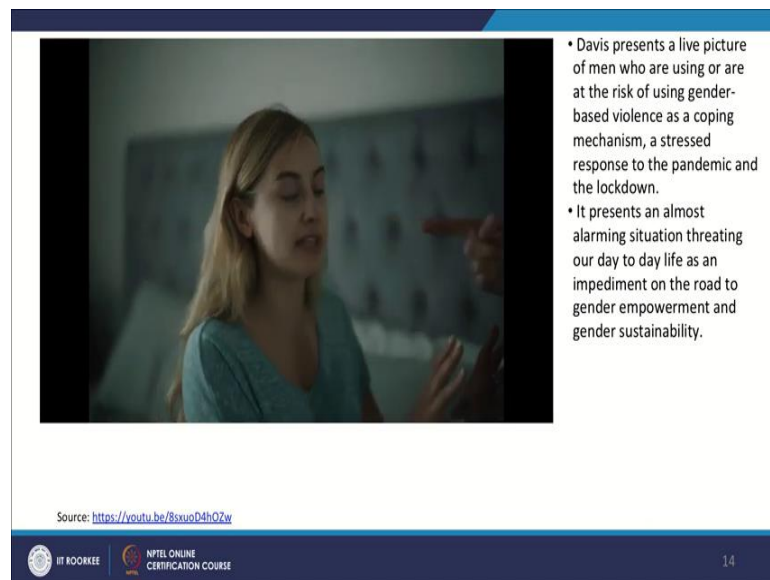
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According to Miguel Acosta, the medico legal study of gender-based-violence under lockdown evolves in two phases: “during lockdown, with the increase in all its forms that is physical psychological and sexual, and after lockdown, focusing on fatality risk assessment, which increases due to perceived loss of control on the part of the perpetrator”.

‘Relationship Manager’ by Falguni Takore, ‘Listened to Her’ by Nandita Das, ‘Day After Day’ by Hubert Davis are some of the recent critically acclaimed short films on gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in the lockdown, cinematically depicting the abovementioned.

Let us watch an excerpt from the short film, ‘Day After Day’ by Hubert Davis an Oscar nominated director speaking directly to men and women being perpetrators and victims of gender-based violence in lockdown.

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- Davis presents a live picture of men who are using or are at the risk of using gender-based violence as a coping mechanism, a stressed response to the pandemic and the lockdown.
- It presents an almost alarming situation threatening our day to day life as an impediment on the road to gender empowerment and gender sustainability.

Source: <https://youtu.be/8xxuoD4hO2w>

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“David presents a live picture of men who are using or are at the risk of using gender-based violence as a coping mechanism, a stressed response to the pandemic in the lockdown. It presents an almost alarming situation threatening our day-to-day life as an impediment on the road to gender empowerment and gender sustainability.

Imagine you are trapped.

Hey Tom come say hi.

Day After Day no way out no release, no words.

You, I am going to ... I am going to stop you.

Day After Day just a growing sense of worthlessness.

Do you want to try hand one?

Yes

I can teach you to do the dog one.

I may you know.

And all-consuming shame Day After Day.

I was just asking you not trying to upset you.

What am I supposed to do if he is not listening?

Not just because you bullying around child.

You don't bully your own child. You are insane.

You treated him like a baby.

Is it ok?

Yeah It is fine.

Just for a moment imagine you are trapped.

Yeah.

It is everything ok.

It is ok.

Calm down.

I am not going to calm down I am not going to calm down.

Just stop it. Get out of my face please.

Day after day no way out.

Come on.

It is ok.

No, it is not he broke the vas.

That is ok.

Hey go get broom, I will take care of this.

I will get I will get the broom. I know just.

You get the broom. Just go. I cannot take this anymore.

No relief, no words.

I am the one that is listening to you.

Then what?

You hear what I am saying to you? Do not cover your face.

Stop it.


Don't cover you face do not cover you face.

Stop it.


Day After Day growing sense of worthlessness.

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- The short film “Day after Day” by Hubert Davis addresses the rise of domestic violence -- physical, emotional, psychological, sexual -- during the COVID- 19 Pandemic. It follows the traumatic experience of a family in the lockdown where the narration is provided from two distinct point of views.
- The two unnamed partners experience different approaches to cope with the pandemic and narrate two completely different stories of isolation in lockdown.
  - The man is volatile and the woman is trapped without articulation and escape.
  - Unfortunately the man resorts to violence to cope up with his tumultuous mindset as a result of home isolation.



A still from the short film.  
Source: amongmen.com



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This short film addresses the rise of domestic violence in all its narratives physical, emotional, sexual, psychological during the pandemic. It follows the traumatic experience of a family in the lock down where the narration is provided from two distinct perspectives. The two unnamed partners experience different approaches to cope with the pandemic and narrate two completely different stories of isolation in lockdown”.

The man is volatile and the woman is trapped without articulation and escape. Unfortunately, the man resorts to violence to cope up with his tumultuous mindset as a result of home isolation.

For the woman lockdown or stay at home order during the pandemic resulted in a round the clock life struggle with the abusive intimate partner. The short film also extends its narrative to toxic hegemonic masculinity which we have discussed in our previous discussions on men’s and masculinity studies.

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- The vulnerability experienced by an individual is aggravated due to two determinants: firstly, because of the contagion and secondly, by the violence exhibited in relation to the intimate partner.
- Posthuman scholarship suggests that anthropocentric discourses intertwined with the notion of power over the “Other” leads to inhuman violence. (Wolfe, Kleinhans, Braidotti, Balsamo).
- In considering the posthuman ethics of the twenty- first century, we will always arrive at the question of the woman, even in cyborg form (Balsamo, Haraway); to problematize the idea of phallocentrism, anthropocentrism and biopolitics of control over the female body.

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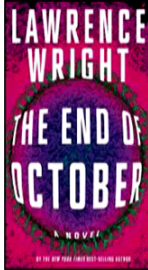
Posthuman scholarship suggests that anthropocentric discourses intertwined with the notion of power over the “Other” leads to inhuman violence. In considering the posthuman ethics of the twenty-first century, we will always write a question of the woman, even in cyborg form; to problematize the idea of phallocentric, anthropocentrism and biopolitics of control over the female body.

The pandemic has complicated human relationality with violence and vulnerability. ‘Day after Day’ is a testament to our current lived realities and for some an everyday struggle. Such a scholarship on gender-based violence in the COVID-19 pandemic has alarmed the academia to develop a more comprehensive and awareness-based model of such problems inaugurated by the pandemic as is side effect to our process of gendering.


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- *The End of October* by Lawrence Wright; *The Pull of the Stars* by Emma Donoghue; *The Pandemic Century* by Mark Honigsbaum; *The Dog Stars* by Peter Heller; *In a Perfect World* by Laura Kasischke are few of the recent novels on pandemic and apocalyptic outbreaks of diseases.
- Posthuman scholarship has embraced this genre to showcase inequalities with respect to *gender*.
- Pandemic literature has offered us to answer the existential question: "What does it mean to be a human?" (Braidotti, 47)
- Does gender really matter in such unprecedented times and realities?



Source: amazon.in




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‘The end of October’ by Lawrence Wright, ‘The Pull of the Stars’ by Emma Donoghue; ‘The Pandemic Century’ by Mark Honingsbaum; ‘The Dog Stars’ by Peter Heller; ‘In a Perfect World’ by Laura K are few of the recent novels on pandemic and apocalyptic outbreaks of diseases. Posthuman scholarship has embraced this genre to showcase inequalities with respect to gender.

Pandemic literature has offered us to answer the existential question: What does it mean to be a human? And, does gender really matter in such unprecedented times and realities? This question is answered in the following video excerpt from Wilson Center.

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**ANYA PRUSA**  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE, BRAZIL INSTITUTE,  
WILSON CENTER

Shadow Pandemic: GBV and COVID-19

- Anya Prusa, Senior Associate Albright Stonebridge Group, Brazil Institute, explains the phrase “Gender Based Violence” (GBV).

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

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Now, in this video Anya Prusa, Senior Associate Albright Stonebridge Group, Brazil Institute, explains the phrase Gender Based Violence.

“So, gender-based violence is as you say a catch-all term that describes a number of different types of violence and these types of violence are often interlocking. The most common that we usually think of would be sexual and physical violence when you think of domestic abuse that is what you think of.

But it can also be psychological such as coercion or verbal abuse it could be economic for example, restricting a woman’s access to financial resources or denying a girl access to education and it is also important to think about institutional violence or the structural subordination and discrimination that women face within societies.

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Shadow Pandemic: GBV and COVID-19

- Anya Prusa, Senior Associate Albright Stonebridge Group, Brazil Institute, explains the phrase “Gender Based Violence” (GBV).

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

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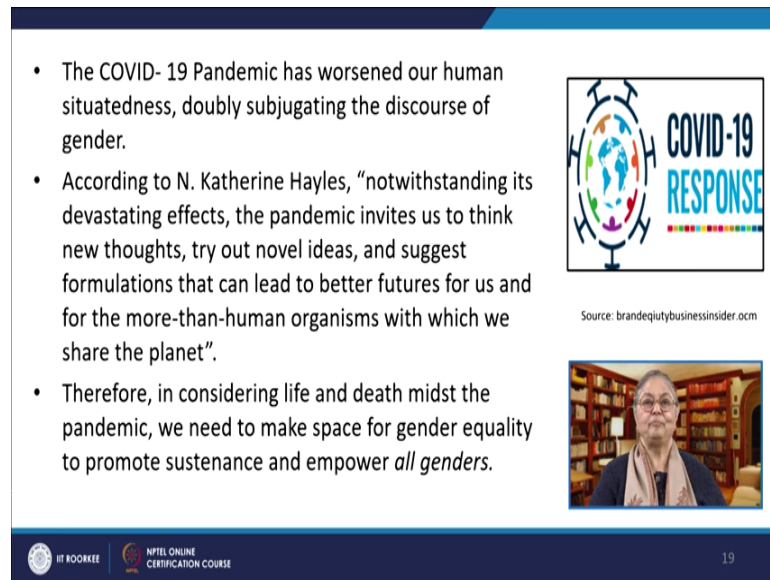
I am not a not totally naive about this topic, but I will have to say in preparing to speak with you and looking at some of the statistical data this jumped out to me with such stunning alarming clarity that the most dangerous place for a woman to be on planet earth is in her home.

Yes. So, we know from data from the world health organization and other organizations as well that one in four women experiences domestic violence or intimate partner violence in her life. So, it is a very real problem for many women around the world this


is not something in the abstract, this is something that women confront every single day”.

“Anya Prusa: urgency to address the issue as she states that GBB affects one auto four women around the globe there is a need to prioritize safety even at home”.


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- The COVID- 19 Pandemic has worsened our human situatedness, doubly subjugating the discourse of gender.
- According to N. Katherine Hayles, “notwithstanding its devastating effects, the pandemic invites us to think new thoughts, try out novel ideas, and suggest formulations that can lead to better futures for us and for the more-than-human organisms with which we share the planet”.
- Therefore, in considering life and death midst the pandemic, we need to make space for gender equality to promote sustenance and empower *all genders*.



Source: [brandequitybusinessinsider.com](http://brandequitybusinessinsider.com)




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The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened our human situatedness, doubly subjugating the discourse of gender. According to Hayles, “notwithstanding its devastating effects, the pandemic invites us to think new thoughts, try out novel ideas, and suggest formulations that can lead to better futures for us and for the more-than-human organisms with which we share the planet. Therefore, in considering life and death midst the pandemic, we need to make space for gender equality to promote sustenance and empower all genders”.

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- Thus we need to still *contextualize gender* even in the twenty first century and in the pandemic as a pedagogical tool to situate our human existence as opposed to gendered beings.
- As we develop a comprehensive understanding of “gender” as a discourse, performance, theory and practice we take a step towards gender empowerment, sustainability and equity in a better future.
- Hence a re-visioning of the genealogy of gender at every step will enable us to *contextualize gender*.



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Thus, we need to still contextualize gender even in the 21st Century and in the pandemic as a pedagogical tool to situate our human experience as opposed to gendered beings . As we develop a comprehensive understanding of gender as a discourse, performance, theory and practice we take our step towards gender empowerment, sustainability and equity in a better future. Hence a re-visioning of the genealogy of gender at every step will enable us to contextualize gender.

Now, let us briefly sum up our journey starting from week one and the various theoretical junctures presented in producing a discursive assessment of gender as a category, pedagogy, theory and practice. In the opening week we analyzed and outlined how the concept of gender has evolved and advanced over the past 50 years as a distinct discursive category.


We looked at the precursors who shaped the field of gender studies including Christine T Pizan, Mary Wellstone Craft, Virginia Woolf and Simone Beauvoir. We situated how the early feminist movement intersects with contemporary gender theory .

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- In our discussion of Simone de Beauvoir, we analysed her key texts and essays, including *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (1947) and *The Second Sex* (1949).
- Her contributions to the theories of gender were thoroughly discussed with the help of her key terms like situation, facticity, and ambiguity.
- Both the volumes of *The Second Sex* (1949) were systematically debated to understand its foundational place in today's gender theories.




Source: Arno Press




Source: Citadel





Source: Vintage classics



Source: W. W. Norton & Company





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In our discussion of Simone Beauvoir, we analyzed her key texts and essays, including the 1947 publication ‘The Ethics of Ambiguity’ and the 1949 work ‘The Second Sex’. Her contributions to the theories of gender were thoroughly discussed with the help of her key terms like situation, facticity, and ambiguity. Both the volumes of ‘The Second Sex’ were systematically debated and discussed to understand the foundational place in today’s gender theories.

In week 2, we explicated the idea of intersectionality and its relevance in gender theory to contextualize the lived experiences of women, intertwined with class, race and sexual orientations.

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- By exploring the impact of race and gender relations with the help of critics like Kimberle Crenshaw, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde; we looked at the various facets of day to day life that are intertwined with each other.
- These critical writers reflected on gender, race and sexuality and paved the way for the domain of queer theory.
- Through a variety of select texts, we looked at different controlling images of Black Womanhood including the mammy, black matriarch, and welfare mother.



Alice Walker  
Source: Monica Morgan



bell hooks  
Source: Emily Kirkpatrick



Audre Lorde  
Source: Everett Collection



Kimberle Crenshaw  
Source: Mohamed Bardarne






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By exploring the impact of race and gender relations with the help of critics like Kimberle Crenshaw, bell hooks, and Audre Lorde; we looked at the various facets of day today life that are intertwined with each other.

These critical writers reflected on gender, race and sexuality and paved the way for the domain of queer theory. Through a variety of select texts, we looked at different controlling images of Black Womanhood including the mammy, black matriarch, and welfare mother. Then, we looked at the concept of gender blurring in the writings of Tony Morrison in week 3. We discussed Morrisons major novels such as ‘Beloved’, ‘Sulla’ and ‘The Bluest Eye’.

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- Nancy Chodorow's social-psychoanalytic theory was influential in discussing how gender hierarchies were produced, reproduced, and possibly changed due to socio-cultural-economic shifts.
- Her idea that cultural products impact sexuality is further taken up by Teresa de Lauretis.
- We discussed de Lauretis' essay “Technologies of Gender” in detail to examine the construction of gender as a product of various social technologies.



Toni Morrison  
Source: Deborah Feingold

Teresa de Lauretis  
Source: Claudia Peppel

Kimberle Crenshaw  
Source: CSN Sociology Student


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Nancy Chodorow’s social-psychoanalytic theory was influential in discussing how gender hierarchies were produced reproduced and possibly changed due to sociocultural and economic shifts. Her idea that cultural products impact sexuality is further taken up by Teresa de Lauretis.


We discussed de Lauretis essay ‘Technologies of Gender’ in detail to examine the construction of gender as a product of various social technologies. In week 4, we moved into the field of queer theory. We discussed the concepts of heteronormativity, gender queer, transgender coming out amongst other terminologies pertaining to queer studies.

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- Various writers associated with queer theory have argued for theorising sexuality independently from gender.
- American cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin has been influential in developing such arguments.
- We have thoroughly discussed her significant essays, including "The Traffic in Women" (1975) and "Thinking Sex" (1984) to show how she helped to shape the trajectory of gender studies since the 1970s.
- American critic Eve Sedgwick also changed how people think about sex and sexuality, moving away from the essentialist position that Rubin also questions.





Eve Sedgwick  
Source: The New York Times



Gayle Rubin  
Source: Gerard Koskovich





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Various writers associated with queer theory have argued for theorizing sexuality independently from gender. American cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin has been influential in developing such arguments. We have thoroughly discussed her significant essays, including the 1975 essay ‘The Traffic in Women’ and the 1984 essay ‘Thinking Sex’ to show how she helped to shape the trajectory of gender studies since the 1970s.

American critic Eve Sedgwick also changed how people think about sex and sexuality, moving away from the essentialist position that has also been questioned by Rubin. Like, Rubin, Sedgwick challenged feminism and prose expositions to work together in the future.

We examined Sedgwick’s major critical works like ‘Between Men’ published in 1985 an epistemology of the closet published in 1990. After the introduction to queer theory, we started week 5 by tracing the history of queer representation in some of the canonical literary texts.

Our discussions which begin with classical Greek and Roman texts were extended to Chaucer, Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde and finally, looking at the twenty first century queer texts apart from analyzing novels like Eugenid’s ‘Middle Sex’ and Booker Winning ‘The Line of Beauty’ by Alan Hollinghurst.

We also examined queer representation in the visual media. We critically examined queer depiction in movies such as the imitation game and caroll and extended our

discussion to the contemporary OTT platforms with his special focus to the Netflix TV show *Sense8*.

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• Reading these visual texts with queer theory can invigorate sensitive renderings of queer legibility, which earlier lacked representation in social and cultural spheres.

These texts chronicle both the pains and pleasures of queer identification, and challenge several repeated tropes and stereotypes.

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These texts chronicle both the pains and pleasures of queer identification and challenge several repeated tropes and stereotypes. Reading these visual texts with queer theory can invigorate sensitive readings of queer legibility which earlier lack representation in social and cultural spheres.

The weeks following queer literature were dominated by our study of the renowned gender theorist Judith Butler and the analysis of her seminal works like ‘Gender Trouble’, ‘Bodies that Matter’ and ‘Undoing Gender’.

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Source: Routledge

Source: New Statesman

- Butler finds that stylized repeated acts of gender are historically reified and naturalized, and gender norms are “impossible to embody” fully in absolute terms.
- She deconstructs the forces of culture which shape individuals, notably through the elements of discourse, taboo and language.

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Butler finds that his stylized repeated acts of gender are historically refined and naturalized, and gender norms are impossible to embody fully in absolute terms. She deconstructs the forces of culture which shape individuals, notably through the elements of discourse, taboo and language.

Apart from these groundbreaking texts in gender studies we also looked at Butler's recent essays like ‘Gender Politics’ and ‘The Right to Appear and Gender’ in Translation. We also saw how Butler in her later works focused on the concept of assembly, in the context of gender politics. This was followed by our analysis of global gender movements such as me too and times up and their cultural consequences.

Further in week 9, we elaborated on contemporary masculinities and the recent developments in the field of men's and masculinity studies, as we discussed R W Connell, Chris Beasley, Talpirtz and others.

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Source: rwconnell.com      Source: amazon.in      Source: amazon.com

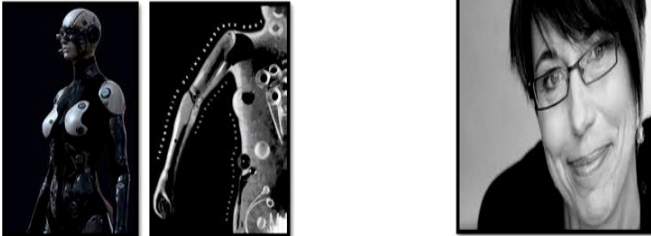
- Men's and Masculinities studies have evolved as a separate field of inquiry in recent scholarship.
- In considering the plurality of "masculinities", RW Connell and James W. Messerschmidt reviewed and reformulated the concept of "hegemonic masculinity".



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Men's and Masculinities studies have evolved as a separate field of inquiry in recent scholarship. In considering the plurality of masculinity R W Connell and James W. Messerschmidt reviewed and reformulated the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Week 10, introduced us to the concept of cyborg women as we examined the critical work 'technologies of the gendered body' by Balsamo.

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Source: medium.com      Source: amazon.com      Anne Balsamo  
Source: Wikipedia.com

- Balsamo's *Technologies of the Gendered Body* reads the body at the intersection of cultural practices, and science and technology.
- It explicates that the body in a technological mediated discourse is more *gendered* than ever.



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Balsamo's technologies of 'the Gendered Body' reads the body at the intersection of cultural practices, and science in technology. It explicates that the body in it technologically mediated discourse is more gendered than ever.

We analyzed the feminist cultural studies in science and technology in the following week where we introduced the bio political narrative of the Gendered Body through the writings of Jemima, Donna Haraway and Margaret Atwood.

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- A curated assemblage of writings by Haraway, Repo, Foucault and Giorgio Agamben contextualized the entanglement of gender and biopolitics.

A curated assemblage of writings by Haraway, Repo, Foucault and Agamben contextualize the entanglement of gender and bio politics. And finally, in week 12, we situated the literary post human and established the relevance of contextualizing gender in the twenty first century. Especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic to develop a holistic sustainable empowering and equitable understanding of gender in the post pandemic era.

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Source: wikipedia.com      Source: amazon.com      Source: nyuyoutube.com      Source: imdb.com

- The twenty- first century marks the posthuman age and incorporates multiple approaches and a plurality of voices that have gained foothold in the area of gender, sexuality and feminist studies.
  - Situating the functions of “gender” and “feminism” in posthumanism allows us to make sense of our posthuman becomings.

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The twenty first century marks the post human age and incorporates multiple approaches and a plurality of voices that have gained foothold in the area of gender sexuality in feminist studies. Situating the functions of gender and feminism in post humanism allows us to make sense of our post human becomings.

Gender is a term that ignites heated discussions and conversations at various levels. The goal of this course on contextualizing gender is to identify, how gender is constructed through cultural practices and to expose the traditional notions that revolve around gender, sexuality and sexual orientations.

Multidimensional understandings of gender can deconstruct the dominant forms of femininity and masculinity. This knowledge is valuable as it highlights a clear urgency for an educational drive which will explore a broad range of issues concerning gender. It will also pave the way for inclusive approaches to international conversations about gender in order to move people towards gender equality.

I hope that our journey together has been meaningful to you. I have thoroughly enjoyed it at every step. I can be approached for any further query through mail. I wish you all the very best in all your endeavors.

Thank you.

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