
**Ortiz Gómez, Teresa. 2006. *Medicina, historia y género. 130 años de investigación feminista*. Oviedo: KRK. 368 pp.
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Medicina, historia y género by Teresa Ortiz can be considered a successful attempt at transferring the author's knowledge and experience in researching and teaching the history of medicine, science, and women's/gender studies. This research was gathered during her long career at the University of Granada, Spain, where she is at present professor at the Department of the History of Science at the Faculty of Medicine¹. Ortiz currently teaches the history of science and medicine to undergraduate medical students, and is also one of the key lecturers in postgraduate women's and gender studies in Spain.

Teresa Ortiz is one of the pioneers in applying and teaching feminist interdisciplinary methodology in the field of history of medicine and science in the Spanish context. In Spanish academia, feminist interest

in women's and health issues is represented within various disciplines, with the most prolific areas being anthropology (such as Mari Luz Esteban), psychology (like Silvia Tubert) and sociology (e. g. Eugenia Gil Garcia). Generally, these works provide either the theoretical background and methodological tools necessary to study various aspects of women and health, or present the results of research conducted on concrete aspects of women's health, especially those related to reproduction, violence against women or bodily issues. On the other hand, feminist historians of medicine such as Montserrat Cabré i Pairet or Consuelo Miqueo have published important works on the history of women in medical professions and androcentrism in medical discourses. Teresa Ortiz herself has published important works on

women and medicine, especially on midwives and female medical professionals. However, *Medicina, historia y género* is a reflection on the histories of women and medicine as disciplines. It offers an excellent initial reading of the development, scientific interests, production, methods, and intersections of the history of women in/and medicine².

Fundamental feminist epistemological concepts, such as 'situated knowledges' (Harding 1991), have most certainly influenced the author while working on this book, whose presence in the narrative is strong, as she shares her inspirations, reflections, and experience in co-forming the Spanish feminist historiography of science and medicine. This quality, together with clear and comprehensive language in which the book is written, makes it very readable. Thus, it can be recommended to readers with intermediate level of Spanish.

The main question posed by Ortiz concerns how the history of medicine as a discipline should be delimited, and how it interacts with gender studies, and especially with women's history and feminist theory. The book is divided into three parts. The first part broadly presents the theoretical and academic context of the feminist historiography of science and medicine, or a historiography pursued from a gender perspective, within the last 130 years in Spain. In the four chapters that comprise this part, Ortiz focuses on the his-

tory of Spanish feminist academia, explains and dismantles common inaccurate or imprecise uses of terms such as *women, gender, gender relations, sexism and androcentrism*, and finally discusses the implication of women's studies in the re-elaboration of the concepts such as *body, authority, and authorship*. The second part of the book is dedicated to a feminist historiography of health and medicine from its early days in the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth century. Here, the author traces the academic traditions of feminist historians of medicine and health, and critically reports on the contributions of the most distinctive authors, outlining the important phases in the development of the discipline. The author also points to the most recent trends in gender and health (or women and health) studies that have flourished in the Western context and particularly in Spain during recent decades, such as the deconstructive studies of medical discourse in relation to women. The final part of the book is dedicated to the history of medicine from a more general perspective. Here, Ortiz critically examines her own discipline and also discusses the most outstanding features in its current development. Finally, the author proposes a series of recommendations regarding the academic teaching of a non-androcentric history of medicine, resulting from her vast experience as a lecturer, and based on feedback she had re-

ceived from her postgraduate students.

Medicina, historia y género is primarily about interdisciplinarity, which has been considered one of the main characteristics of the methodological toolbox of women's and gender studies. Throughout the book Ortiz discusses possible intersections within the disciplines such as women's history, history of medicine and history of science both in research and teaching, providing an excellent practical example of how to pursue interdisciplinary scholarship. This dimension of Ortiz's work is emphasised in the third part of the book, where she refers to interdisciplinarity as, along with pluralism, one of the most distinctive features of the contemporary history of science and medicine, which seeks to include and combine different theoretical and methodological paradigms.

I would highly recommend Ortiz's book to all scholars and students who work on issues related to women and medicine, especially within or in reference to the Spanish feminist framework. Above all, this work provides an excellent and neatly organized bibliographical revision of the most prominent works from Anglo-Saxon, French and Spanish context. The extended reference list can be useful to those interested in (feminist) history of science and medicine, and also to all who wish to learn about the origins and development of feminist scholar-

ship in Spain. The book is based on rich documentary sources including quantitative and qualitative publications by and on women in scientific journals, under- and postgraduate courses in gender and history of medicine offered by Spanish universities, the proportion of men and women professors in Spain within the field of the history of science, and more. Furthermore, the methodological comments and observations are of great value especially to less experienced scholars, especially as far as academic teaching is concerned.

With regards to drawbacks of this text, in Chapter 1.2 Ortiz extensively discusses rather basic notions such as *gender, sexism, or androcentrism* in a passage which is too rudimentary for researchers with some experience in the field of gender studies. Meanwhile, the next chapters (1.3 and 1.4), which are dedicated to feminist re-conceptualizations of the body and the concepts of *feminist authorship, authority and sexual difference*, only scarcely mention these concepts. Development and critical revision of these would have increased the usefulness of this book for feminist researchers. Ortiz does situate herself as a feminist scholar, but this book would have benefited from more emphasis on her own position within feminist theories and academia. However, the simplicity and underdevelopment of the mentioned parts of the text can be justified by Ortiz's consideration

for the broader public at which the book is aimed. These are, as she explains in the introductory part of the book, scholars who work in the field of the history of medicine, possibly with scarce knowledge of women's studies or contaminated with the common misuses of these terms, and postgraduate students of history of medicine and women's studies. Beyond any doubt, both will certainly find this work of great utility in their research and studies.

Endnotes

¹ The book I review was published in Spanish only. The author's publications in English include chapters on the history of Spanish midwives in Marland (1993) and Marland and Rafferty (1997). She has also recently published a chapter on female medical professionals in Spain during Francoism (Rodríguez-Sala & Zubieta García 2005) and co-edited *Dynamics of health and welfare* (published in Lisbon by Colibri in 2007), a collection of commented sources in history of medicine, in which she co-edited, together with Denise Bernuzzi Sant'Anna, the part entitled *Perspectives on gender and health*.

² Teresa Ortiz is also one of the founding members of Instituto de Estudios de la Mujer [Women's Studies Centre], an interdisciplinary body established at this university in 1986. It is now host to GEMMA: Joint European Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies, a prestigious European postgraduate programme, which is being developed simultaneously since 2007 in seven European universities (Granada, Oviedo, Utrecht, Lodz, Ljubljana, Hull and CEU-Budapest) under auspices of the European Commission. *Medicina, historia y género* is used as a textbook in the

Spanish edition of the Master's.

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