Gendering the Technological Imagination

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ABSTRACT

In her essay, "Gendering the Technological Imagination," Anne Balsamo describes the relationship between gender and the technological imagination by examining some of the myths that persist about women and technological innovation. She draws on insights provided by feminist epistemology to elaborate the nature of agency that unfolds during the process of developing technological applications. To illustrate how the methods of hermeneutic reverse engineering are deployed in practice, and to elaborate a reproductive theory of technology, she describes the development of an interactive multimedia documentary that was created for the NGO Forum held in China in 1995. (The NGO Forum was held in conjunction with the 4th U.N. World Conference on Women.) The multimedia documentary, called Women of the World Talk Back, served as a particular type of boundary-object that enabled the creation of several cultural constructs, including a set of identities for the designers and the audience members, as well as a set of counter narratives about the implications of the hardware and software that were used to create the work.