Literature, Culture and Media
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Lecture – 20
Queer Studies and Representation of Gender in Media

Welcome dear participants, in this module we are going to discuss the beginning of the queer studies and then we would link the representation of gender with media theories. In our previous discussions we have seen how the feminist studies have developed with the help of the postmodernist philosophies into a discussion of indeterminacies of gender. This gave rise not only to the masculinity studies, but also it developed the queer studies as an independent part of study.

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The term queer or queer studies or queer theory was first used by Teresa Lauretis in her articles entitled "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities", which was published in 1991. She has used the term queer to suggest the possibilities of at least 3 interconnected elements which can coexist and overlap under this discussion. The first as we can write fully understand is a dismissal and rejection of heterosexuality as a normative definition of sexuality and desire.

Secondly we see that she questioned and challenged the assumption that lesbian studies and gay studies can constitute a single unified entity. So that they have to be studied differently. She also suggested that there are diverse ways in which race shapes our sexual biases. So

Teresa de Lauretis used the term queer studies for the first time to understand the alternate aspects of sexual desires.

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- De Lauretis suggested that queer theory could encompass all of these critiques and make it possible to rethink and reconfigure the way in which we understand gender and sexuality.
- Queer theory emerged in the 1990s to make sense 'of an already deeply entrenched set of questionings and abrasions of normality.'
- On-going process of self-constitution and self-transformation

De Lauretis suggested that queer theory should encompass all of these critics and she also made it possible to rethink and refigure the way in which we understand gender and sexuality. Queer theory emerged in the 1990s to make sense of what was already deeply entrenched way of questioning the abrasions of what was earlier understood as normality. Queer is also a part of an ongoing process of self-constitution and self-transformation and attempt to understand the sexual desire in every individual.

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- The radical power of the notion of queer lies in the impossibility of defining:
  - "Queer theory is characterized by a variety of methods of interrogating *desire* and its relationship to identity. It has, unsurprisingly, emerged against a complex backdrop of critical theory and action, using poststructuralist techniques of deconstruction to reveal the historical constitution of the sexual subject". (Katherine Watson, 2005)
  - Destabilizes the fundamental premise that categories like sex, gender and sexuality are 'natural' – taken-for-granted categories
  - They are treated as stable, constructed as 'natural' categories by glossing over the inherent interdependence of the binary terms like 'homosexual', 'heterosexual', 'gay', 'lesbian', 'male', 'female', 'masculine', 'feminine'
- Structural inequalities within socio-cultural and political realms

The queer is very difficult to determine and define in a very stratified way. Here I would like to quote from Katherine Watson and I quote "Queer theories characterized by a variety of

methods of integrating desire and its relationship to identity". So we find that for the first time the queer theory has started to talk about the desire in a very strong and underlined manner. Prior to that we have seen that the sexual theories and the feminist theories or the masculine theories focused on the cultural constitution of an individual sexuality.

However, we find that their understandings were by and large limited to the binaries, the refusal of the binaries, the way the culture and society and other radical forces including religion or morality definitions or the state laws et cetera define and determine the sexualities, but for the first time we find that in a systematic manner the issue of sexual desire was foregrounded by the queer theory.

So Katherine Watson has suggested and understood this aspect that the queer theory is a method of interrogating desire. She further says it has unsurprisingly emerged against a complex backdrop of critical theory in action using poststructuralist techniques of deconstruction to reveal the historical constitution of the sexual subject.

So we find that using the postmodernist techniques the same techniques which had been used by the postfeminist and also the masculinity theories by and large, the queer theorist also tried to destabilize the categories of sex, gender and sexuality which otherwise were treated as natural taken for granted, they were treated as a stable and constructed as natural categories. So we find that the queer theory has started to question them once again from the perspective of sexual desire.

They have also talked of challenging the binary terms and you would find that the binaries of homo and heterosexuality, the understandings of desire in terms of gay, lesbian, male, female, masculine and feminine are being restructured by the queer theorists. So in general we can say that the queer theorists have started to challenge the structural inequalities which exist in the socio-cultural as well as political realms of contemporary world.
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Forerunners and Influences

- Queer theory has been influenced by psychoanalytic and poststructuralist ideas of identity, sexuality and the role of the symbolic order in the creation of subjectivity.
  - Lacan—creation of identity through the encounter with the symbolic order (Language)
  - Derrida—challenged binary oppositions (male/female; masculine/feminine)
  - Foucault— provides an important framework: genealogical method illustrates that some experiences(sexuality, madness) become the object of institutional knowledge processes (clinic, psychiatry, asylum)
- These theorists are credited with emphasizing how identity is constituted and dependent upon signification in language; thus, it's not essentialist, stable or coherent, but constituted in language

Queer theory has been influenced as we have already seen by the psychoanalytic and poststructuralist ideas of identity, sexuality and the role of the symbolic order in the creation of subjectivity and you can as well imagine the list of poststructuralist thinkers, Lacan, Derrida and Foucault, who we have discussed earlier also. Lacan's idea of the creation of identity through the encounter with the symbolic order as well as Derrida's challenge to the binary oppositions, which we have discussed in detail.

Foucault's significant frame work, for example, his ideas that how institutional knowledge processes the individuality of a person. So these theories collectively are credited with emphasising how identity is constituted and is dependent on the signification of language and that identity or desire is not essentialist, stable or coherent.

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- In the 1970s and 80s, the gay and lesbian theorists engaged with the question of sexuality via the essentialist versus constructionist debate
  - Attempted to combat the culture of homophobia
  - Recuperated the histories of sexuality, expressions of homosexuality in literature, art and culture
  - Focused on sexual self-definition
- The work of Judith Butler, Eve Sedgewick, and Lauretis pioneered the growth and development of queer studies as an academic discipline in the 1990s.

So we find that by the time it was 70s and 80s, the gay and lesbian theorist had already engaged with a question of sexuality via the essentialist versus constructionist debate and they had also attempted to combat the culture of homophobia. In fact, it is around the 1970s that the histories of sexualities and expressions of homosexuality in literature, art and culture started to focus on the critical scene.

I would particularly like to refer to 1970s movie and TV serials, which were prepared on the life of J. Edgar Hoover, the first director of the FBI. It was said that he had homosexual desires and these movies and TV serials which were filmed and released in 1970s accepted that. It was a major change because in earlier media it was perhaps not possible for the art directors to talk about homosexual desire so openly.

Neither the directors nor the consumers market would have been available or welcoming to it. So we find that by 70s and early 80s, it was already a talk that homosexuality as a desire or as an alternate desire may exist, but then it was further talked about in critical terms by critics like Judith Butler, Eve Sedgewick and Lauretis who pioneered the growth and development of queer studies as an academic discipline in the 1990s.

So we find that the stage had already been set by the thinking and the art movements of the 70s and 80s and by the time it was 90s we find the queer studies have taken a particular shape. Judith Butler whom we have discussed in detail in the previous module also has been a very important figure in the development of the queer theories.

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Judith Butler

- Dismissed the notion of pre-cultural body
  - The body assumes identity through words and language
  - Identity is constituted in language
  - Individuals are always already gendered.
- Gender Identity is tenuously constituted in time and "instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (1990)
  - Assumes an aura of naturalness through repeated performances (body gestures, clothing, attributes, traits).
  - Subversive use of outlawed performances (drag, butch, femme, female masculinity, male femininity) have the potential to reveal the categories of sex, gender and sexuality as unstable and precarious that seek to marginalize alternative and non-normative/non-heteronormative forms of desires, sexualities and forms of gender expression

She has dismissed the notion of pre-cultural body by saying that the body assumes identity through words and language and that identity itself therefore is constituted in language and individuals are always already gendered. So we would find that Butler had foregrounded the idea that through the repeated performances we gradually arrive at a self-definition of identity. The repetition of performances in terms of body gestures, the clothing, the attributes, the behavioural traits et cetera.

Identity is tenuously constituted overtime and instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Subversive use of outlawed performances for example, the drag, female masculinity, male femininity et cetera have the potential to reveal the categories of sex, gender and sexuality as unstable and precarious that seek to marginalize alternative and non-normative forms of desires, sexualities and forms of gender expression.

Another significant critic is Eve Sedgewick, whom we have also referred to in the previous discussion on masculinity studies.

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Eve Sedgewick

- Sedgewick's works *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) and *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) problematize the essentialist v. constructionist debate.
  - Criticised this essentialist and constructionist binary as being too engrossed with the question of identity
- She formulates that during the 19th century the 'culture of the individual' 'created a version of knowledge/sexuality on a cognitive refusal of sexuality between women, between men' (Watson, 2005).
- This refusal was reified and homosexuality was constituted as clandestine.

Sedgewick's works published in 1985 and in 1990 problematize the constructionist versus essentialist debate once again and she has criticized the essentialist binary as being too engrossed with the question of identity. She has suggested that during the 19th century the culture of the individual somehow created a version of knowledge also created a version of sexuality on the basis of a cognitive and deliberate refusal of sexuality between women and between men.

And therefore we find that it was around the 19th century according to Eve Sedgewick, the refusal of the homosexual desire was confirmed and it was constituted as being a clandestine one.

- For Sedgewick, 'queer' represents an 'open mesh of possibilities'
- She recognizes that people's experiences are not monolithic or uniform
- One's experiences of gender, sex, desire and sexuality are all very diverse
- She reconfigures the map of sexual/gendered identification
- Thus, queer emerges as a *floating signifier* that attaches itself to non-normative and marginal forms of identities and desires.
- It is often preferred over categories like 'gay', 'lesbian', 'bisexual', 'gender non-conforming', 'transgender', 'intersex' as it is able to capture the fragility and inherent precariousness of identity markers.

She further says that the word queer represents an open mesh of possibilities. She recognises that people's experiences are not monolithic and they cannot be uniform and therefore our experiences of gender, sex, desire and sexuality are diverse and unique and therefore she has reconfigured the map of sexual and gendered identification. In her works we find that the word queer emerges as a floating signifier that attaches itself to non-normative and marginal forms of identities and desire.

The word queer is also preferred over categories like gay, lesbian, bisexual, gender nonconforming, transgender, intersex et cetera as this word has the capability to capture the fragility and inherent precariousness of identity markers and therefore we find that the word queer particularly in academic literary creative field has substituted these individual labels to a great extent.

- The term queer is also used as a substitute for the larger LGBTIQ community as it is considered more inclusive.
- 'Queer' is a marker of provisionality, indeterminacy, and positionality that contests the vocabulary of categorical thinking to suggest the ways in which queer is always in a process of becoming or negotiation (Edelman, 1995).
- This dynamic aspect of queerness has been privileged over titular expansions of the LGBTIQ community to complicate and destabilize the very impulse of traditional identity politics.

The term queer is also used therefore as a substitute for the larger LGBTIQ community as it is considered to be more inclusive. Queer is a marker of provisionality, indeterminacy and positionality that contests the vocabulary of categorical thinking to suggest the ways in which queer is always in the process of becoming or negotiation. It is not fixed. So the dynamic aspect of queerness has been privileged over titular expansions of the LGBTIQ community to complicate the very impulse of traditional identity politics.

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Criticism

- Many theorists consider queer theory (as opposed to queer activism) to be elitist.
  - They criticize it for ignoring theory-praxis interface
  - Accuse it of being apolitical and anti-empirical
- For Kirsch, queer theory is apathy-encouraging and agency-deflating in that it 'disengages the energetic level of alliance and interpersonal relations, only to refocus efforts on the reductionist deconstruction of texts interpreted only for personal use.' (qtd in Watson)
  - Accused of commodification of 'queer' and criticized for its role in supporting mass consumerism and capitalism, for Kirsch, queer theory 'closely follows the development of current capitalist relations of production'. (qtd in Watson)

The queer theories are also criticized because many thinkers believe that this is rather an elitist approach and it ignores the theory praxis interface. They also accuse the queer of being a political and anti-empirical. One of the major critics of queer theories is Kirsch, who has repeatedly talked against the queer theory and a quote from him, he has said that, "the queer

theory is apathy-encouraging and agency-deflating in that it disengages the energetic level of alliance and interpersonal relations

only to refocus efforts on the reductionist deconstruction of texts interpreted only for personal use". So here we find that this theorist talking how it is for a personal use only that the text is being deconstructed. He also accuses the queer of commodification of sexuality and also criticises for it is role and supporting, mass consumering and capitalism. So we find that the queer theory though is the theory which is very much talked about, a very essential part of our personality and identity still is being criticized by certain people.

So we find that the concept of feminism which is started as a political movement for socio-political equality has gained momentous and has also developed and become more inclusive. In my opinion it is feminism which has flowered further to incorporate the differences of gender, to incorporate the masculinities and the queer studies because the basic focus of feminism had been equality for different genders.

And it is only that the debate has been further enhanced to encompass the masculinities as well as the queer identities so that the hegemonic masculinities does not retain its supremacy as far as our own identity formation is concerned; however, we think that the media representations of gender have continued to produce the binary in order to become more catchy.

And in the rest of the module we are going to discuss how the representation of gender and women takes place in the media. It is only towards the end of the 20th century that we find that the consumerists approach has grown. The capitalist market forces are becoming more and more strong in our world.

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Representation of Women and Gender in Media

- "Turning people into sex objects is one of the specialties of our species." (Camille Pagliais)
- Media covertly constructs images of masculinity and femininity to enhance stereotypes even now
  - Representation in popular media has steadily become more and more sexualized over the last forty years.
  - Highly sexualized and provocative images of women imply that they are in positions of inferiority and low social power
  - Master-servant relationship between man and woman is obliquely encouraged even by women's magazines/products

And here I quote from Camille Pagliais who says that "turning people into sex objects is one of the specialities of our species". Her idea is very clear that people have been turned into sex objects for their marketability. Media has also become very different with the advent of the technology. So we find that the print media has given place to the online media so quickly that it is very difficult to understand and fully grasp its impact on the psyche of the people.

However, the basic task of media is to represent reality or as reality is perceived by the media makers and therefore we find that media covertly has constructed images of masculinity and femininity to enhance the stereotypes because the production of stereotypes is directly linked to market forces as we will see in the rest of the discussions. Representation in popular media has become more and more sexualized over the last 40 years.

And there are several forces which are linked with this phenomenon. For example, the growth of consumerist, capitalist, the growth of technology, the fact that media has become more and more immediate and then it has also become more approachable by the masses. So all these facts together have significantly added to the growth and power of media and then the saleability of media is also linked with a fact that more and more people are able to consume material provided by the media.

And therefore we find that the representation in popular media has become steadily more and more sexualized. Highly sexualized and provocative images of women implied that they are in positions of inferiority and low social power. The representation of women as all of us see around us is based on the erotic body postures normally.

Wherever men and women are depicted together in the media footages we find that the master servant relationship between men and women is also obliquely and sometimes very directly encouraged not only by the popular media, but also by those media houses which get specifically to the needs of women. For example, women products women magazines et cetera.

So we find that in media particularly in different TV serials and movies in magazines, in online magazines, in advertisements et cetera images of bodies of men and women and even of children are becoming highly sexualized. Primarily they began with the objectification of a women's figure presenting it as a passive object.

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- Sexualized images in media and advertising
- Objectification of women, seen as passive objects
- Images of hegemonic masculinities
- Upholding of social stereotypes of gender to continue binaries
- May create unhealthy social relationships/attitudes
- May enhance physical violence as bodies are treated as sexual objects, not as human beings
- Increase in the likelihood and acceptance of sexual violence as such images become a part of the daily discourse

They also present images of hegemonic and protest masculinities, somehow to justify the prevalence of these type of masculinities. So we find that media uphold social stereotypes of gender to continue binary instead of establishing equality or instead of challenging the binary, we find that even in today's world more or less the media is promoting the binaries. It also may create unhealthy social relationships and attitudes.

Because media in today's world has a significant power and grip over the imagination of the people. We construct the media but in a way media also constructs our psyche and imagination in today's world. It also enhances physical violence as bodies are treated as sexual objects and not as human being and therefore there is an increase in the likelihood and acceptance of sexual violence as such images become a part of the daily discourse.

When we see these images and media portrays around us. When we look at images of violent behaviour and when we look at the portrayal of a body merely as a sexual object, then in our mind the acceptability of such images also grows and therefore we find that such media images ultimately indirectly promote the acceptance of sexual violence in the society.

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- Media, films, TV serials and social sites often promote the *"to-be-looked-at-ness"* of women
- In films and serials, the woman provokes love, hate, anger
- Male protagonists often respond to it and may chose to take care of the woman
- Woman in herself is often portrayed as passive or in conventional caring roles – no agency of her own
- Women are portrayed in domestic or decorative roles
- Purpose is often to seek male attention

Most of the media, films, TV serials, social sites particularly promote a particular image of women and that is to-be-looked-at-ness of women if we can phrase it like this. So in films and serials we find that the portrayal of women's character is also very traditional and conventional in such a way that they are often portrayed as provoking love or hate or anger and male protagonist often respond to these images and they also choose to take care actively of women.

So the subservient role of women is indirectly projected by most of the TV serials. A woman in themselves are often portrayed as passive or in conventional caring role as if she herself does not have much agency. Women are portrayed most of the time in domestic or decorative roles and purpose is often to seek male attention.

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- Gendered images are used to increase the appeal of media or a product to the detriment of, or without regard to, the interests of the women portrayed, or women in general.
- If media images communicate that sexual exploitation is neither serious nor harmful, the environment is being set for sexual exploitation to be viewed as trivial and acceptable.
- As long as there are media producers who continue to find the degradation of women to be humorous, and media outlets that will air the content, the impact and seriousness of sexual exploitation will continue to be understated and not meaningfully addressed in our society.

So we find that gendered images are often used to increase the appeal of media or a product to the detriment of or without regard to the interest of the women portrayed or women in general. So we find that it is a sexuality of women which is projected through the media at the detriment of other characteristics or agency of women. So if media images communicate that sexual exploitation is neither serious nor harmful

the environment is already being set for sexual exploitation to be viewed as trivial and acceptable. So such media portrayals promote the acceptance of sexual exploitation and sexual violence as being somehow more and more acceptable among the people and as long as the media producers who continue to find that the degradation of women is either humerous or it is something which is a very non-serious issue.

And there are media outlets who will air this type of a derogatory content, the impact and seriousness of sexual exploitation will continue to be understated and not meaningfully addressed in our society. We can look at certain images how toxic and protest masculinity in films is being promoted. I have taken up only certain examples which are supposed to be very popular and in all these examples we find that

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Toxic Masculinity and Protest Masculinity in Films

the toxic and protest masculinity is being pirated as something which is more and more acceptable. In these pictorial representations we find that women are absent. It is only the male who has been depicted over here.

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In these pictorial representation we would find that the women's figure is present only in one pictorial image. In this promotional material for *Taxi Driver* we find that the figure of the woman is presented in the background, but the agency belongs to the man. So we would find that the subservience of women is promoted not only because their body is presented normally as a sexual object, primarily as a sexual object.

But also because whenever they are shown in relationship with men in pictorial images they are always depicted as not possessing agency or being comfortable with the agentic roles of

men. So we would find that it is not only their projection in isolation, but their projection with men which is also derogatory often with them.

Another aspect related with the representation of women and other gender aspects is related with the type of dresses which are to be coveted, the size particularly in the context of women and different types of marketed products.

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Dress, Size, Products

- In both prime-time television and family films, women are highly likely to be depicted as thin and scantily clad.
  - Make it difficult to keep up with the ideal feminine/masculine figure. Striving for the virtually unattainable perfect body, women were viewed as a new way to make money
  - Slimming surgeries, Gyms, New Beauty Myths
- The use of "size zero" versus "six-pack abs" in advertisements and products of the clothing industry have been met with criticism.
  - Anorexia nervosa is a socially transmitted disease and exposure to skinny models may be a contributing factor in it
- Number of women in meaningful roles is declining

So in both prime time TV and family films women are highly likely to be depicted as thin and scantily clad. So we would find that they are always presented as a product which has to be decorated and parroted for consumption. It has also become very difficult to keep up with the ideal feminine figure or for that matters the ideal masculine figure. So you would find that nowadays most of the youngsters, men as well as women strive for the virtually unattainable perfect body.

Women are viewed and men are also viewed as bodies and it has become a new way to make money. For example, this over emphasis on size 0 figure or the 6 pack abs in advertisements has also promoted different type of surgeries to enhance the body parts or to the slimming surgeries. It has also opened a new market for the gems and new beauty myths are also be created.

So we would find that in advertisements as well as in the products of the clothing industry a particular type of size for example size 0 or a particular type of a figure for example the 6 pack ab figure of men is also being operated and promoted. It also comes into a lot of

criticism, but we would find that more or less the media is dominated by the portrayal of these images.

Sometimes a follow-up attempt of these almost unattainable ideas result into physical difficulties. For example, anorexia nervosa is a socially transmitted disease and exposure to skinny models maybe a contributing factor to it. So you would find that the presence of women as far as their association with meaningful roles in media is concerned is continually declining.

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Media Coverage of Women and Women's Issues

- Women professionals and athletes continue to be under-represented in news coverage, and are often stereotypically portrayed when they are included.
- Women athletes are also relatively ignored by the media.
  - Margaret Carlisle Duncan and Michael Messner studied sports coverage on three network affiliates in Los Angeles.
  - They report that only nine per cent of airtime was devoted to women's sports, in contrast to the 88 per cent devoted to male athletes.

It is not only the presentation of the figure of women which is derogatory, but at the same time we would find that the media coverage of women and women's issues is also derogatory. Women's professionals and athletes continue to be underrepresented in news coverage and are often stereotypically portrayed when they are included. Women athletes are also relatively ignored by the media.

Margaret Duncan and Michael Messner have studied sports coverage on 3 network affiliates in Los Angeles. They report that only 9% of air time was devoted to women's sports in contrast to the 88% devoted to male athletes.

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- Duncan notes that commentators (97 per cent of whom are men) use different language when they talk about female athletes.
  - Where men are described as "big," "strong," "brilliant," "gutsy" and "aggressive," women are more often referred to as "weary," "fatigued," "frustrated," "panicked," "vulnerable" and "choking."
  - Commentators are also twice as likely to call men by their last names only, and three times as likely to call women by their first names only.
  - Duncan argues that this "reduces female athletes to the role of children, while giving adult status to white male athletes."
- Media images of women in sports are also very different from the familiar pictures of male athletes in action.
  - Female athletes are increasingly photographed in what Professor Pat Griffin calls "hyper-sexualized poses."
  - Serena Williams

Duncan also notes that commentators use different language when they talk about male and female athletes. She has also pointed out that the majority of the commentators with sports activities are men. So when they describe men, male athletes they are normally described as being big, strong, brilliant, gutsy or aggressive and women are often referred to as weary, fatigued, frustrated, panicked, vulnerable, choking et cetera.

Commentators are also twice as likely to call men by their last name only, and 3 times as likely to call women by their first names only and here I would like to refer to 2 very famous tennis players Serena Williams and Roger Federer. So whenever Serena Williams is referred to by the commentators she is always introduced by her first name on the other hand whenever Roger Federer is referred to he is always referred to as Federer and not Roger.

So you would find that the use of the first name in the context of women somehow links them with the image of children whereas the adult male players are given a position of authority. So you would find that it is not only the portrayal of an image of a man or a women which initially gives a particular message to the society, but the media presentation of relationships and the use of language by live media can also promote those gender images which are not very helpful.

So you would find that these differences also draw our attention to how media presents men and women player differently. The same is the issue with politics. Women who have dominant roles in media are often presented as being somehow inferior.

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- Politically active women are often disparaged and stereotyped by the media.
  - When Hillary Clinton was still first lady, she was referred to as a "witch" or "witchlike" at least 50 times in the press.
- Rivers writes, "male political figures may be called mean and nasty names, but those words don't usually reflect superstition and dread. Did the press ever call Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, or Clinton warlocks?"
- US presidential candidates on gender – Hillary vs Trump
- Is US ready for a woman President?
- Gender stereotype is stronger than the racial one

So we would find that women who are politically active like women athletes are often disparaged and stereotyped by the media. When Hillary Clinton was still first lady, she was referred to as a witch or witchlike at least 50 times over the years by the press and Rivers writes, male political figures may be called mean and nasty names, but those words do not usually reflect superstition and dread.

And the question is asked did the press every call President Carter, Reagan, Bush or Clinton as warlocks or vampires for that matter. In the US president election, the Hillary versus Trump election we would find that the questions were often asked based on the gender. In fact, the questioning most of the time centered on the debate on this question whether US is ready for a women president or not instead of looking at the personality traits. So we can say that gender stereotypes is stronger than the racial one.

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Transgender and Non Binary characters on TV

This representation is also seen in the way that transgender and non-binary characters are presented as the slide shows we find that the commonest profession which is given to transgender characters is that of sex workers and at the same time you would find that anti-transgender slurs in language and dialogue is also very much present and illustrated very openly.

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Queer Representation in Indian Films

The queer representation in Indian films is also an indication of it, whereas in most of these movies we would find that either people are very hesitant in accepting their desire openly.

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My Brother Nikhil

My Brother Nikhil is that rarest of movies made in India which deals with the themes of HIV/AIDS, homosexuality and the social stigma attatched to them very maturely and beautifully

Or this desire comes into a lot of social criticism. The economics of gender is stereotyping; however, cannot be negated.

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Economics of gender stereotyping

- No one would deny that the mass media is big business.
  - According to the American Motion Picture Association, Hollywood films alone pulled in $10 billion in 2011, and that doesn't include the renting and selling of DVDs.
  - However, media executives argue that the economics of the industry make it impossible to avoid stereotypes of women.
  - Many commentators argue that media content is driven by advertising – in particular the desire to reach the most desirable part of the audience, males ages 18 to 34.
  - San Diego State University communications professor Martha Lauzen reports that shows focusing on a female character tend to be scheduled in "lousy" time slots.

So mass media is a big business and we have to accept it and according to the American Motion Picture Association, Hollywood films alone pulled in 10 billion dollars in 2011 and that does not include the renting and selling of DVDs. So it is a very big business in any country. So media executives argue that economics of the industry make it impossible to avoid stereotypes of women.

Many commentators also argue that media content is driven by advertising. In particularly the desire to reach that part of the audience which is the most desirable one and that is males aged between 18 to 34. So you would find that this is the target group for the media because

their eyes are on profit in business and therefore they try to project those gender stereotypes which have a particular appeal to this section of the audience, the working, economically independent and sexually active males between 18 to 34 years of age.

At the same time, we can say that there is some change as far as the projection of women and transgender is concerned and also we would find that there is a positive change in the way male figures are also being presented here. We find that certain trends have already started in the media, whereas men are presented as possessing nurturing roles also, women are also presented as being independent agentic people.

And the transgenders are also being presented as individuals. However, we would find that there is a tendency

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- And yet ultimately this is a relatively small audience, most factions aren't adequately represented.
- The vast majority of women are not included in the audience for these progressive ads.
- Furthermore, not a single one of the progressive ads displayed showed a woman with a family or long term relationship, subtly implying a sort of mutual exclusivity between independence/empowerment and family life.

to portray women in such agentic roles in such a manner that they are shown as alone independent and capable people. However, woman with a family or a long term relationship is hardly ever shown as having a progressive agency. So you would find that there are certain implications that there is a sort of mutual exclusivity between independence and empowerment and family life.

So the media emphasis is still is that it is always a question of either or as far as women representation is concerned whereas it is not the case when it comes to the representation of a male figure in the media. To sum up we can say that we are familiar with the way stereotypes have been presented by different media in terms of women figures, the sexuality of women in

terms of the hegemonic of men and in terms of the alternate sexualities and homosexual desires.

We also have to admit that media has started to change even though this change is very slow, but at the same time we should not underestimate the significance of media because media can spread points of view in a convincing manner. In the later modules when we would be discussing media, this issue would be taken up again in somewhat more detail.

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- Many would agree that some strides have been made in how the media portray women in film, television and magazines, and that the last few decades have also seen a growth in the presence and influence of women in media behind the scenes.
  - Nevertheless, female stereotypes continue to thrive in the media we consume every day
- Portrayal of homosexual desire
- Media can spread points of view in a convincing manner. Still regressive, not necessarily a vehicle of change

To sum up I would only say that the current media, the world over is not acting as a vehicle of change, it is still regressive and it must change if the feminist desire or the desire of the gender critics to attain equality in our society is to be realised. Thank you.