

plant into the background. By framing the problem in this way the illusion was created that, were the issue of dioxins to be resolved, waste incineration would be a fully justified means of addressing the problem of communal waste disposal. Alternative forms of waste disposal, and the question of whether the production of huge amounts of waste is acceptable in the first place, were completely ignored. Konopásek also analysed the reasons that led the environmental activists to abandon the case of the incinerator as a lost cause: a single-handed reduction of the problem to the issue of dioxins, only limited participation of the local community, the nature of the communication between the environmental activists and the local community and the Malešice Incinerator management.

Professor Maureen McNeil (Institute for Women's Studies, Lancaster University) has for many years been examining how popular, personal and pressing stories about reproductive problems and new reproductive technologies form women's expectations and ideas about reproduction. What is striking about these stories is the absence of the woman as a subject (the protagonists are the team of reproductive technology experts and the fact of conception itself). The stories create just a model of some sort of seemingly universal, neutral woman (who, if not entirely absent, figures in the narratives as a completely passive element), and they are constructed from the position of a white, heterosexual woman of middle or upper-middle class background. However, new reproductive technologies have opened the discursive space to other subjects, such as lesbian mothers, homosexual parenting couples, and post-menopausal mothers, and as a result heterosexual women have been swept from their hegemonic position as the sole type of actor in these stories. In her research, McNeil strives to burst open and refute the seeming universality and commonplaceness of these narratives of personal suffering, which owing to the well-established discourse of intimate personal experience have been made to appear unquestionable.

The proliferation of stories of personal suffering and the 'redemptive' power of new technologies has led to a significant shift in how assisted reproduction is perceived; it is now beginning to be portrayed and viewed in increasingly neutral terms as a natural method of reproduction and it is in growing demand. As these stories circulate and the use of new reproductive technologies spreads, other important aspects in this field are pushed to the background, such as child poverty in developing countries, the issue of adoption, and the broader social aspects of reproductive issues, for instance, changes in gender roles and identities, and the economic aspects of having a family. Finally, the stories about new reproductive technologies generate an atmosphere of increasing anxiety around the issue of reproduction.

Vicky Singleton (Centre for Science Studies, Lancaster University) focused on the variety and diversity of methods used to implement a governmental health-care programme aimed at training citizens to provide first aid even in cases of complicated cardiovascular accidents (training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, heart massage, the use of a defibrillator). Singleton underscored the multifaceted aspects of this long-term process of education toward independence and self-reliability in the provision of first aid (interactions within the community, information campaigns, etc.).

The Spring School of Science Studies closed with a public lecture and discussion on 25 March 2005 at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Charles University. At this meeting, chaired by Jiřina Šmejkalová from the University of Lincoln, briefer accounts of the lectures of John Law, Maureen McNeil and Vicky Singleton were presented. Jiří Loudín, from the Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, spoke on the topic of innovation and 'catching up' with the level of science in the advanced countries of Western Europe. He focused on justifying this need to 'catch up' with Western Europe, the dialectical rela-

tionship between innovation and preserving original qualities, and the issue and strategies of imitation, which require originality and autonomous approaches. Loudín sees the Czech Republic's originality and contribution in its 'civilisation capital', and especially in the education of the Czech population, and he reflected on the possible means of mobilising this capital, or, in other words, on the issue of how to produce educated elites. In the discussion that followed, the idea of 'catching up' and competition in technological progress was called into question, and arguments were raised to the effect that this is not a static, straightforward and unproblematic idea.

The colloquium was well organised. The well-conceived and well-structured three-day programme made it possible for the speakers' presentations to be followed by insightful debate. This was mainly achieved by the adequate order and spacing of presentations and follow-up discussions, the valuable feedback from discussants, and the final summaries on each of the sessions provided by the chairs.

The Spring School of Science Studies provided a number of stimuli for thought

within the Czech environment. These are not only the emphasis on studying science in its social context and incorporating the observations and findings of post-structuralist and (post)feminist thought and criticism, but also the emphasis on the detailed observation of concretely localised scientific and technological practices in a long-term perspective. The practices adopted by STS challenge us not to descend into embracing a simplified concept of critique or making gross generalisations, and to be careful not to apply exceedingly vague conceptual metaphors that veil the multifaceted nature, processuality, and complexity of scientific and social practices. STS strives to think through the position of the researcher from the point of view of their situatedness and their responsibility for criticism, and contemplates the impact of the tension between the involvement and detachment of the researcher. In the context of Czech science what may be the most important contribution of STS is the stress on the self-reflection of the researcher over their own situatedness and the situatedness of 'power'.

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