

Taming of the Shrews: the cultural history of women and production of scientific knowledge.

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Abstract: 300 words

The aim of this paper is to trace turning points in the cultural history of women's participation in the production of scientific knowledge.

The objectivity of modern science, a blessing and predicament of the Enlightenment, has been predominantly a masculine project and practice. The *époque* brought about the prominent figure of a *great inventor*, creating pantheons of male celebrities in every discipline, inaccessible for women researchers, giving credit and recognition to spectacular enterprises and famous individuals. The apparatus of science has started to develop in the absence of women, or even in opposition to their participation, which was not necessarily the case before, as in the case of astronomers' guilds in 17th c. Germany (Schiebinger 2008). The studies on female authors of patents in the late 19th c. France, including inventions in chemistry, portray patent submission as a costly business enterprise of a privileged new industrial elite, where woman was still legally dependent to her father or spouse (Chanteux 2012). The absence of women in scientific community was not only a consequence of the laws regulating their inclusion, but also a result of dominating economic models.

In the second part of the 20th c., the world started to be described through the lens of power relations and domination, and this brought about the category of *gender*, as a set of culturally constructed representations, or performed, lived experience (Butler 1988). Therefore, we acquired tools to read the meanings conveyed by representations of women scientists in the popular culture: either male women, old maids, or less-skilled helpers of men (Flicker 2003).

Finally, the paper tackles the importance of recent feminist science and technology studies that have been re-appropriating the *objectivity* of science once criticized as merely masculine, and proposing new way of engaging with science, such as *situated knowledges* (Haraway 1991).

References

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