

Chronicle by Aida López

The 10th Spring School in History of Science and Popularization was called Handling the body, taking control: technologies of the gendered body. Every two years since 2001, this School takes place and congregates researchers from all over the world. It is organised by the Societat Catalana d'Història de la Ciència i la Tècnica along with the Institut Menorquí d'Estudis and this year, it was wonderfully coordinated by the well-known researchers Montserrat Cabré (University of Cantabria) and Teresa Ortiz-Gómez (University of Granada).

The School started on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, with Barbara Orland (University of Basel) and her opening conference *From humours to hydraulics. The gendered body in anatomy, experimental physiology and medical practice (1630-1770)*. With her, we went back to the 16th century, when blood flow in a closed circuit inside our bodies was first discovered and its important consequences for theories around sexual differences. She talked about theories which supported milk being created before blood in the human body, since -usually- while women lactate, they won't menstruate.

After a short break and some appetisers inside the Institut Menorquí d'Estudis building, where everybody could chat and socialise for a while, the first Workshop began. Sofia Zuccoli talked about the women's body paradox back in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when it was both perfect and imperfect at the same time. Varvara Redmond talked about *niddah* -purification ritual of women's body after menstruation- which affects orthodox Jewish women in current societies.

Camille Bajoux presented an interesting route through the word "andrology". This word originally meant 'anthropology', but it became sexual-male-health related at some point in history. The question is: why? Coming all the way from Philadelphia, Jessica Dandona spoke about men bodies being studied as a prototype of human bodies, but women bodies being studied only when it comes to fertility, pregnancy and birth. Last but not least, Eliza Toledo talked about her PhD research. She found some documents with interesting information about women who were lobotomized during mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in Brasil. After the talks, Barbara Orland, the speakers and the audience engaged in a debate about language and translations, mental problems Jewish women need to come up with to take the pill and how shocking it is that healthy women were lobotomized.

After a small break to have a coffee and digest everything we had learnt, Posters' Session started. Paloma Moral presented her research on a hermaphrodite person in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cynthia L. Thang talked about technological changes in medicine, specially about scars and aesthetics. William de Jong-Lambert presented some interesting ideas about capitalism and eugenics around a 1930s geneticist. Finally, Amaia Fernández de Gorostiza introduced us to the first women who entered Fine Arts and Medicine anatomy lessons after beating their exclusion. She pointed out how important this is for creating individual and collective identity.

Ana M<sup>a</sup> Mateo and Hilda Argüello presented us some midwives current problems related to birth medicalization. Alena Sharelysheva brought a poster about women who had one or both breasts removed and how they found and shared their beauty. In a similar way, Laura Franco talked about reconstructive plastic surgery on women who were attacked with acid. Finally, Nechama Haddad also talked about surgery, but not health-related surgery: vulvas

reconstruction because they don't follow heteropatriarchal society stereotypes. All speakers did a great job and they were congratulated.

The next day, School started with Delphine Gardey, from University of Geneva and her talk: *Science as usual? A gendered reading of Masters and Johnson's Laboratory and Clinic of Orgasm*. Delphine spoke about Masters and Johnson, relying on the TV series with the same name. She talked about how Virginia Johnson, who started working with Masters as an invisible technician and helper, and actively participated in their research, achieved co-authorship of their articles. Masters and Johnson, between decency and transgression, presented sex aside from reproductions and put orgasm in the spotlight.

After a coffee to build back our energies, the second Workshop started. It was centred on sexual activity (or not) of women. Alejandra Palafox Menegazzi presented her research results on judicial procedures about raping from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Chile. Sara Serrano Martínez brought us back to the Spanish dictatorship to speak about the gender of expert witnesses in abortion and infanticide trials. Anna Dobrowolska also spoke about dictatorships, specifically in Poland in the period 1955-1969 and how prostitution was pathologized. Nora Lehner talked about sexuality, desire and biopolitical aspects. Marie Walin spoke about female impotence in the 19th century in Spain, important enough to annul a marriage, and its relation with vaginism. Last but not least, Silvia Armenteros Fuentes talked about sex medicalization, sexual dysfunction in women and asexuality in the current Spanish society.

The afternoon session was technology-oriented. It started with a M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Santesmases (CSIC-Madrid) talk: *The reproductive body and the public fetus: Pregnancy, visual cultures and the origins of medical genetics, 1960s-1970s*. She narrated a story through pictures of chromosomes. She told us how important it was to stop making draws (and losing interest on details) and starting taking pictures in the scientific research context. She also spoke about the importance of drawing fetus as babies, forgetting about the women body which contains said fetus and centring the attention on the latter.

Workshop 3 started with Esmeralda Covarrubias, who talked about the pelvimeter, an instrument used by Mexican gynaecologists which brought up some racial differences among women. Anne-Charlotte Millepied spoke about endometriosis diagnosis techniques and how studies beyond gynaecology could help detection. Claire Grino established the differences on freezing spermatozoa and freezing eggs, which results much more difficult. Dresda Méndez de la Brena presented a remarkable work about chronic diseases and "living untimely" which fascinated the audience. The final touch was by Natalia Fernández Jimeno, who made a presentation about Assisted Reproduction Techniques and the optimistic and pessimistic views on the subject inside feminism. Santesmases underlined the wonderful critics to what is medically established.

The last Spring School day was May 25<sup>th</sup>. In the morning, Agata Ignaciuk (University of Granada) delighted us with her talk *Abortion 'cultures': politics, activism and experiences in the Cold war era*. She spoke about USA and Poland, but also about Spain and the trips to London that women had to take in order to have an abortion until 1985. She talked about the so-called 'Abortion Culture' and the ideas which are based on. Some of them are still surprisingly active.

The last Workshop started with Alexandra Roux, who spoke about the anticonception pill, which was a liberation for women in the first place, but has become a double-edged sword. The question is still *when* do women want to become mothers, instead of *if* they want to become mothers. Next, Emily Kaliel and Karissa Paton spoke about the Alberta region in Canada. Women joined together and became experts in their own reproductive health in order to fight against legislative measures of the government, which pretended to design strategies to increase natality but not counting on them.

Hanne Blank and her powerful voice talked about menstrual extraction and how it could be an abortion technique. She also spoke about bioethics limits in this research. Katheryna Ruban presented some debates which took place back in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century about abortion. A doctor sustained “No women should be turned into a reproduction machine”. We realised some of these debates are still alive, even though they are old. Last intervention was for the Swedish Morag Ramsey, who is starting her PhD in abortion technologies used in Sweden.

The 10th Spring School closed with thoughts related to the solidity and richness that feminist historiography has achieved. Also, the audience pointed out the need of making men part of these studies -in general, make them part of all gender studies-. We cannot add to our lives any more responsibilities. The best reward from the School was learning and sharing ideas and knowledge with everybody during three wonderful days. History, science and technique became one to fight against ignorance, oppression and oblivion.