

discourse. It is a chapter, moreover, which provides an ironic and interesting “Malaise Bingo” of STS researchers, which consists in recognizing themselves in questions and statements such as: “Is the aim of STS to make science better?”; “The academic world is the place of social change?”; “I work with a natural science researcher who, whenever he revises an article of mine, systematically comments “I don’t understand” on the epistemological passages in which I question the linear progress of his field of research”.

Consistently with the attention to (and curiosity in) the construction of future scenarios in the technoscientific field, the book closes with a reflection by Arie Rip on: “The future of the regime of the promises” (Section 4, Chapter 5). Here the discussion returns to promises as integral elements of a knowledge regime (and therefore something that concerns the present more than the future) and the double linkage that ties scientific promises to research funding. In particular, Rip identifies in three current trends the most significant features of what will be the future scenarios: a) a focus on indicators, instead of the “reality of things”, which gives rise to an industry of “derived products” (such as, for example, the Shanghai ranking of the best universities in the world); b) the attempt to link emerging scientific technologies and knowledge to product innovation and the absorption of these products on a social level; 3) a certain deprofessionalisation of science.

These may not be the right trends for a happy ending, but the book deserves to be read anyway.

References

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Boel Berner and Isabelle Dussauge (eds.)

Kön, kropp, materialitet: perspektiv från fransk genusforskning [Sex, body and materiality. French perspectives on gender studies], Lund, Arkiv, 2014, pp. 249

Silvia Bruzzone Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées and **Henny Stridsberg** Université Paris 8

The focus of this collective work is the development of gender studies as viewed through the prism of technology and natural science. The editors' intention is to show in a collection of articles how French feminist research and gender studies have contributed to our understanding of science, technology and materiality, and more broadly to the construction of knowledge, with a special focus on a so called French perspective.

The texts that make up the book are taken from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds – philosophy, anthropology, sociology, history, and biology – and were published in French-edited academic reviews or books between 1997 and 2010. In the introduction, the editors retrace the history of gender studies in France. Even though France was in the forefront in the 1970s in this field – starting with Simone de Beauvoir's crucial work – they recount the ideological and institutional resistance to the development of gender studies in France.

From an ideological point of view, the main characteristics of the second wave of feminism were its opposition to any form of intellectualization of the movement and its disconnection with the academia. The fragmentation of feminist groups and disengagement from the first wave of the 1950s were also features of the French women's movement in the 1970s. These factors prevented the development of academic research in women studies during this period.

From an institutional point of view, the clear separation among academic subject areas in France hindered the progress of the new discipline, with sociology and history proving to be more open to feminist issues. It was not until 1983, therefore, that the first Department of Gender Studies was created at CNRS, with a specialization in the sociology of work.

Gender studies have flourished in France in the last twenty years thanks to the involvement of well-known scholars such as Pierre Bourdieu and Françoise Héritier. The establishment of the Institute for Gender Studies in 2012 then brought greater acceptance for the subject. Despite this, the editors claim that gender studies in France still do not enjoy much official support, and that the educational offer and the number of professors in the sector are both still limited. More recently, moreover, objections have been raised by Catholic associations in the context of the debate on same sex marriage, adoption, and procreation practices.

The editors place the texts in this book within a third wave of feminist thinking, which since the 1990s has been characterized by an understanding of gender as social construction. As the editors explain, what these texts have in common is that they have all raised gender issues in French technology and natural science studies. As its title suggests, the book is divided into three sections: materiality, body and sex.

The main topic of the first section is how technology has contributed to the reproduction of gender power relations.

The first piece, by Delphine Gardey, focuses on the development of the typewriter as a feminine object at the beginning of the 20th century,

and shows how this process accompanied the subordination of women in office work.

Danielle Chabaud-Rychter's piece deals with the progressive "detech-nicization" of technical objects and the progressive exclusion of users from their technical mechanisms. In the case of home appliances, the growing distance between design innovators and users takes the form of a greater distance between man-innovators and women-users, at the same time as design progressively embodies female practices.

Ilana Löwy shows how natural processes have been redefined by new medical techniques for assisted procreation in accordance with nation-specific values and socio-economic conditions. In France, severe State control over those techniques and the restricted access offered to heterosexual couples reinforce the "norm" that procreation is confined to young heterosexual couples. The U.S. context is very permissive in terms of permitted techniques and access for non-heterosexual individuals, but this medical sector turns out to be highly lucrative and completely regulated by the market, and so in practice, the right to assisted procreation is restricted to people with high incomes. In Israel, a specific combination of orthodox Jewish values (in particular relating to procreation) and national interests – namely the perpetuation of the Israeli State – make Israel the most liberal system in terms of low-cost access to assisted procreation.

The second part of the book deals with nature, science and medicine. It shows in particular how medical knowledge might lead to a separate new understanding of the body apart from the subject, affect access to work activity and even represent a source for moral judgment on the body.

Madeleine Akrich and Berenice Pasveer analyse the role played by medical practice in childbirth. Their main theory is that the dichotomy introduced by obstetric knowledge between a woman's body and her perception of it does not inexorably translate into a sensation of alienation from her body. Their suggestion is that we should go beyond the dualism between medical practice and the holistic approach. Some techniques used on women (such as epidurals) may allow a woman to maintain a certain link between her body and herself. This is very body- and context-specific, and from this perspective, the role of medical personnel as mediators becomes crucial, and diversification in medical practice is necessary in order to adapt to the plurality of patients.

Rossella Ghigi retraces the "invention" of cellulite as a pathology in medical discourse at the beginning of the 19th century and its appearance in women's magazines in the 1930s. The author shows how the crusade against cellulite and obesity at the time created moral condemnation of women's bodies, as it was associated with the concept of women's unhealthy bodies and the degenerate habits that are typical of modern cities.

In her analysis of the connections between female health and risks in the workplace, Anne Fellingner focuses on the nuclear research sector. The

historical evolution of this field of research - from the experiences of Marie Curie and Marguerite Perey until today - show how increasing protection of women in this area actually led to their being gradually excluded from this area of research, in which men are now over-represented.

In the last section of the book, the authors approach the discussion of biological sex differences from a variety of angles.

Nicolas Divert provides an analysis of the social mechanisms that link sexuality and education choices, showing how boys at French fashion schools are characterized as deviant in a dual sense: both sexually, because it is presumed they must be homosexual, and also with regard to their choice of profession.

Differences in height between men and women appear to be taken for granted, but what are the causes of sexual dimorphism, and why does it persist? While the evolutionist theories that are mobilized to explain, dimorphism are not appropriate to explain the phenomenon, Priscille Tournaille claims that there is a certain level of resistance when it comes to investigating the social and political causes that lie at the origin of differences that are perceived as being biological. According to the author, the fact that women have historically been less well-fed than men still contributes to the persistence of a hierarchical relationship between men and women.

Finally, the philosopher Cynthia Kraus presents a complex critique of the social-constructivist approach of recent feminist theory, which has questioned the dual model that only recognizes two sexes. She suggests that social-constructivist knowledge practices deserve to be examined and problematized further.

Readers of *Tecnoscienza* will find an interesting analysis in each text of the various entanglements among gender, techniques and knowledge production. In addition, the variety of disciplinary perspectives and original fieldwork sometimes gives rise to extremely passionate research goals. The aim of the book is less convincing, however; in the end, the reader is none the wiser about what the contribution of gender studies to techniques and natural science studies from the so-called “French perspective” has been. The lack of a concluding chapter and transversal analysis compromises the editors’ intent and ultimately leaves it up to the readers themselves to finding any concluding remarks. What has been proposed as a “French perspective” is not sufficiently problematized, and nor is the interest in the interaction between gender and studies on materiality. This means that the choice of articles is not clear, and in the end, the purpose of the book seems to be to suggest examples of interactions between gender and STS studies under the principal headings of “materiality”, “body” and “sex” to non-Francophone readers without ever developing a discussion on disciplinary boundaries and epistemological perspectives.

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