

Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Edyta Głowacka-Sobiech
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Izabela Skórzyńska
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

“Unworthy of History.” The Absence of Women in History from the Perspective of the Analysis of Curricula and Selected History Textbooks in Poland. An Outline of the Issue

The problematic aspects of this paper are focused on the school historical narration in Polish textbooks for history/history and society classes. It aims at outlining the framework and consequences of a certain way of presentation of the role and place of women and men in the school historical narration.

Gender. History. School historical education

According to the law, in the Polish educational system access to education is provided to girls and boys to the same extent; school is, however, as all institutions are, suffused with the values, knowledge, and convictions, predominant and accepted in a given culture, concerning womanhood and manhood. Which means, in the specific case of the Polish school, that both its organisation and educational content are marked with the asymmetry of role and status of women and men in the society.¹ Since the idea and practice of co-education was popularised in the public educational system, there has been a predominant conviction that the school institution is “gender-neutral.” However, as a range of studies conducted in many countries have

¹ Of course, it is also a scene in which all other inequalities are brought to light: those associated with age, fitness, wealth, ethnicity, etc.

shown, the reproduction and preservation of the patriarchal social order became an element of school's "hidden curriculum," and thus remains utterly invisible and unrealised for the majority of its participants.² According to Roland Meighan, "'The hidden curriculum' is a term used to refer to those aspects of learning in schools that are unofficial, unintentional or undeclared consequences of the way teaching and learning are organized and performed in schools."³ Analyses of the official curricula and textbooks of various subjects have revealed a range of hidden messages and ideologies hidden in them. "*These messages*," Meighan underlines, "reflect the worldviews of their authors."⁴ Among those, one can also find views concerning the female and male roles.⁵

The problems of gender-related stereotypes and the social mechanisms of gender identity formation constitute an important theoretical and practical question for present-day humanities (history, pedagogy, psychology, sociology). Stereotypes are currently understood as excessively generalised, simplified, rigid, and change-resistant mental representations of a certain social category, or a special kind of cognitive schemas (the psychological aspect) as well as, simultaneously, as systems of collective beliefs, a special kind of patterns that are an integral part of the socio-cultural structure of a given community (the socio-cultural aspect).⁶

² R. Meighan, *Socjologia edukacji* [A sociology of educating], translated by E. Kiszczurno-Koziej, Z. Knutsen, P. Kwieciński, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 1993; J. Nowotniak, "Ukryty program wychowania," in: *Wychowanie. Pojęcia—Procesy—Konteksty. Interdyscyplinarne ujęcia*, ed. by M. Budzikowa and M. Czerepiak-Walczak, Vol. III, GWP, Gdańsk 2007, pp. 181-205; A. Janowski, *Uczeń w teatrze życia szkolnego*, WSiP, Warszawa 1995; M. Karkowska, "Socjalizacja rodzajowa dziewcząt i chłopców a ukryty program edukacji szkolnej," in: *Role płciowe. Kultura i edukacja*, ed. by M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, WSHE, Łódź 2006.

³ R. Meighan, *op. cit.*, p. 71 (21). [Page numbers in parentheses mark quotes from R. Meighan, I. Siram-Blatchford, L. Barton, S. Walker, *A sociology of educating*, 4th illustrated edition, Continuum, London 2003.]

⁴ R. Meighan, *Socjologia edukacji*, p. 110.

⁵ M. Arnot, *Reproducing gender: essays on educational theory and feminist politics*, Routledge Falmer, London 2002; B. Thorne, *Gender play: girls and boys in school*, Open University Press, Buckingham 1993; M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, "Nauczycielskie i uczniowskie przekazy socjalizacyjne związane z płcią," in: *Płeć i rodzaj w edukacji* [Sex and gender in education], ed. M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha, WSHE, Łódź 2004; K. Konarzewski, "Egzaminy zewnętrzne - czy mają płeć?," in: *ibid.*

⁶ M. Kofta, A. Jasińska-Kania, *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia. Uwarunkowania psychologiczne i kulturowe*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2001; *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia*, ed. by C.N. Macrae, Ch. Stangor and M. Hewstone, GWP, Gdańsk 1999; *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia*, ed. by Z. Chlewiński and I. Kurcz, Instytut Psychologii PAN, Warszawa 1992.

Gender-related stereotypes, being on one hand individual beliefs concerning traits of women and men (individual stereotypes) and simultaneously as socially shared views of the womanhood and manhood (cultural stereotypes)⁷ on the other, are a potential source of developmental barriers, limit the experiences of an individual (the pressure on differentiation of roles of women and men, and marginalisation of womanhood result in a reduced number of life choices made by people of both sexes⁸); they can be wrongful, negatively influence interpersonal relationships, they constitute a threat to self-realisation and vital opportunities, and are often used to manipulate people, exclude them from various spheres of life, limit their access to goods and values; also, in a wider context, they contribute to social conflicts⁹, which is of particular interest in the context of the analysed issue, since stereotypes are the stuff of which negative attitudes—prejudices—are made, and thus are a source of stimuli and justifications for discriminatory behaviours and forms of violence towards representatives of a given gender category. It has been shown many times that stereotypes about women are used by boys and men as arguments to support the existing disparities and male domination, ‘legalise’ exercising control over women, as well as channel, direct, and justify violence towards them. The stereotype behaviour training begins in the child’s first days of life and continues for almost the entire life. Stereotypes are an integral part of cultural heritage and are being reproduced, like the entire axio-normative system, in mythologies, religions and customs, ideas, ideologies, and scientific knowledge.

⁷ T.D. Nelson, *Psychologia uprzedzeń*, GWP, Gdańsk 2003, p. 27; C. N. Macrae, Ch. Stangor, M. Hewstone, *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia. Najnowsze ujęcie*, GWP, Gdańsk 1999, p. 229; M. Kofta, A. Jasińska-Kania, *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia. Uwarunkowania psychologiczne i kulturowe; Stereotypy i uprzedzenia*, ed. by Z. Chlewiński and I. Kurcz; Ch. Stangor, M. Schaller, “Stereotypy jako reprezentacje indywidualne i zbiorowe,” in: *Stereotypy i uprzedzenia*, ed. by C. N. Macrae, Ch. Stangor and M. Hewstone; R. Unger, Sandra, “Seksizm: perspektywa zintegrowana,” in: *Kobiety i mężczyźni: odmienne spojrzenia na różnice*, ed. by B. Wojcieszke, GWP, Gdańsk 2002; T.D. Nelson, *Psychologia uprzedzeń*, GWP, Gdańsk 2003, pp. 263-306; *Przemoc motywowana uprzedzeniami. Przestępstwa z nienawiści*, ed. by A. Lipowska-Teutsch and E. Ryłko, Towarzystwo Interwencji Kryzysowej, Kraków 2007.

⁸ S.L. Bem, “Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing,” *Psychological Review* 1981, No. 88, pp. 354-364; D.E.S. Frable, S.L. Bem, “If you’re gender-schematic, all members of the opposite sex look alike,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1985, No. 49, pp. 459-468.

⁹ E. Mandal, *Podmiotowe i interpersonalne konsekwencje stereotypów związanych z płcią*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2000; K. Deaux, M. Kite, “Stereotypy płci,” in: *Kobiety i mężczyźni: odmienne spojrzenia na różnice*; R. Unger, Sandra, “Seksizm: perspektywa zintegrowana,” in: *ibid.*; T. D. Nelson, *Psychologia uprzedzeń*, pp. 263-306.

Naturally, the knowledge imparted at school is not gender-neutral either.¹⁰ Studies taking into account the cultural gender category undeniably prove that both the teachers (their beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and behaviours) and the way learning is organised (the official curricula, textbooks, and selection) make up a mechanism which sustains and produces gender-related stereotypes and affect the unequal position of women and men in society and culture (the domination of boys and men).¹¹ Whereas in Poland the majority of professionals working in education not only is unaware of their own contribution to sustain the inequality, they just deny that gender discrimination exists, as well as lifetime, multi-faceted consequences of suffering it.¹²

The depreciation of womanhood at school takes many forms, of double standards in the evaluation of appearance and behaviour, naturalisation of male violence against girls (treating bullying female peers as ‘normal boy’ behaviour, a result of “natural at this age” boys’ emotional immaturity, or a form of advances), sexualisation of girls’ bodies, differentiation of classes in certain subjects according to students’ gender, the influence of more or less directly expressed teachers’ personal stereotypical beliefs, treating what girls have to say as less important, ignoring or discouraging girls in appointments to important tasks and functions, dividing subjects

¹⁰ E. Pakszys, “Płeć a rozwój nauki. Problemy epistemologii feministycznej,” in: *Studia kobiece z psychologii, filozofii i historii*, ed. by J. Miluska and E. Pakszys, Wyd. Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1995, pp. 85-98.

¹¹ D. Pankowska, *Wychowanie a role płciowe*, GWP, Gdańsk 2005, pp. 99-104; C. M. Renzetti, D. J. Curran, *Kobiety, mężczyźni i społeczeństwo* [Women, men, and society], PWN, Warszawa 2005, pp. 103-137; L. Kopciwicz, *Rodzaj i edukacja. Studium fenomenograficzne z zastosowaniem teorii społecznej Pierre’a Bourdieu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej Edukacji TWP we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2007; E. Górnikowska-Zwolak, “Nauczycielskie koncepcje ról społecznych kobiety i mężczyzny—czynnik wzmacniający, czy osłabiający szanse rozwojowe?,” in: *Płeć i Rodzaj w Edukacji*; S. Jackson, “Heterosexuality, heteronormativity and gender hierarchy: some reflections on recent debates,” in: *Sexuality and society*, ed. by J. Weeks, J. Holland and M. Waites, Polity Press, Oxford 2003; R. W. Connell, “Cool guys, swots and wimps: the interplay of masculinity and education,” *Oxford Review of Education* 1989, No. 15(3), pp. 291-303; R.W. Connell, *Gender*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2002; V. Walkerdine, *Schoolgirl fictions*, Verso, London 1990; B. Thorne, *Gender play. Girls and boys in school*, Open University Press, Buckingham 1993; M. Mac an Ghail, *The making of men. Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*, Open University Press, Buckingham 1995; R. Gilbert, P. Gilbert, *Masculinity goes to school*, Routledge, London 1998.

¹² L. Kopciwicz, *Rodzaj i edukacja. Studium fenomenograficzne z zastosowaniem teorii społecznej Pierre’a Bourdieu*; D. Pankowska, *Wychowanie a role płciowe*, pp. 87-104; I. Chmura-Rutkowska, “Getto nauczycielek—w pułapce stereotypu,” in: *Płeć i Rodzaj w Edukacji*; R. Szczepanik, “Nauczyciele wobec zachowań szkolnych uczniów i uczennic starszych klas szkoły podstawowej,” in: *ibid.*

and scientific disciplines into female and male ones (where the former are considered as less prestigious), stereotypes of womanhood and manhood, and often the ‘absence’ of female characters in school textbook narrations.

In the didactics and methodology of history teaching and learning, the consequences of the ‘absence’ of women and promotion of patriarchal values by such a patriarchal view of the past have yet to be voiced with clarity. The curricula reflect a broader issue, of course, that history as a science, in spite of many changes in the European, Anglo-American, and Polish historiographies, is still subject to androcentric ideology. Just like all sciences, due to the exclusion of women from it for many centuries, history is a projection of the male worldview and a record of stories of men.¹³ The knowledge about the life and experiences of a half of humanity is only emerging, due to the influence of widely understood post-colonial studies, including those on the past of *gender studies*.

For a very long time, socially and culturally constructed conventions, rules, and norms of female and male behaviour, deemed natural and unchangeable, were not a subject of scientific reflection, and for centuries the view of the role of females and womanhood was characterised by a common belief of the naturally subordinate position of woman towards man.¹⁴ Georges Duby wrote, in a pessimistic tone, “Let us reconcile with fate: only as much comes to us from the female world as the view of men shows us. Still, has the world essentially changed so much?”¹⁵ The consequences of the centuries-long discrimination and absence of women in the public sphere affect us even today. Magdalena Środa states that women, who due to limitations and stereotypes functioned for centuries mostly in the private sphere—overlooked by historians—are deprived of their own history, and common and shared memory. This is reflected, in turn, in the conviction that politics, power, and all important things in this world “naturally” have something in common with manhood.

¹³ L. Davidoff, Keith McClelland, Eleni Varikas, *Gender and history: retrospect and prospect*, Blackwell Publishers Inc, Oxford 1999; K. Canning, *Gender history in practice: historical perspectives on bodies, class and Citizenship*, Cornell University Press-Sage House, New York 2006; M. E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History*, Blackwell Publishers Inc, Malden 2001; L. Mc Call, D. Yacovone, *A shared experience: men, women, and the history of gender*, New York University Press, New York-London, 1998; B. G. Smith, *The gender of history: men, women, and historical practice*, President and Fellows of Harvard College, USA, 1998; *A companion to gender history*, ed. by T. A. Meade, M. E. Wiesner, Blackwell Publishers Inc, Malden 2004.

¹⁴ M. Uliński, *Kobieta i mężczyzna. Dzieje refleksji filozoficzno-społecznej*, Wyd. Aureus, Kraków 2001.

¹⁵ G. Duby, *Damy XII wieku*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 2000, p. 9.

Women in Poland do not have the feeling of community of interests, much less the memory of events which have built that community. History is a history of men, narrations which shape our identity are narrations of men, and it is men who are the heroes of the stories they tell. Women remain somewhere in the shadows, not only of history but also of men, separated, scattered, confined to privacy, and focused so that men can still build that history.”¹⁶

History written by men, from their perspective, and about men—such as is present in teaching history at school—certainly contributes to preservation of traditional beliefs and ruins the chance to build a democratic society.¹⁷

The content of Polish textbooks of history, though this concerns other subjects as well, (mainly primary and lower secondary school textbooks) directly translates to the effects of teaching and learning, shaping of the mentality and gender identity of Polish society. The knowledge acquired at school influences the perception of women and men, as well as a range of decisions made while entering various social roles.¹⁸ In many aspects, gender equality in Poland remains in the sphere of declarations and statutes. Public opinion polls reveal a particularly large discrepancy between the declarations of equality of rights (made by men) and the everyday practice.¹⁹ The argument of that side hardly ever changes—it is men who have always ruled the world, it is them who have made discoveries, and defined what is important and what is not. But is it so certain?

In the Western methodological thought and historiography, similar views have not held sway for a long time. According to many researchers, the testimony of a new perspective on history in French and Anglo-American research is the shift of focus of many historians towards matters which have so far remained beyond their considerations; to the front of these matters came “undoubtedly the history of women.”²⁰ In the French science, these views were expressed by historians associated with the “Annales” school

¹⁶ M. Środa, *Kobiety i władza*, Wydawnictwo W.A.B., Warszawa 2009, p. 406.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ A. Czerwińska, J. Piotrowska, *20 lat zmian. Raport. Kobiety w Polsce w okresie transformacji 1989–2009*, Warszawa 2009.

¹⁹ Chmura-Rutkowska I., Ostrouch J., *Mężczyźni na przełęczu życia. Studium socjopedagogiczne*, Oficyna Wydawnicza “Impuls,” Kraków 2007.

²⁰ J. Topolski, *Od Achillesa do Beatrice de Planissolles. Zarys historii historiografii*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, Warszawa 1998, p. 147; B. S. Anderson, Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of their own: women in Europe from prehistory to the present*, Vol. I/II, Oxford University Press, New York 2000; M. E. Wiesner, *Women and gender in early modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press 2000; *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. by R. Bridenthal, S. Mosher Stuard, M.E. Wiesner, Houghton Mifflin 1998; G. Bock, *Women in European history*, Blackwell

of history (Fernand Braudel, Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre), who not only voiced their disagreement on traditional history and dogmatism but also opened new research fields to historians, at the same time creating together innovative methods of researching the past and bringing to attention new sources of knowledge about the history of humankind, which had been considered so far as “unscientific”²¹ It is to this group of scientists that we should be grateful for taking up such “unmanly” issues as fatherhood, motherly love, and family, or the broadly understood “private sphere”²². These topics became quite settled in the historical science after many years of struggle against the “old” history (1950s–1970s) and gained, at least in France, a dominant position in intellectual, institutional, and propaganda terms not only in historiography but humanities as well.²³

Privacy, culturally attributed to womanhood, is commonly understood as hidden and intimate things that happen behind the closed doors of homes. Public sphere is the space for gaining prestige and money, exercising power, making decisions, and entering social conflicts as well. In a common opinion, these spheres are separated from each other. The slogan popularised by the feminist movement, “personal is political,” or “everything is political,” brought to attention many important questions, hidden ideologies, and beliefs concerning the public and private spheres and relationships between them. Of course, of the private and public sphere, each has its own specificity, typical mechanisms, and structures, yet analysing them separately and ignoring the manifold and bidirectional dependences—as many researchers

Publishers Inc, Malden 2002; S. S. Hughes, Brady Hughes, *Women in World History: Readings from prehistory to 1500*, M. E. Sharpe Inc., USA 1995.

²¹ The name is derived from the periodical “Annales. Economies - Societes - Civilisation,” which gathered around a circle of researchers interested in practising “a new history.” The journal has been published since 15 January 1929. See: J. Topolski, *Od Achillesa do Beatrice de Planissolles*, pp. 113-136; W. Wrzosek, *Historia - kultura - metafora. Powstanie nieklasycznej historiografii*, Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, Wrocław 1995; A. F. Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2003, pp. 708-820; B. Geremek, W. Kula, “Przedmowa” [Introduction], in: F. Braudel, *Historia i trwanie*, translated by B. Geremek, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1999, pp. 5-18. See also: M. Riot-Sarcey, “Women’s History In France: An Ill-Defined Subject,” *Gender & History* 2002, vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 15-35.

²² E. Badinter, *Historia miłości macierzyńskiej* Oficyna Wydawnicza Wolumen, Warszawa 1998; *Historia ojców i ojcostwa*, ed. by J. Delumeau and D. Roche, Oficyna Wydawnicza Wolumen, Warszawa 1995; J.L. Flandrin, *Historia rodziny*, Oficyna Wydawnicza Wolumen, Warszawa 1998.

²³ W. Wrzosek, “Metafory historiograficzne w pogoni za uludą prawdy,” in: E. Domańska, J. Topolski, W. Wrzosek, *Między modernizmem a postmodernizmem. Historiografia wobec zmian w filozofii historii*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1994, p. 6.

have indicated—leads to false conclusions.²⁴ Danuta Duch-Krzysztozek has remarked, that no one doubts to which sphere the apron and slippers belong, and to which the director's desk and company car. However, the answer to the question who in the family most often wears the apron, and who uses the luxurious company car is a result of culturally, economically and politically determined human choices.²⁵

The first step towards the “denaturalisation” of gender was made as a result of debates held in the 1970s, research, and discoveries on the issue of which of the differences between sexes, then considered natural, are determined biologically and which culturally. This exchange of opinions and research results from various scientific disciplines—psychology and anthropology in particular—and the simultaneous dynamic development of feminism revealed the extent and universality of gender inequity and oppression. The next step was the shift in the interest of researchers, in the 1990s, from the issue of gender differences to the topic of differences in socialisation.²⁶

It has been proven that gender norms, internalised in the process of socialisation and education, lead to women and men being situated in different social spheres. The social identity of men is shaped by the demands of the role of citizen and worker in the public sphere, and the role of the head of the family in the family sphere. Whereas the social identity of a woman is modelled above all by the rules of the role of wife, mother, and caretaker of all family members. Since women have always belonged to the private sphere (as well as slaves used to), they were politically forced to be silent until only recently.

...Throughout the whole Western history, women were a part of the population forced to silence on the public scene. ...Women were deprived of voice partially because that which defines them and with which they are inevitably linked—sexuality, giving birth, human body—was ignored in political discourse.²⁷

²⁴ C. Pateman, “Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy,” in: *Feminism and Equality*, ed. by A. Philips, New York University Press, New York 1987, pp. 103-126; A. Phillips, “Przestrzeń publiczna, życie prywatne” [Public spaces, private lives], in: *Aktorzy życia publicznego. Płeć jako czynnik różnicujący*, ed. by R. Siemieńska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2003; *Humanistyka i płeć. Tom III. Publiczna przestrzeń kobiet. Obrazy dawne i nowe*, ed. by E. Pakszys and W. Heller, Wyd. Naukowe UAM, Poznań 1999.

²⁵ D. Duch-Krzysztozek, *Kto rządzi w rodzinie?*, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2007.

²⁶ C. M. Renzetti, D. J. Curran, *Kobiety, mężczyźni i społeczeństwo*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005; *Revising Gender*, ed. by M. M. Ferree, J. Lorber, and B. B. Hess, Altamira Press, Oxford 2000.

²⁷

The now classic feminist works underlined that the division into the female/private and male/public spheres of life is not just the result of the sum of choices by the majority of women and men concerning social roles, but is a part of a broader ideology and everyday practices, placing women in positions subordinate to men in the hierarchy of social structure. This is attested by the historical and cultural variation and diversity of the degree, extent, and forms of involvement of women and men in the public and private spheres. Feminism also questioned the popular, narrow scope of activity and understanding of politics and the public sphere. It was pointed out that the division of work at home and the family pattern (power–submission) also can and has to be discussed as a political and economic issue. The division into the public and private spheres becomes particularly problematic when we realise how much individual stereotypes, internalised and accepted values and norms influence the ways and rules of the public world; and on the other hand, to what extent the forms of private life are imposed on the members of a given society by the social and economic framework. It is in the public sphere that certain ideologies are generated and cultural taboos are reinforced. The image of privacy (leisure time, parenthood, sexuality) is also in a large part constructed in public, e.g. in science, school textbooks, political debates, and soap operas.

The association of male identity with activities in the public sphere and power over women, and womanhood with the private sphere and submission to the power of men is a principle which still more or less rigorously and transparently organises the life of women and men in the majority of present-day societies.²⁸ According to the theory of accumulation of advantages (and more broadly, the theory of conflict), the difference in the situation of women and men ensues from the mechanism, conforming to which the possession of socially important resources, advantages, and prerogatives facilitates the acquisition of subsequent ones.²⁹ Therefore, social advantage tends to increase, whereas the lack of privileges deepens the pauperisation, marginalisation, and subjection. The perpetuation of this inequity and domination of men (and masculinity) is, according to Pierre Bourdieu, the result of symbolic violence, which is “...a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition

²⁸ A. Giddens, *Socjologia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2004; C.M. Renzetti, D.J. Curran, *Kobiety, mężczyźni i społeczeństwo*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005.

²⁹ P. Sztompka, *Socjologia*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2003, pp. 364-367.

(more precisely, mis-recognition), recognition, or even feeling.”³⁰ The result of symbolic violence, inscribed in the processes of socialisation, upbringing, and—most importantly here—formal education, is naturalised inequality, sexism (in its extreme form, misogyny³¹), as well as the discriminatory practices derived from it, which shape the everyday experiences of women and men worldwide. For Rita Felski, history is not a purely philosophical question but a pressing “social and pragmatic concern,” that is of crucial importance for many individuals and groups in terms of their sense of social and human subjectivity. “Indeed, from a sociological perspective, one might speak not of the death of grand narratives but the proliferation of them, as ever more subordinate groups identify themselves as historical actors in the public domain.”³² The same researcher adds that narratives of women and other groups deprived of voting rights are “engendered by a profound sense of exclusion from conventional Oedipal genealogies, they question rather than affirm the notion of a universal subject of history; yet they also seek to reconfigure our understanding of both past and present in a manner that transcends the local.”³³ Instead of basking in their own identity, the scientists from these groups formulate statements about the world which they think are generally true (and not true only for them). They believe that paying meticulous attention to various groups that contributed to shaping of the modern world leads to a better history, not to the death of history.

Non-classical historiography breaks with existing idols and reinterprets the traditional historiographical metaphors. It also suggests a different view of humans in history and a different view of the world, since that presented by the “old” history shares nothing in common with the world created by the “new” history, mainly due to promoting alternative systems of non-cognitive values.³⁴ In classical history, the author of events is an individual (a man), usually performing a distinguished social role, a ruler, commander, great lawgiver, artist, politician, etc. Sometimes the subject of events is a state, nation, or the Church. They are metaphorised by being attributed human

³⁰ P. Bourdieu, *Masculine domination*, translated by Richard Nice, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2001, pp. 1-2; Polish edition as *Męska dominacja*, translated by L. Kopciwicz, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2004, p. 8.

³¹ D.D. Gilmore, *Mizoginia, czyli męska choroba*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2003.

³² R. Felski, “Fin de siècle, fin de sexe: transeksualizm i śmierć historii,” in: *Pamięć, etyka i historia. Anglo-amerykańska teoria historiografii lat dziewięćdziesiątych (Antologia przekładów)*, ed. by E. Domańska, translated by M. Zapędowska, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 2002, pp. 285-306. [English quote from *eadem*, “Fin de siècle, fin de sexe: Transsexuality, postmodernism, and the death of history,” *New literary history*, Vol. 27, No. 2, p. 344.]

³³ R. Felski, “Fin de siècle,” pp. 345-346.

³⁴ W. Wrzosek, *Metafory historiograficzne*, p. 9.

(male) traits. A classical historian follows in the steps of the chronicler and proposes his vision of history, seen with his eyes.³⁵ The chroniclers were seldom women; therefore, we have little information about women in the past. “No illusions,” writes Georges Duby. “It is already very difficult to develop some perspective on men, even the most famous of those who changed the world. ...What is there to say about women then, about whom far less was said? They will always remain to us vague shadows, devoid of contour and depth of relief.”³⁶ It is sometimes so, too, that there is extant information about female figures; but so what, since it is all in a negative (witch, hag, crone, “power-hungry”) or unjust (seen only through their own carnality and sexuality) context. What is there left to research then? Agnieszka Gajewska writes that the “[i]mage emerging from the feminist studies illustrates above all the social context in which these heroines were brought up and in which they acted. And, most of all, it reveals the problems they had to face, and thus often focuses on the sociological aspect of scientific research.”³⁷ Therefore, women known from the annals of history appear in our times as true heroines, as they gained fame (at least by being recorded in history) in spite of ostracism and lack of social support in their times.³⁸ Moreover, it often happened so that great women could be only collaborators, aides of male researchers (e.g., this was the image long associated with the person and activities of Marie Skłodowska-Curie). The problem is, thus, the change of perspective and hierarchy today. At present, dehierarchisation must also encompass historical problems and questions which deserve reflection. History is not principally just about wars, combat tactics, and political economy, that is, subjects imposed by the gender categories. History is also

...war rapes, mandatory sterilisation and prostitution, forced marriages, marriages of children, ritual mutilation of women, punishments for marital infidelity, as well as the outlawing of abortion, laws hindering women’s access to divorce, propaganda concerning procreation, and the participation

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³⁶ G. Duby, *Damy XII wieku*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 2000, p. 8.

³⁷ A. Gajewska, *Hasło: Feminizm*, p. 40.

³⁸ K. Targosz, *Sawantki w Polsce XVII w. Aspiracje intelektualne kobiet ze środowisk dworskich*, Komitet Historii Nauki i Techniki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Retro - Art., Warszawa 1997; *Rola i miejsce kobiet w edukacji i kulturze polskiej*, ed. by W. Jamrożek and D. Żołądź-Strzelczyk, Instytut Historii UAM, Poznań 1998 (Vol. I), Poznań 2001 (Vol. II); *Partnerka, matka, opiekunka. Status kobiety w dziejach nowożytnych od XVI do XX wieku*, ed. by K. Jakubiak, Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Bydgoszczy, Bydgoszcz 2000.

of women in conspiracy, pacifism of women's organisations, to list only the most important.³⁹

Why is it so difficult to create content and images which do not depersonalise and depreciate womanhood? The gender role models and stereotypes contained in textbooks are deeply ingrained not only in the heads of historians and other professionals related to school education but most of all in the broader social assumptions about the female and male traits, roles, and competencies. Changing these patterns is a lengthy process and no single strategy will ever be successful.

The results of consecutive research performed in many countries precipitated a discussion about discriminatory ideologies, procedures, and practices present at schools, and in particular about the responsibility of historians and teachers for the image of the world they present to the students during classes. We believe that a dialogue in which empirical data is presented and stress is placed on increasing the awareness of the professionals related to historical education can lead to the development of certain standards of maintaining gender balance in the textbooks.

We hope that the problems we present will result not only in an interesting critical study into gender themes in school historical and civic education but will also become an impulse to reflection, further research, and definite action for historians, educators and sociologists, educationalists, authors of textbooks and teaching/learning materials, as well as teachers.

The main idea around which the narration of the article is constructed is gender, construed as a changing, socially negotiable cultural construct of sex, a discourse, set of definitions, values, and norms concerning womanhood, manhood, and the differences between sexes. The natural differences between women and men, including the two fundamental ones related to the fact that women bear children and are able to breast-feed, are interpreted in very different ways in various cultures, discourses, and ideologies. The consequences of these interpretations at the level of everyday practice are manifold as well. In this approach, there are various, sometimes contradictory definitions of gender present in social reality, and school education, including school historical education, is one of the immensely important means of conveying these ideas.

In the 6th or 7th year of life, the image of the world shaped in the mind of a child begins to be influenced by school, with a teacher (often presented as an unquestionable authority), its peculiar organisation, overt and hidden curriculum, and most commonly used educational means, that is textbooks,

³⁹ A. Gajewska, *Hasło: Feminizm*, p. 49; see also: G. Baudler, *Bógi kobiety. Historia przemocy, seksualizmu i religii*, Wydawnictwo Ureus, Gdynia 1995.

the purpose of which is to explain the world, clearly and in a way suitable to the age of the child. As Elżbieta Kalinowska is right to remark, although a handbook is only a means that should facilitate realisation of the curriculum, in practice its function is usually much more important. Teachers simply, and above all else, ‘study’ the textbook which, as a result and contrary to the guidelines, determines what each child has a chance to work with at school.⁴⁰

The marginalised or utterly glossed over areas in patriarchal history included, most generally speaking, spheres culturally assigned to womanhood and women: carnality and everyday life. The voices and figures of women, their points of view, and fruits of their genius are unavailable to us not only because, like today, women had to overcome many barriers to break through to the public sphere, but also because even present-day historians consider the lives and affairs of half of humanity as less important in research and description. It is certain as well that the authors of textbooks and curricula either more or less consciously ignore them or, for the sake of their own stereotypical beliefs, repeat the old and increasingly less functional schemas.

Womanhood and manhood, according to the authors of Polish textbooks, are two different worlds. Worlds filled with more sex/gender stereotypes than exist in social reality.⁴¹ Kalinowska, cited above, evaluates the condition of Polish textbooks as follows: “The image of the world created by textbooks does not conform to reality, being reduced to a single kind of life for women and men, it does not show the whole range of manifold social situations and arrangements in which people function. And it is doctored so that not only it does not show the achievements and aspirations of girls and women but it actually understates them. The images of women and men, girls and boys shaped by school textbooks are not based on the observation of present-day reality but on the socially functioning stereotypes about women and men.”⁴²

⁴⁰ E. Kalinowska, “Wizerunki dziewczynki i chłopców, kobiet i mężczyzn w podręcznikach szkolnych,” in: *Portrety kobiet i mężczyzn*, ed. by R. Siemieńska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 1997, p. 116.

⁴¹ B. Szacka, “Kobiety i mężczyźni, dziewczynki i chłopcy. Podział wedle płci w prezentowanym dzieciom obrazie świata,” in: *Portrety kobiet i mężczyzn*, pp. 105-114; D. Pankowska, “Wizerunki dziewczynki i chłopców w podręcznikach do nauczania początkowego i do nauczania zintegrowanego,” in: *Płeć i Rodzaj w Edukacji*, pp. 125-138; I. Desperak, “Podwójny standard w edukacji. Kobiecość i męskość w podręcznikach szkolnych,” in: *Ibidem*, pp. 139-142; I. Chmura-Rutkowska, “‘Fartuchowce’ i strażacy - czyli płeć w elementarzu,” *Forum Oświatowe* 2002, No. 2, pp. 47-64; K. Arcimowicz, “Wzory męskości propagowane w podręcznikach ‘Przysposobienie do życia w rodzinie’,” in: *Od kobiety do mężczyzny i z powrotem. Rozważania o płci w kulturze*, ed. by J. Brach-Czaina, Trans Humana, Białystok 1997, pp. 197-225.

⁴² E. Kalinowska, *Wizerunki dziewczynki i chłopców, kobiet i mężczyzn w podręcznikach szkolnych*, p. 116.

In the case of teaching history, we know from random and unsystematic research conducted in Poland that women and women's affairs take very little room in the textbook views of the history of the nation and the world.⁴³ (See Tables 1 and 2)

Studies have shown that women in textbooks play roles secondary to men, they are almost absent as characters of public life. "...[W]hat is masculine is universal. What is feminine is accidental and secondary."⁴⁴ The few women are presented in traditional, usually family-related roles as well as contexts and spheres culturally considered as typically female. Women are not only underrepresented in the textbook view of history, often information about them is distorted or, simply, untrue. The topic of (in) equality of women and men and the history of emancipation movements concerning the empowerment of half of humanity is not deemed worthy of being presented in Polish textbooks.⁴⁵ Anna Wołosik, a teacher and the founder of the "Toward the girls" association (Pol. *Stowarzyszenie "W stronę dziewcząt"*) postulates that "[w]omen have to be reclaimed for history. And history for women, too: now, when a girl reads a textbook where women do not appear at all, she feels uprooted, deprived of her connection to the past."⁴⁶ We believe that in the textbooks, like in the mass media analysed by Gaye Tuchmann, women are "symbolically annihilated" by marginalising and trivialising their persons, views, and interests, by stereotyping and ignoring the variety of their lives, roles adopted in life, and their contribution to the working of the society, as well as by bullying with messages imbued with violence and humiliation of women.⁴⁷

It is worth to stress that the patriarchy is sustained due to cultural reproduction, in which participate very well educated people, historians, scientists, and teachers. While the prohibitions concerning racist content or offensive to religious sensibilities are scrupulously observed, violating the dignity of women and promoting sexist content does not seem to pose a

⁴³ E. Nasalska, "Role kobiet w historii powojennej w podręcznikach polskich i niemieckich w latach dziewięćdziesiątych," in: *Portrety kobiet i mężczyzn*, pp. 153-164.

⁴⁴ M. Środa, *Kobiety i władza*, p. 406.

⁴⁵ E. Nasalska, "Role kobiet w historii powojennej w podręcznikach polskich i niemieckich w latach dziewięćdziesiątych," pp. 153-164; C. H. Persell, C. James, T. Kang, K. Snyder, "Gender and education in global perspective," in: *Handbook of the sociology of gender*, ed. by J. S. Chafetz, Kluwer, New York 1999; Renzetti C. M., Curran D. J., *Kobiety, mężczyźni i społeczeństwo*, pp. 153-154.

⁴⁶ Interview with A. Wołosik, "Równość płci w podręcznikach szkolnych", *Wysokie Obcasy*, extra of *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

⁴⁷ G. Tuchmann, "The symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media," in: *The manufacture of news*, ed. by S. Cohen and J. Young, Constable, London 1981, pp. 169-175.

serious problem. The images of women are unrealistic, grotesque, and false. Sexism, too, is frequently assigned a positive value.

History as an academic discipline is under the same influence of the historical policy of the state as school historical education, while at the same time it has at its disposal incomparably more efficient tools that guarantee its ideological autonomy, the chief task being the preservation of “political freedom.” The awareness of this state of affairs, clearly verbalised by historians during the last half-century, has been reflected among others in the post-colonial discourse, which points out changes in the paradigm of practising history as a science and, in consequence, suggests a change in educational policy concerning the historical education of children and youth.⁴⁸ Thence comes not only the need for analysis but also proposed changes addressed to the authors of curricula and textbooks, and to history teachers. Recently there have been postulates to establish a “new style” of practising history, to develop a new socio-cultural idea of this discipline, headed towards an in-depth analysis of the studied phenomena, taking into account the topics which have so far been hardly present or absent at all.⁴⁹ There has been a noticeable pluralisation of approaches and subjects of academic history and reflection has been developed on topics rarely noticed so far, such as the history of childhood, family, and women. An open question is how this reflection affects the history course at the present-day Polish school. How do the authors of core curricula of general education, curricula and textbooks of history relate to the changes in historiography and how do they apply them? The so-formulated question is of great importance, since along with the development of social references to the past (social memory), and reflection about it, there emerged a diagnosis of historical education as one of the better organised forms of shaping historical memory within the framework of the historical policy of the state, where the choice of content, forms, and educational methods incurs serious long-term consequences in the form of specific ways of thinking and acting of students, who will soon begin shaping our future.

⁴⁸ This state of affairs, raising the issue of the presence of post-colonial discourse in the theory of history and historiography, the latter breaking, in terms of topics and approaches, with the 19th-century scientific tradition of practising this discipline, its Eurocentrism, ideologisation, positivism, and sexism, have been pointed out by such authors as: Ewa Domańska, Dobrochna Kalwa, and Maria Solarska.

⁴⁹ E. Głowacka-Sobiech, “Dzieje oświaty i myśli edukacyjnej w systemie nauk historycznych (wstęp do dyskusji),” *Łużyckie Zeszyty Naukowe* 2005, No. 1, p. 24.

Gender in present-day textbooks for history teaching and learning

The view of history always reflects the contemporary social and political relations of power and domination, which are being reproduced by texts and speaking. We assume the existence of a relationship between the texts in the textbooks (and, more broadly, the scientific discourse of historians) and the functioning of contemporary women and men in the public sphere. In other words, we assume that textbooks can be an instrument for reproducing and preserving or criticising and changing the social order based on the inequity of women and men. A critical analysis of the textbook texts is set a task to reveal the frequently unconscious ideologies, interests, and symbolic power.⁵⁰ The analysis of textbooks is expected to show and draw attention to the facts and relationships unnoticed on an everyday basis: whether and to what extent the textbook contents are an element of a “hidden curriculum” of excluding women and promote sex-related stereotypes, gender polarisation, misogynism, and androcentrism.

Owing to the problem of the role and place of woman, man, child, and family in history, raised and discussed on account of the educational reform in 1999, and recently of the change in core curricula in 2008⁵¹, certain changes took place in the methods of constructing school historical narration. In history textbooks designed for 4-stage education (stage II is primary school, III is lower, and IV is upper secondary school) there appeared (as part of the subjects of history, and history and society) new approaches to historical topics. In the above context, and at least potentially, the “new” school history changes its character, being humanised by new thematic threads, their new expressions, and new methods of educational work, based on educational

⁵⁰ *Krytyczna analiza dyskursu*, ed. by A. Duszak and N. Fairclough, Universitas, Kraków 2008.

⁵¹ The aims, contents, and effects of historical education currently in force at educational stages II, III, and IV are regulated by the Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curriculum for preschool and general education for specific types of schools (Pol. *Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 grudnia 2008 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół*), *Dziennik Ustaw* [Journal of Laws] (*Dz.U.*) 2009, No. 4, item 17. The aims and effects of training of prospective teachers are regulated by the Interdepartmental Ordinance (of the Ministers of National Education and of Science and Higher Education) of 17 January 2012 on the Standards of Education Preparing to Practise the Teaching Profession (Pol. *międzyresortowe (MEN, MNiSZW) rozporządzenie z dnia 17 stycznia 2012 r. w sprawie standardów kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela*). Pursuant to the Higher Education Act (Pol. *Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym*) of 27 July 2005, *Dz.U.* 2005, No. 164, item 1356, with later amendments).

projects and interactive methods, which stimulate students in the process of studying, living, and experiencing the past.

As the provisions of core curricula change, individual authors and publishing houses gradually prepare new editions of textbooks. How did the approaches and contents of school historical narration for lower secondary school change in these circumstances?

To answer the so-formulated question, we present here selected examples of quantitative analyses of (1) the core curriculum of general education from 2008 and (2) selected textbooks for teaching history and society/history. The presented analyses are a part of a broadly planned quantitative and qualitative research realised within the framework of the research project “*Unworthy of history.*” *The absence of women in history in the light of the analysis of history textbooks in Poland (at the lower secondary level).*⁵²

Below, we will focus more on the primary and lower secondary school, treating the adduced analysis results only as an illustration, as an argument for the validity of further research into the presence of gender themes in school historical education.

And so, the subject taught in primary school (since 1999) is history and society, which prepares the students (an introductory subject) to explore the historical knowledge regarding historical chronology, analysis, and interpretation, creating a historical narrative, interest in social issues, an cooperation in public affairs, which the authors of the core curriculum defined as developing a habit of “inquiring in a social context” into information about the past by asking such questions as “why is it as it is?” and “could it be otherwise?” and attempting to answer the questions so asked.⁵³ This aim is primarily promoted by (1) “a reflection upon oneself and one’s social environment,” when the student explains “how the distinctness and uniqueness of every human is expressed; gives examples of various human needs and ways to satisfy them; explains the significance of family in life and points out examples of rights and obligations of individual family members; expresses an opinion on cultivating traditions and amassing family mementoes; describes the school community, taking into account her/his rights and obligations; gives examples of student board activities in her/his school; demonstrates, using examples, what is fair behaviour; explains how courtesy and tolerance are manifested; provides examples

⁵² Chief Researcher: Edyta Głowacka-Sobiech; Researchers: Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska, Izabela Skórzyńska (Adam Mickiewicz University, Faculty of Educational Studies, Szamarzewskiego 89, 60-568 Poznań; AMU, Institute of History). Project No. NN 108 188 340; Agreement No. 1883/B/H03/2011/40 NCN.

⁵³ Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 on the core curriculum...

of conflicts between people and suggests how to solve them.”⁵⁴ Similar functions are assigned to the reflection upon the state in the context of democracy, constitution, and civic rights, translated as well into the rights and obligations of a student at school. Beyond doubt, such a provision in the foundations of historical education at primary school to the topics of particular interest to us here, related to the place and role of women/men in history. It is only the provisions of points 8–29 of the core curriculum which can bring disillusionment, where the historical content mandatory at the educational stage II are described in detail, using the language of educational effects. What is an indicator here is the representation of proper names of women and men, whose achievements the students learn during the 3-year course of history and society (Table 1).

Table 1 Distribution by name of women and men in the provided content of core curriculum for teaching history and society at primary school (2008).

Core curriculum for preschool and general education for specific types of schools (DzU of 15 January 2009, No. 4, item 17). Primary school		
Contents in points 8–29	Women (by name)	Men (by name)
8. History as a story	No reference	No reference
9. Foundations of Europe	Athena	Zeus, Heracles, Apollo, Odysseus
10. Polish state of the Piast dynasty	No reference	Piast, Popiel, Lech, Czech, Rus, Mieszko I, St Adalbert, Bolesław I Chrobry, Otto III, Casimir the Great, Wierzynek
11. Monks	No reference	St Francis of Assisi
12. Knights	No reference	No reference
13. Burghers	No reference	No reference
14. Peasants	No reference	No reference
15. Discovery of the New World	No reference	Cristopher Columbus
16. Nicolaus Copernicus and his discovery	No reference	Nicolaus Copernicus
17. Jadwiga and Jogaila.	Jadwiga	No reference

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

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18. Jagiellonian Court	No reference	No reference
19. A Polish noble (Pol. <i>szlachcic</i>)	No reference	No reference
20. Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth	No reference	No reference
21. Commonwealth in the 17th century.	No reference	Stefan Czarniecki; Jan III Sobieski
22. Fall of the I Rzeczpospolita	No reference	Stanisław August Poniatowski, Tadeusz Kościuszko
23. Forms of struggle for independence	No reference	Jan Matejko, Stanisław Moniuszko, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stanisław Wyspiański
24. Life in the emigration	Marie Skłodowska-Curie; Helena Modjeska	Frédéric Chopin; Adam Mickiewicz
25. An industrial city	No reference	No reference
26. Restitution of the Polish state	No reference	Józef Piłsudski; Roman Dmowski
27. Poland during World War II	No reference	Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler
28. People’s Republic of Poland	No reference	No reference
29. Solidarity and the rise of the III Rzeczpospolita	No reference	No reference
	4	32
100% = 36		
%	11.1%	88.9%

Source: own research.

Of course, even in the context of the indicator that is the participation (by name) of women and men in the prescribed content of historical education in the core curriculum for primary schools, what is crucial for deciding the presence or absence of gender themes are textbooks and a teacher’s narrative; on which and whom we may hope that they will significantly enrich the representation of women in the school history course (at the educational stage II). Meanwhile, however, random studies of primary school textbooks, which examine textbooks for the reformed school (after 1999), reveal that it is not necessarily the case (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2 Famous women and men present in the contents of 3 selected textbooks for teaching history in 4th grade at primary school (names and surnames, no repetitions).⁵⁵

Famous people (by name)	
Women (by name)	Men (by name)
St Kinga, Athena, Princess Wanda, Izabela Czartoryska, Marie Skłodowska-Curie, Queen Hatshepsut, Wiśława Szymborska, Queen Jadwiga, Rzepicha.	Lech, Czech, Rus, Pope John Paul II, Władysław Jagiełło, Popiel, Stanisław August Poniatowski, Józef Wybicki, Zawisza Czarny, Mieszko I, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Jan Matejko, Jan III Sobieski, Piast, Otto III, Hipolit Cegielski, Thomas Edison, Casimir the Great, Józef Poniatowski, Pierre Curie, Zygmunt III Waza, Ignacy Paderewski, Nicolaus Copernicus, Alexander G. Bell, Phidias, St Adalbert, Siemowit, Leonardo da Vinci, Tutankhamun, Romulus, Remus, Marcus Aurelius, St Francis of Assisi, Neptune, Poseidon, Adam Mickiewicz, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Zbigniew Herbert, Izaak Poznański, Wincenty Witos, Daedalus, Icarus, Yuri Gagarin, Frédéric Chopin, Wright brothers, Ignacy Łukasiewicz
9 people	45 people
100% = 54	
4.8 %	95.2%

Source: own research.

It is worth asking, in these circumstances, how does the raised issue fare at lower secondary school. Here, the historical education was treated in a different way by the authors of the reform and serves, in particular after the changes of 2008, primarily the function of “erudite history” (formerly encyclopaedic), yet with a simultaneous assumption that students actively participate in gaining and working through this knowledge; therefore,

⁵⁵ The following three textbooks were analysed: M. Błaut, H. Chamczyk, I. Miklikowska, *“Moja historia” Podręcznik do klasy czwartej szkoły podstawowej*, Wydawnictwo Nowa Era, Warszawa 2003; A. Pacewicz, G. Czetwertyńska, T. Merta, J. Królikowski, D. Gawin, K. Mazur, *“A to historia!” Podręcznik do historii i społeczeństwa dla klasy czwartej szkoły podstawowej*, Nowa Era, Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej, Warszawa 1999; B. Szeweluk-Wyrwa, W. Surdyk-Fertsch, *“Historia i społeczeństwo. Człowiek i jego cywilizacja” Podręcznik do historii i społeczeństwa dla klasy czwartej szkoły podstawowej*, Wydawnictwo Nowa Era, Warszawa 2003.

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a yes for erudition, but one shaped in a creative and critical way, and directed towards not only knowledge but also development of skills and social competences of students. Yet in fact, the chronological organisation of content, emphasis placed on factography, predominance of political, national, and world history, are in a certain contradiction, due to the volume and nature of the material to be worked out during 3 years of education at lower secondary school, with the assumptions of active, creative, and critical participation of students in the process of education. The benefit of such a conception of historical education at lower secondary school is the fact that a significant correction of the core curriculum for general education was made, at least potentially, in 2008 when part of the contents of historical education, scheduled so far for lower secondary school (the history of the 20th century after 1918), was transferred to the 1st grade of upper secondary school, while preserving the previous schedule of history classes at lower secondary school. It was, however, primarily a response to the deficit of time needed for the contemporary history content (so far realised very cursorily, also due to the lack of time). Again, the saving of time and the opportunity to expand and enrich the history course with gender themes, everyday-life history, etc. are somewhat virtual here, and the contents prescribed in the core curriculum only potentially opens teachers and students to these themes. Similarly to primary school, the lower secondary school students develop and explore their skills and knowledge of historical chronology, historical analysis and interpretation, and creating a historical narrative. In fact, nothing is being said about “inquiring in a social context” into the sense of history. And the organisation of historical contents, ancillary to the “great history” of politics and social movements, personalises it only to a very small extent, which is reflected in the representation not only of women but this time also men in the core curriculum for educational stage III (Table 3).

Table 3. Participation by name of women and men in the content of core curriculum for teaching history at lower secondary school (2008)

Core curriculum for preschool and general education for specific types of schools (DzU of 15 January 2009, No. 4, item 17). Lower secondary school		
Content in points 1–39	Women (by name)	Men (by name)
1. Earliest human history	No reference	No reference
2. Civilisations of Middle East	No reference	No reference

3. Ancient Israel	No reference	No reference
4. Greek civilisation	No reference	No reference
5. Roman civilisation	No reference	No reference
6. The heritage of antiquity	No reference	No reference
7. Christianity	No reference	No reference
8. Arabs and the Muslim world	No reference	No reference
9. Origins of the Western Christian civilisation	No reference	Charlemagne; Otto III
10. Byzantium and the Eastern Church	No reference	No reference
11. Medieval European society	No reference	No reference
12. Material and spiritual culture of Latin Europe	No reference	No reference
13. Poland of the early Piasts	No reference	No reference
14. Feudal fragmentation and unification of Poland	No reference	Bolesław Wrymouth; Casimir the Great
15. Poland during the Union with Lithuania	No reference	No reference
16. Great discoveries	No reference	Ferdinand Magellan, Cristopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama
17. Humanism and renaissance	No reference	Leonardo da Vinci; Michelangelo; Rafael Sanzio; Erasmus of Rotterdam; Nicolaus Copernicus; Galileo
18. Schism in the Western Church	No reference	Martin Luther; John Calvin
19. Poland and Lithuania of the last Jagiellonians	No reference	Mikołaj Rej; Jan Kochanowski; Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski
20. Society and political system of Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth	No reference	No reference
21. Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and its neighbours	No reference	Bohdan Khmelnytsky
22. Forms of a modern state	No reference	Louis XIV

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23. Europe in the 18th century	No reference	Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau;
24. Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century	No reference	Stanisław Konarski; Stanisław Leszczyński
25. Rebellion of subjects—the United States War of Independence	No reference	No reference
26. Commonwealth in the Stanisławian Age	No reference	No reference
27. Struggle to retain independence in the late 18th century	No reference	No reference
28. French Revolution	No reference	No reference
29. Napoleonic Age	No reference	Napoleon
30. Europe after the Congress of Vienna	No reference	No reference
31. Development of industrial civilisation	No reference	No reference
32. Europe and world in the 19th century	No reference	No reference
33. Polish lands after the Congress of Vienna	No reference	No reference
34. Society of old Rzeczpospolita in the times of national uprisings	No reference	No reference
35. Life in partitioned Poland	No reference	No reference
36. Europe and world at the turn of the 20th century	No reference	No reference
37. World War I and its consequences	No reference	No reference
38. Russian revolutions	No reference	No reference
39. Polish cause in World War I	No reference	No reference
	0	25
100% = 25		
	0%	100%

We might repeat here that, of course, the decision who and why was mentioned by name in the lower secondary school history belongs to the authors of textbooks and teachers. Even here, however, as is the case of the history course at primary school, the quantitative data offer little hope.

Table 4 Women and men (by name, no repetitions). Lech Morykiewicz, Maria Pacholska, Wiesław Zdziabek, Historia. Gimnazjum. Poznajemy przeszłość, SOP Oświatowiec, Toruń 2009. Table contains only data regarding the earliest human history and ancient history in the textbook approved for use at schools according to the core curriculum in force since 2008.

Famous people	
Women (by name)	Men (by name)
Clio, Isis, Ishtar, Athena, Gaia, Hera, Demeter, Aphrodite, Artemis, Pythia, Nike, Venus, Juno, Diana, Mary Mother of Jesus	Herodotus of Halicarnassus, Thucydides of Athens, Jesus Christ, Christopher Columbus, Julius Caesar, Hammurabi, Cyrus the Great, Khafre, Abraham, Moses, Saul, David, Salomon, Homer, Diodorus, Hesiod, Draco, Solon, Themistocles, Neocles, Cleisthenes, Pericles, Plutarch, Darius I, Miltiades, Xerxes, Leonidas, Philip II, Ameinias, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Tales of Miletus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Myron, Polycleitus, Phidias, Isocrates, Alexander the Great, Darius III, Archimedes, Euclid, Zeno of Citium, Epicurus of Samos, Tarquinius Superbus, Pyrrhus, Hannibal, Pompey, Spartacus, Lucius Licinius Crassus, Caius Julius Caesar, Marcus Licinius Crassus, August, Marcus Antonius, Diocletian, Constantine the Great, Hadrian, Marcus Ulpius Trajan, Cassius Dion, Aelius Aristides, Trajan, Caracalla, Titus Livius, Publius Cornelius Tacitus, Suetonius, Plutarch, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Claudius, Paul of Tarsus, St John, St Callixtus, Hieronymus, Augustine, Licinius, Arcadius, Theodosius the Great, Sextus Aurelius Victor, Justinian the Great, Gilgamesh, Anu, Enlil, Enki, Marduk, Shamash, Horus, Re, Anubis, Osiris, Amun, Hathor, Messiah, Minos, Minotaur, Theseus, Agamemnon, Uranus, Kronos, Dionysus, Apollo, Hercules, Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Charon, Laokoon, Jove, Romulus, Remus, Neptune, Mars, Ares, Mithra, Serapis, Jupiter
15 people	120 people
100% = 135	
20.25%	79.85%

Source: own research.

Instead of conclusion

The above illustrative material demonstrates, considering just the relative participation of female and male characters in school textbook narrative, the significance of gender studies regarding historical education. They are all the more important since we have our own representation of female and male researchers who, systematically and taking into consideration the indigenous culture of women and men in its historical and social conditioning, take up gender issues, thus shaping an intellectual climate that should also be reflected in school historical discourse. Apart from the Polish female and male authors quoted in the text, who raised the issue of the presence of post-colonial discourse in the theory of history and historiography, the latter departing in its topics and approaches from the 19th-century scientific tradition of practising this discipline with its Eurocentrism, ideologisation, positivism, and sexism, these questions have been mentioned by Ewa Domańska, Dobrochna Kałwa, and Maria Solarska⁵⁶, among others. This subject matter has for many years also been explored by authors coming from Maria Janion's intellectual circle, such as Agnieszka Graf and Kazimiera Szczuka. There are also examples of research on women in history textbooks carried out by Małgorzata Szymczak and Mariola Hoszowska.⁵⁷ Thus the Polish tradition of historical gender studies is gradually taking shape, as they are developed concurrently both as a theoretical and critical reflections, and as the research on and historiography of women. It is a tradition worth drawing upon also in the research into the teaching of history, including the school textbook narration. We are convinced that the increased awareness of the problem of unequal treatment of women and men among the professionals related to historical education at all levels is of utmost importance for the contents of textbooks, historical memory, and social consciousness of young Polish women and men.

⁵⁶ E. Domańska, *Mikrohistorie: Spotkania w międzyświatach*, Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, Poznań 1999, D. Kałwa, *Kobieta aktywna w Polsce międzywojennej. Dylematy środowisk kobiecych*, Wyd. Historia Jagiellonica, Kraków 2001; M. Solarska, “Czy historia kobiet jest możliwa? Wstępne rozpoznanie problematyki,” in: *Czy przeszłość powinna być inna? Studia z metodologii historii i historii historiografii*, ed. by M. Bugajewski, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Historii UAM, Poznań 2009; as translator, together with M. Borowicz and K. Plasik: *Ilana Löwy, Okowy rodzaju. Męskość, kobiecość, nierówność* [L'emprise du genre: masculinité, féminité, inégalité], Oficyna Wydawnicza Epigram, Bydgoszcz 2012.

⁵⁷ M. Szymczak, *Kobiety w polskich programach i podręcznikach do nauczania historii dla szkoły średniej po II wojnie światowej*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu zielonogórskiego, Zielona Góra 2011; M. Hoszowska, “Wizerunek kobiety w XVIII-wiecznych podręcznikach historii ojczystej,” *Prace Historyczno-Archiwalne*, Rzeszów 2002, T. 11, pp. 105-118.

“Unworthy of History.” The Absence of Women in History from the Perspective of the Analysis of Curricula and Selected History Textbooks in Poland. An Outline of the Issue

by Edyta Głowacka-Sobiech, Iwona Chmura-Rutkowska, Izabela Skórzyńska

Abstract

The issue of the article focuses on a school historical narrative in Polish textbooks for teaching history/history and society. The sense of it is to define the framework and consequently present in a certain way the roles of women and men in a teaching history education represented by currently textbooks forced in the Polish school.

Keywords: education reform, base of general education, school historical handbooks, Teaching historical narrative, gender studies.