



Francis Bacon, *Bullfight*, (1969)

### Week 3

#### **The Biopolitical Body**

Biopower is a term credited to Michel Foucault. It refers to the way that modern states have developed to manage their large populations in terms of life and its processes. As he says it is: 'an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations' (*History of Sexuality* Volume 1: 140). In this class we will see how this concept has been extended to what might be called biopolitics.

#### **Essential reading:**

Rose, N. 'Molecular Biopolitics, Somatic Ethics and the Spirit of Biocapital' *Social Theory and Health*, 2007, N.5, pp.3-29.

#### **Further reading:**

Cartwright, L. *Screening the Body : Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Foucault, M. *The Birth of the Clinic : An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, London : Tavistock Publications, 1973.

Fukuyama, F. *Our Posthuman Future : Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, London : Profile, 2003.

Jonsen, A.R. *The Birth of Bioethics*, New York; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1998

**Questions for discussion in class:**

1. What is the difference between 'molar' and 'molecular' as Rose uses the terms?
2. What does he mean that contemporary biology operates in a 'flattened field of open circuits'?
3. What characterises 'biological citizenship'?
4. What is 'biocapital'?

**Film Screening: *Blade Runner* (1982)**



**Week 4**

**The Affective Body**

Within cultural theory the emergence of what has been referred to as the 'affective turn' points to a growing sense that there is a dynamism immanent to bodily matter and matter generally. In this session we want to try and get a clearer sense of what this term actually means and why it is of use to us.

**Essential Reading:**

Massumi, B. 'The Autonomy of Affect' in *Parables of the Virtual*, Duke University Press, 2002

**Further Reading:**

Ahmed, S. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, London: Routledge, 2001

Clough, P. 'The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedicine and Bodies' 2008; 25; 1 *Theory Culture Society*

Gilbert, J. 'Signifying Nothing: 'Culture', 'Discourse' and the Sociality of Affect', *Culture Machine* available at:

<http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/cmach/backissues/j006/articles/gilbert.htm>

Hemmings, C. 'Invoking Affect: Cultural Theory and the Ontological Turn', *Cultural Studies*, V.19, N. 5 September 2005 , pages 548 - 567

Illouz, E. 'What Role for Emotions in Sociological Theory?' *Body & Society* 2001 7: 97-102

Slack, J., The Affective Terrain of Adolescence: The Matrix available at: [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/1/1/3/7/p111374\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/1/1/3/7/p111374_index.html)

Shouse, E. 'Feeling, Emotion, Affect' *M/C - Media and Culture* Volume 8 Dec. 2005 Issue 6

### Questions for discussion in class:

1. What does Massumi mean by intensity?
2. Why has the study of affect become more important today?
3. What are the differences between emotion and affect?
4. What does he mean by the 'virtual'?

### Week 5

#### The Prosthetic Body

In further analysis of the connections between modernity, technology and the body the subject of prosthesis is a useful one to consider in more detail. Relating to cybernetics, transplant technology, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, among other cultural and scientific developments, "the prosthetic" suggests up a potentially posthuman condition. This week we look at this and will explore some of the theoretical speculations that have been built upon it.



#### Essential reading:

Landsberg, A. 'Prosthetic Memory: Total Recall and Blade Runner' *Body & Society*, V.1, (3-4): 175-189. 1995.

Tomas, D. 'Feedback and Cybernetics: Reimagining the Body in the Age of the Cyborg' *Body & Society*, V.1, (3-4): 21-43, 1995.

**Further reading:**

Easthope, G. The body and disability: Prosthetics, proxemics and pratfalls

Hables Gray, C. 'MAN PLUS: Enhanced Cyborgs and the Construction of the Future Masculine' *Science as Culture*, Volume 9, Number 3, 2000

Rawdon Wilson, R. Cyber(Body)Parts: Prosthetic Consciousness *Body & Society* 1995 1: 239-259.

Smith, M. The Prosthetic Impulse From a Posthuman Present to a Biocultural Future

J.Zylinska, *The Cyborg Experiments: The Extensions of the Body in the Media Age*

*New Formations*, 46: The Prosthetic Aesthetic

**Questions for discussion in class:**

1. Are cultural readings of the potential of prosthetics far beyond the realities?
2. Is the figure of the cyborg a useful one for thinking about bodies?
3. How does the prosthetic body relate to the idea of the posthuman?
4. Are we all cyborgs now?

**Film Screening: *Alien Resurrection* (1997)**

**Week 6: Reading Week**

## Week 7

### **The Reproductive Body**

The reproductive function of women's bodies has for centuries been the basis for the primary distinction between genders. It even has its own specific field of study: gynaecology. Control over this field of biological knowledge has, on an obvious level, been determined by wider gender relations of patriarchy and masculinist notions of weak and strong. What we want to do this week is to look at how this field has been contested and how the struggle for dominance can be seen to operate.

#### **Essential reading:**

Lupton, D. 'Feminisms and Medicine' chapter 6 from *Medicine as Culture: Illness, Disease and the Body in Western Societies*, London: Sage, pp. 131-160.

#### **Further reading:**

Fletcher, R. 'Reproductive Consumption' *Feminist Theory*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 27-47, 2006

Gatens, M. 'Feminism as "Password": Re-thinking the "Possible" with Spinoza and Deleuze' *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* Spring 2000, Vol. 15, No. 2: Pp.59-75

Gallardo, X.C. 'Who Are You?': Alien/Woman as Posthuman Subject in Alien Resurrection' available at:

<http://reconstruction.eserver.org/043/gallardoc.htm>

Ginsburg, F. *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, University of California Press, 1997

Gorman, G. 'Alien Resurrection and Becoming-Cyborg: "1 is Too Few" ' available at: <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/spaces/fall08/gorman.html>

Haraway, D. *. Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium*. New York London: Routledge, 1997.

Martin, E. *The Woman in the Body : A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction* Boston: Beacon Press,

Stacey, J. 'She is not herself: the deviant relations of *Alien Resurrection*', *Screen*, vol. 44, no. 3 (Autumn 2003), pp. 251-276

Thompson, C. *Making Parents. The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies*, 2005

Ussher, J.M. *Managing the Monstrous Feminine: Regulating the Reproductive Body* London: Routledge, 2005

#### **Questions for discussion in class:**

1. Why are women's bodies so 'problematic' for medical discourse?
2. In what ways was childbirth contested by feminists
3. What role has technology played in this process?
4. Can the essentialist arguments of some commentators be legitimately challenged?

## Film Screening: *Panic in the Streets* (1950)



### Week 8

#### **Discussion of independent Research**

The focus today is on your portfolio research material and its relevance to the themes of the course. We will discuss material from each student in turn and use it as the basis for feedback and clarification. By this stage you will be expected to have between 5 – 10 examples with 200 words on each one. This is not assessed so the emphasis is on how you are developing your understanding and its relevance to contemporary media culture.