

Where Were You Mutti? A Critique of the Progress of Educational Reform: Female Inclusion in History Textbooks for the Modern History Case Study, Germany 1919-1939

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Abstract

This article reports on findings from a study which investigated how changed academic approaches to female agency in historical processes have influenced the concepts and contents of history textbooks in Higher School Certificate studies of Modern History in New South Wales. It is important to assess how far school textbooks have come in terms of including women given that one major way history is interpreted to students is through textbooks. In this research, data were gathered from the key textbooks for the Modern History National Study, Germany 1919-1939, and analysed using Banks' scale of curriculum integration to evaluate how well new interpretations of historical scholarship on women's experiences, during Wilhelmine, Weimar, and Nazi Germany have been integrated into high school textbooks. It also investigates the views of teachers and presents their perceptions of existing textbooks staying up to date with recent developments on female agency in the academic milieu.

Keywords: Gender Inclusion, History Textbooks, Secondary Education

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Introduction

As an academic discipline, History has experienced rapid and exponential change during the recent past. Since the late 1960s, (Appleby, 1994) postmodernists and critical theorists have rejected the foundations of historical and scientific knowledge and challenged convictions about the objectivity of knowledge and stability of language upon which the verities of Modernist historicism were based. Francis Fukuyama's controversial, *The End of History*, (2002) enunciated the end of the absolutisms of Modernism presaging a "fluid scepticism" of objectivity and "truth-seeking" across new historical landscapes. These landscapes have, inter alia, added social, cultural, women's, postcolonial, and sub-altern perspectives (Cabrera, 2006) to accepted areas of historical literacy and highlighted the importance of negotiating theory. Theory is a dangerous word. The American Critical Theorist, Stephen Brookfield (2005) warned that, "Acting on what they believed are accurate theories of human nature people have started wars, committed murder, and sanctioned torture. How we think is a matter of life and death." These shifts in ontology and epistemology demand that teacher educators and teachers reconsider their attitudes to the philosophy of knowledge and more recent additions to the historical canon. Failure in this regard suggests that students entering dedicated tertiary historical studies or with history as a curriculum method in teacher training can face a lonely and at times frustrating voyage around the historical theories, as they ply their way through the inchoate theoretical sounding's of more recent historical thinkers in the hope that they will reveal their meanings.

The current Modern History Syllabus pays obeisance to the more recent tendencies in historical scholarship. One of these transformations have been the institutional recognition of female agency to historical processes. However, there appears to be a lacuna in research exploring and reporting how well recent academic approaches to gender in History have translated to Australian school textbooks. Given that schools are natural connectors between society on matters of culture and social democracy, (Savoie, Bruter & Frijhoff, 2004) this study sought to address the lack of knowledge in this area within an Australian context and suggests that a study of current senior Modern History textbooks from the New South Wales Stage 6 Curriculum presents an opportunity to critique the progress of educational reform in female inclusion, with the school as mediator of social change and justice.

To operationalise the study, I focused upon the key textbooks for the Modern History unit of work, Germany 1919-1939. This case study is the uncontested heavyweight of the New South Wales' Stage Six Modern History case studies, with a constituency of 68% of candidates sitting the 2008 examination, and a cohort of 66% of students averaged out sitting the examination from 2005-2016. I identify with a critical theory paradigm in critiquing key textbooks for the subject. My affinity for critical theory is premised on Brookfield's statement that a critical theory must investigate "... matters of morality and communication and how a democratic society might organise itself to promote the fullest and freest communication possible among its members." (Brookfield, 2005) There is the assumption that by using a critical theory perspective, knowledge is not neutral and therefore the field is overtly political. Further, I enjoy insider status as a teacher in the workplace, Higher School Certificate marker, speaker at state and federal conferences for the subject professional associations, manuscript

reviewer, and unremitting public observer of the current NSW Stage 6 Modern History Syllabus.

This study is relevant and significant as the first project focusing on implementation of gender perspectives within the New South Wales Higher School Certificate Modern History Syllabus. Hence an examination of a policy and its implementation will provide analysis of a previously unexamined aspect of educational reform. The study is also significant because it canvasses factors causing congruence or non-congruence between intention and reality. Identification of factors facilitating or inhibiting intention and reality in implementation of the philosophical goals will provide information for decision makers, policy makers and teacher educators for making appropriate decisions and adjustments concerning the policies and strategies of gender perspectives in educational reform. Thus, the orientation of this study of policy congruence, is on how effectively the philosophy of the New South Wales Education Standards Authority - formerly Board of Studies of New South Wales - translates into policy and practice in schools. This study focuses on these findings and identifies key points raised by the research.

Background

Academic approaches to the study of German women in the historical period 1919-1939 have responded positively to the importance of gender roles and gender concepts which have been widely accepted as an essential dimension of history. (Evans 1976; Mason 1977; Winkler 1977; Bridenthal, Grossman, & Kaplan 1984; Sabeau 1984; Owings 1993; Quack 1995; Reagin 1995; Distel 2001; Stephenson 2001; Harvey 2004; Scheck, 2004a; Scheck, 1999b; Smith 2008; Sutton 2009) How have these developments influenced history textbooks for schools? Textbooks in schools assume a reduced importance when compared to gender disparities based on access, parity, achievement, curriculum, and teacher treatment. Yet despite decades of research to expose and ameliorate gender bias in textbooks, Blumberg's (2008) background paper for the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report, found that textbooks continue to be "...one of the best camouflaged and hardest to budge rocks in the road to gender equity in education," and "... far more widespread geographically than the remaining gender gap in parity. Indeed, all these biases and their effects are part of the "hidden curriculum." (2008)

Textbooks have also been identified by Gordy, Hogan, and Pritchard, as "One major way in which history is interpreted to students ...". They aver, "... knowledge provided by texts shapes our ideas about women's and men's roles" and argue that textbooks represent an index of progress in the study of gender roles as, "Social meanings attached to women and men can be revealed in studying history." (2004) Their Connecticut study of the integration of women's experiences of World War Two into high school textbooks tested school district statutory compliance to the use of gender and racially fair textbooks. By employing content analysis and Banks' scale of curriculum integration (1993) coded across four typologies, the researchers revealed that all thirteen major teaching texts reached the contribution level, five progressed to the additive level, three contained elements of the transformation approach, but none exhibited a critical thinking orientation. (2004) A more recent study of Germany's secondary school system which sampled twenty out of 150 approved textbooks used in Hauptschule, Realschule, and Gymnasium streams,

(Lassig & Pohl, 2009) came to the conclusion that German textbooks limit women's history to a small number of topics, invest intensively in gender perspectives late in student careers and do not make full use of the opportunities offered by the curricula to integrate the findings of recent historical scholarship.

Issitt expresses further concerns related to the purpose, status, and use of textbooks. He claims their low status as "... literary objects and vehicles of pedagogy masks their place in the transmission of ideologies and hegemonic function as the voice of disciplines" (2004) and warns against their legitimisation of a discursive field via the guise of political neutrality. Unfettered use of textbooks plays into the hands of the uninspired and untrained (Cameron 2004) by perpetuating "a received knowledge and passive consumption which circumscribes knowledge that counts, positions learners in a subordinate epistemological status, and directs engagement to an outcome based upon a goal. (Issitt, 2004)

The research problem is stated as how power is produced and reproduced through education, and in this case, the degree to which the emancipation of the public sphere has been subverted by institutions. Blumberg's meta-analysis, (2008) Gordy, Hogan, & Pritchard's evaluation of "Herstory" (2004) and Issitt's apprehension of the hegemonic overtones of textbooks (2004) suggest that representation of female agency throughout historical processes has progressed little in quantum or orientation despite the presence of a considerable and growing body of literature in the academic milieu. Their findings reflect poorly on international compliance in transposing recent trends in historical scholarship on women and gender perspectives into school textbooks, providing yet another rationale for a study of this type in the Australian context.

Rationale & Aims

The research aims were to investigate and evaluate how well the key textbooks for the Modern History study, Germany 1919-1939, provided opportunities for student engagement with some of the more recent academic theoretical approaches to female agency in History for this period, and gather and explore data on how teachers respond in providing opportunities for student awareness and understanding of newer approaches to female agency in History. The following questions guided the study. Have new academic trends on concepts of female agency entered key school history textbooks for the unit of work, Germany 1919-1939? What attitudes do teachers have about the value of textbooks in teaching this unit of work? How aware are teachers of contemporary trends in the historiography of women for this area of historical study? What attitudes do teacher have about the value of integrating contemporary trends in the historiography of women into their teaching of this unit of Modern History?

Design & Methods

This research was informed by two methodologies. A content analysis using a schema adapted from Banks' (1993) mode of curriculum integration was undertaken to assess the level of inclusion of female representation in textbook content. A literature search and analysis of the textbooks recommended by the History Teachers' Association of New South Wales revealed that there are approximately twenty-eight books regarded by teachers and students as appropriate textbooks dedicated to the National Study,

Germany 1919-1939. Of these, the most significant publications were Germany 1918-1939, (2007) Hitler and Germany: History Keynotes, (2008) and Republic to Reich. (2007) Of these publications, in particular Republic to Reich, (3rd. ed.) and Germany 1918-1939, were the most frequently cited texts and almost all other texts are routinely reissued. I restricted the analysis to a representative sample of ten books selected for content analysis.

Banks' model was devised in the mid-1990s to measure and assess the stages in which the liberal arts curriculum progresses through stages of promoting respect for and knowledge of human diversity. The four levels of Banks' model are listed below.

Approach	Description	Examples
Description Examples		
Contributions Level 1	Heroes, cultural components, holidays, and other discrete elements related to diverse groups are added to the curriculum on special days, occasions, and celebrations.	Artefacts from diverse groups and/or individuals are studied without attention of their meaning and significance.
Additive Level 2	Content, themes, concepts and perspectives are added without changing the curriculum structure.	Addition of uncontroversial books, articles, people, and materials to a lesson without giving sufficient background knowledge and/or context necessary for student understanding.
Transformation Level 3	The key goals, structure, and nature of the curriculum are changed to enable student exposure to concepts, events, issues, themes and problems from a range of diverse perspectives. Students view events and issues in an empathetic manner and can synthesise and apply their knowledge and understanding in new or changed environments.	Lessons and topics describe and explore the meaning of concepts, events, issues, themes and problems to all groups involved. Students explore their own values and others' and the impact of beliefs, values and attitudes on the decisions people make. All perspectives are heard. Alternative explanations are investigated, particularly that of marginalised groups.
Social Action Level 4	Students identify important social and cultural problems and issues, gather pertinent data, clarify their values, make decisions, and take action to resolve the issues or problem.	Students study prejudice and discrimination and take action to improve social awareness and understanding. Students study the treatment of diverse and marginalised groups and take actions to remedy inequity.

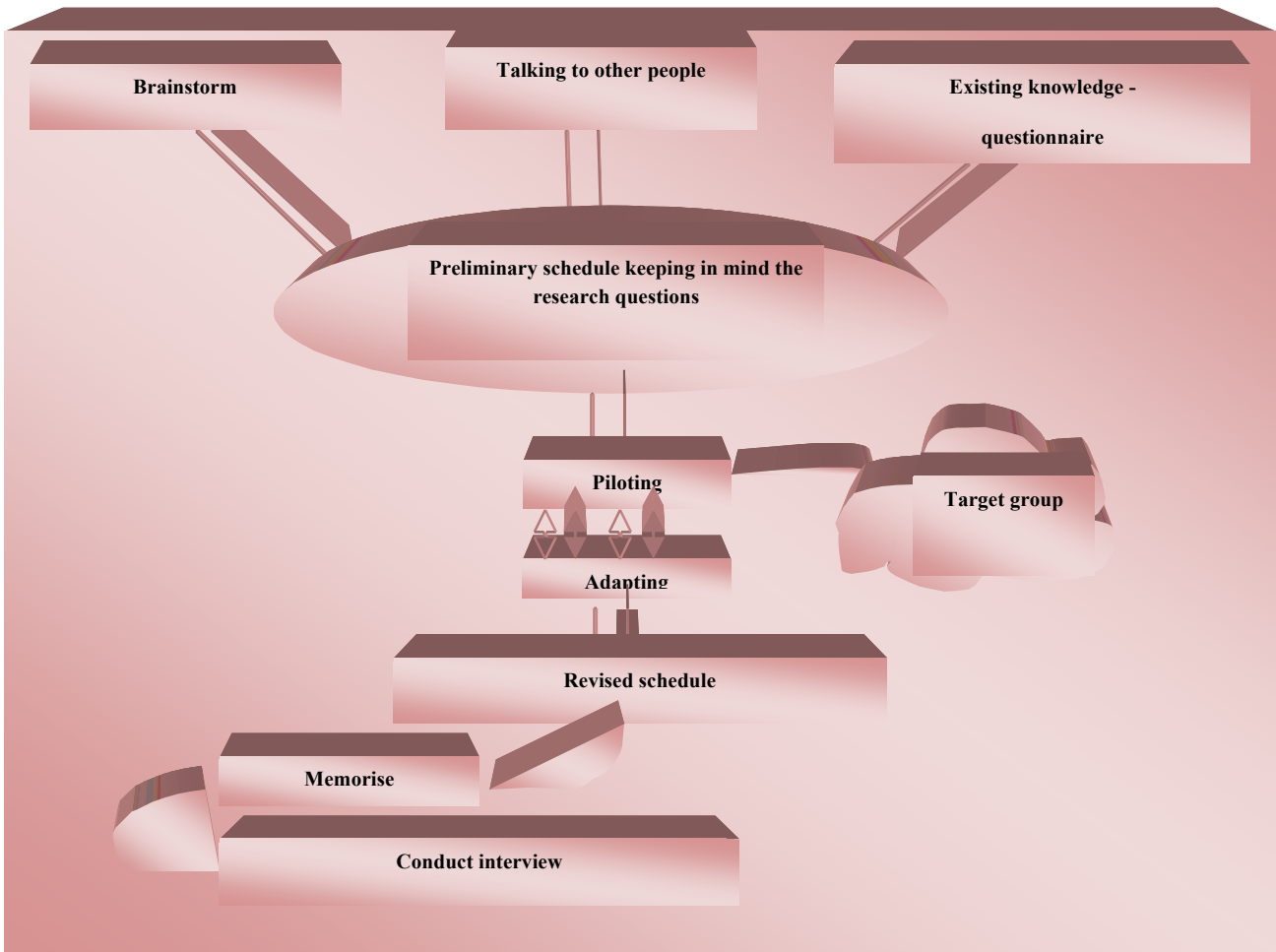
The Contribution Approach is the most frequently used in textbooks. It focuses on heroes, holidays, and discrete cultural elements and is characterised by the addition of extraordinary persons into the curriculum carefully chosen to fit mainstream perspectives and criteria. With the exception of the separate but parallel case study on Leni Riefenstahl, texts that mentioned the work of famous individuals or personalities, female organisations and movements in Germany 1919-1939, were coded as reaching the contributions approach (Level 1) of integration. The Additive Approach varies in that content, concepts, and themes are grafted onto the curriculum without changing its structure, purpose, or features. This approach is acquitted by adding a book section, article, or dimension into the existing curriculum without restructuring it or redefining curriculum purposes, nature, or goals. Texts coded as Level 2 go into more comprehensive and detailed description about the significance of women in terms of the issues and difficulties they faced. However, they offer little to no discussion about the importance or consequences of the female experience in the period studied. The Transformation Approach differs from those mentioned in that it involves the use of different perspectives, content, and frames of reference. This approach emphasises the need for examining a range of perspectives in order to understand the complexity of their study.

Texts coded at level 3 required critical thinking skills of a higher order. Students may negotiate syllogism by practicing the art of spotting an argument that does not stand up to scrutiny, because of areas of inconsistency; appeal to authority, the negating antecedent, ad populum, and post hoc ergo propter hoc, to illustrate several recognisable techniques of fallacy and sophism in form and reasoning. For example, students may be invited to evaluate to what extent the “soft power” of Nazi propaganda platforms such as Volksgemeinschaft lead to the dismantling of the sweeping democratic reforms and increased visibility for women in the public sphere achieved during the short-lived Weimar period. This would require a student foray into the more recent historical literacy’s drawing on theoretical approaches of the interdisciplinary kind they will encounter in their tertiary studies in History. For example, student concept-building would be augmented by their awareness of the Sonderweg paradigm, and their capacity to test the connection between propaganda and change by interrogating the validity of the argument that Weimar was a failed experiment in Modernism. Accordingly, students might consider Weimar as a testing ground for a new relationship between civil society and democracy, and the paradox of Germany’s flirtation with parliamentary democracy and state failure-inability to contain individualistic forces unleashed by democracy that threaten to pull society apart. This would require an understanding of German women’s contribution to the creation of conditions that hastened the collapse of the party system, and which mostly supported the reforms sought by the Nazis to transform Germany’s institutional framework. The final approach, the Social Action Approach, includes all of the elements of the Transformation Approach and requires students to make decisions and take action related to the concept, issue, or event they are studying. Using Bank’s scale, the texts were coded for their thematic content and were assessed for their degree of inclusive history according to the four levels.

The second qualitative approach used to gather data on teacher perspectives was secured through a brief questionnaire that contained open and close-ended questions, and through semi-structured interview. Some items for the questionnaire were adapted from existing Australian and International surveys on teacher use and perceptions of

textbooks and attitudes to gender inclusive instructional strategies and teaching materials. (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 2006: Gender Bias in Textbooks: Education for All by 2015, 2007; Teaching Australian Literacy Study, 2009) The questionnaire contained 14 items. After preparing the pre-trial questionnaire the pilot study was carried out before administering the final questionnaire to highlight problems with the questionnaire and subsequent interviews. It was submitted to forty experienced HSC teachers for their evaluation. Following the pilot, the questionnaire was revised to include two open questions, two dichotomous questions, five single answer mode multiple choice, three multiple answer mode multiple choice (1 rating scaled) and two rating scaled questions. The advantages were considered to be that some degree of complexity could be obtained with both dichotomous and multiple-choice items which could be coded and aggregated to elicit response frequency, and some use of rating scaled items could gain a small measure of sensitivity of response and yet still be quantified to generate numbers. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) One hundred and forty questionnaires were distributed, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 of the same teachers. Semi-structured interview was chosen as a legitimate *modus vivendi* between the structured and non-directive interview. Structured interviews compel interviewees to answer the same set of standard questions. The order of questioning is fixed and wording is specific and there is minimal scope for probing or deviating from the specified agenda.

This approach was discounted as it did not tie in with my affinity for Critical Theory due to the power imbalance between researcher and respondent, and I wanted to move beyond an approach associated with descriptive information to one aligned with producing data which probed deeper into the working lives of the interviewees and one capable of generating theory. The non-directive interview, a technique emanating from the therapeutic assessment interview offered the theoretical promise of minimal interviewer direction and respondent freedom to express their attitudes fully and freely. However, this approach was also rejected due to the disadvantages of having no set questions, no pre-determined framework for recording responses, and exigencies of time. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) Semi-structured interview enabled a more flexible instrument as I could use a standardised interview schedule yet the method allowed for the haptic exploration of emergent themes and enabled scope for pursuing and probing for novel information through additional prompts and impromptu questions in order to follow up leads and the unforeseen or contingent emerging during the interview. As revised, the semi-structured interview consisted of 14 open-ended items congruous with the research questions, “What attitudes do teachers have about the value of textbooks in teaching this unit of work? How aware are teachers of contemporary trends in the historiography of women for this area of historical study? What attitudes do teacher have about the value of integrating contemporary trends in the historiography of women into their teaching of this unit of Modern History organised into three sections: Textbooks, (6) Contemporary Gender Trends in History, (5) and Views of inclusion of Gender Perspectives in Teaching. (3)



Visual representation of how the interview guide was generated, piloted, adapted and used in the field.

Findings

Content Analysis

All texts reached the Contributions stage for women before 1919, during the Weimar interregnum, and particularly during the Nazi period. However, the type of coverage was very limited. Only two of the texts provided any description of women's wartime experiences, one mentioned women as special cases; for example, the reproductive nationalism associated with the Mother's Cross, as their contribution to the fixation with racial purity and population growth, and one included a descriptive and marginal role of women and their organisations in the political life of Weimar but did not discuss their significance or present their perspectives. Thus, the mainstream curriculum remains unchanged and students do not attain a comprehensive-sophisticated view of women in Wilhelmine, Weimar, or Nazi Germany. Issues and events come to be seen as additions to the curriculum, and appendages to the main story of the German nation's development. The curriculum remains unchanged in its basic structure, goals and features. Five of the books reviewed reached the Additive stage in that they gave more detailed and specific descriptive information on the lives of women, including: their appearance in national politics as members of political parties, electoral constituents, members of the Reichstag, as the Hitler Youth, as "Mothers of The Nation," and in the spheres of work and social groups. However, they were all from a male perspective and no comprehensive analysis was found on the importance of these experiential aspects of gender. At the Transformation stage,

four texts demonstrated elements of level three, as they presented the views and perspectives - albeit succinctly - of women of different social, racial, and/or geographical groups on topics which required critical thinking skills such as the counterfactual to history. These included evaluations of the role and status of women in the enterprise of Volksgemeinschaft and Gleichschaltung, in employment, education, agency in social movements, and as politically aware citizens cognisant of their importance to the Nazi's early electoral fortunes and their subsequent complimentary roles in Nazi policies for transformation of a nation. Recent stand-alone primers on Leni Riefenstahl and short monographs on Rosalia Luxemburg also fit this approach. None of the texts reviewed reached the Social Action Approach.

Teacher Perceptions

Qualitative case-studies of volunteer teachers were carried out over seven academic years 2009-2016. Data was gathered through analysis of teaching programs, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. In the light of the data collected for this assignment, all teachers found the research project interesting and felt that they gained valuable insights into this area of educational research by participating. The findings can be summarised as follows. The questionnaire identified the demographic profile of teachers, all of whom were HSC markers, and investigated their frequency of textbook use and of other teaching and learning resources, their preferences for selecting textbooks, their perceptions of how well textbooks stayed up to date with recent historiography on women, their familiarity with recent scholarly trends in gender perspectives in History, engagement with professional development opportunities in this discourse, perceptions of their own teaching practice, and how desirable it was for senior students to have knowledge and understanding of recent historiography on women, for the nominated subject, Germany 1919-1939.

The results revealed that all teachers used textbooks as the primary resource for teaching the subject. Almost 60% of respondents used a textbook dedicated solely for this purpose, following the concept of a workbook, while others used two textbooks with chapters running in parallel to the Syllabus outcomes. All teachers indicated that they used films as the next preferred teaching resource and 34% used websites sometimes. All nominated Mason's, From Republic to Reich, or Webb's, Germany 1918-1939, as the sine qua non for the course. All spent between 18-22 hours using a textbook in class, representing 56-62% of the indicative hours allocated for the unit of work by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority. These results compared favourably with anecdotal claims from the teachers interviewed "that students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and that teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook."

In terms of what made the ideal text for the subject, 40% strongly agreed for Category 1, "Language easy to understand." All agreed for Category 2, "Availability of teacher resources"; there was an almost even split on those who agreed-disagreed for Category 3, "Length of text"; all strongly agreed for Categories 4 & 5, "Develops student understanding of concepts" and "Chapters linked to Syllabus outcomes"; yet 24% agreed for Category 6, "Includes up to date historical research/theory." On Section 6, all indicated that they had not studied feminist theories, feminist literature, or feminist pedagogy at all, but indicated they had gained an overview/introduction to gender perspectives and social justice in their formal educational training and

qualification or obtained through professional development opportunities. Section 7 revealed one teacher had undertaken less than 5 hours professional development in teaching gender perspectives in the past 5 years and others answered that they had not participated in any such training. Using 5 point Likert rating scales, Section 8 showed 75% of teachers disagreed that their primary textbook had altered to accommodate to contemporary scholarship on women, and others chose the neutral response. Surprisingly, Section 9, also rating scaled, showed that 86% chose the neutral response, on how important it was for senior students to have access to recent academic knowledge on German women and girls for the period studied. The open-ended Section 10 which invited teachers to comment on how their teaching approaches and strategies changed to accommodate recent educational ideas elicited responses similar in meaning, if not in word use.

However, Section 10 unintentionally exposed an unexpected digression. All teachers held strong ambivalent feelings about the effect of the Quality Teaching in Schools policy on their teaching of this and other units of work for the Modern History subject. They indicated the Quality Teaching Framework was a political response to the clamour from government for a new generation of technologically literate, self-directed learners and a policy directive that aims to develop attitudes and skills for lifelong learning. They believed that Quality Teaching signals a shift away from learning theories with a psychological focus toward a sociological one in terms of emphasising the relational aspects of social interaction and learning, how learners conceptualise new ideas in the light of prior learning, and learning outside of classroom contexts. All indicated their reservations about the implications for teacher's due to the potential for repositioning and re-alignment in the practical expectations of what teacher's work is and the role of the learner, and lack of adequate department support in funding or provision of release time and/or availability for professional development opportunities, particularly in the areas of literacy in ICT and Web2 use. They also inveighed against the dearth of professional development opportunities facilitated by the NSW Department of Education and Training in skilling teachers in recent trends in historiography. All felt that professional development in this area had been ignored by the Department and that the responsibility had fallen mostly to the History Teachers' Association of New South Wales, or to individual teachers, to remedy this neglect via external means such as further studies in these areas at Graduate Certificate or Master's level.

The interview posed a series of questions for each of these themes: Textbooks, Contemporary Gender Trends in History, and Views of inclusion of Gender Perspectives in Teaching. Specific key perceptions arose on Textbooks. All teachers believed that while existing textbooks have their shortcomings, in the light of limited and inadequate availability for professional development opportunities provided by the NSW Department of Education and Training for upgrading their familiarity and skills with ICT compounded by the uncertainty surrounding the post-Laptop 'roll-out,' textbooks would remain as the primary teaching resource for teachers of this subject, and that the onus remained with students to use their own initiative in non-class and study time to access other sites and sources of information, if they want to specialise in more recent theories related to the historiography of the subject. Criticism of textbooks was confined to poor connections between chapters, the perception of occasional bias of the author/s, treating important examinable areas too "lightly" with insufficient detail - a contradiction to the earlier response on student

agency in student-centred enquiry based learning - and too many sources and activities at the expense of content, or what Cameron (2004) lamented as the “double page spread”; topics presented with minimal content, a couple of sources, a few activities, and capable of an 85% photocopy reduction and rebirth as a worksheet dreaded by the student. Comments on Contemporary Trends of gender revealed an almost complete ignorance of specific contemporary theories, historians, or historical works inclusive of women in historical processes. Interest in contemporary trends in literature related to the topic were confined to thematic areas of economic, political, and military history and all four divulged that they were unlikely to read such material unless it was budgeted for by their school faculty or library. In response to the effect of new thinking on the role of women in historical processes and its effect on teaching the subject, the overwhelming majority of teachers claimed that it made no difference as the formal examination paper questions hardly varied in the orientation of the questions and had rarely departed from this focus since 1964; the topic of “Totalitarianism” was raised as one of several such examples. Several teachers conceded that there were suggestions from some senior students not relating to textbooks but expressing a wider malaise with the subject itself as an anachronism.

On the final theme, Views on including contemporary gender perspectives in teaching, 76% of teachers believed that it was not important for senior students to focus on gender perspectives as historical categories or as an analytical instrument, while most agreed that it was important only in the context of the Personality Study of the female Documentarist, “Leni Riefenstahl.” All agreed that the Personality Study gave interested students scope to engage in comparison of the established schools of political and military historiography with the more recent discourses of contemporary and emerging theories of gender. All agreed that the teacher’s role in promoting student engagement with gender perspectives for the subject was that of a facilitator.

All evinced concern about the possible detriment to student outcomes of investing in a greater overt focus on gender given the sheer volume of historical information to cover in the time allocated for this unit. The majority alluded to Modern History as a subject having been previously identified as problematic in terms of negotiating content-heavy units of work (Vinson 2002) requiring students to develop knowledge and understanding of key features, issues, individuals, groups, events, concepts and other forces along with skills to undertake the process of historical inquiry and communicate an understanding of history. All felt that the difficulties associated with the “cramming” and “compression” of content necessary to negotiate the unit in the indicative hours allocated had not been genuinely alleviated by the post 2005 Syllabus revisions. Teachers saw it as primarily the role of the school library to cater for individual student interest in this area. Almost half of the respondents supported the idea in principle of a new text or texts incorporating more recent historiographical gender perspectives. However, this was tempered with a reluctance to devote much classroom time on these emerging concepts and changed content and all stated they would probably eschew use of such texts unless they were accompanied by endorsement from the peak body professional association, the NSW History Teachers’ Association, and more problematically, in the light of the uncertainty and controversy associated with the imminent National Curriculum, and possible further Syllabus revision, they would not commit to taking a more proactive role in integrating recent historiographical trends into teaching the subject unless the material was a mandatory inclusion directed by NESA and sanctioned by the Examination

Committee in the Higher School Certificate Examination or its equivalent replacement.

Conclusion

The findings of this research have clear messages and implications for teachers, students and others concerned with social justice with regard to the role and status of female agency in historical processes. The main findings arising from the content analysis and teacher interviews suggest that the textbooks do not make full use of the limited opportunities offered by the curricula to integrate the findings of recent historical scholarship. Despite being adroit with the language of reform, the subject orientation of the current HSC Modern History syllabus remains mostly fixated with themes based upon political and military historical processes, and units of work dominated by the twin political themes following the Second World War, Decolonisation and Cold War World. Arguably, these units demonstrate a historical and historiographical lacuna of almost three decades thus minimising institutionally sanctioned opportunities for teachers and students to explore more recent historical literacy's. These results share parallels with Lassig and Pohl's (2009) study of how changed academic approaches to history have influenced the concepts and contents of history textbooks in Germany. Although the German education system is streamed into the Hauptschule, preparation for an apprenticeship in a manual trade; the Realschule, entry to an apprenticeship in commerce or healthcare; and Gymnasium, from which the thirty percent of top students will be prepared for university entrance with the Abitur examination, textbooks that go beyond a chronological approach are usually available only to Gymnasium students at sixth form level. (Lassig & Pohl, 2009) In a similar vein to Lassig and Pohl, the texts examined in this study hardly ever address gender as a historical category or employ it as an analytical instrument. Similarly, the 10 texts examined for the German Case Study mirror the approaches of textbooks used for Gymnasium and Realschule; they offer some limited practical advice on historical work and follow the concept of a workbook with chapters linked directly to syllabus inquiry points along meta-curricular lines, blending content and skills together.

These findings revisit an older theme of *Curruptio optima pessima*, and signal a call for action. Given the plethora of recent scholarship on German women in the period under study, there can be no valid reason for their over-representation in the "Contribution" and "Additive" typologies of Banks' Scale in contemporary school textbooks for senior students. While gender has been integrated into historical writing descriptively, if not analytically, the potential of gender has not been incorporated into the mainstream historical methodology of senior texts for this subject. There was no evidence that teachers reified textbooks for this unit of work, or that lessons were textbook dominated. There were however, clear examples that class time was textbook driven, and although teachers varied in how they actually made use of texts, and use of other teaching and learning materials, textbooks remained as a primary framework which instilled confidence and security in students. Given the high stakes of the HSC as the major pathway to tertiary studies this is understandable. Arguably, what is at stake is how we reconcile the institutionally sanctioned curriculum with other voices outside of formal learning sites but which provide a more authentic mode of expression. How does the student free themselves from empirically identifiable inconsistencies between outmoded curriculum support materials and the discourses of

the more recent historiographical trends? How can teachers and students free themselves from this lacuna, given that most historians now work within an intellectual milieu that is consciously and occasionally unconsciously interdisciplinary?

Anecdotally, a leitmotiv of student estrangement from the subject is based on the absence of female agency in the discourse as female and male students continue to seek access to more recent histories in web-based environments and continue to critique the elision and omission of women from their place at the historical table in school textbooks. This study presents an opportunity for senior students to explore areas/themes such as the following, with the school as mediator of social change and justice: the counterfactual in history the “What if ...?”; gender as an important element of history and the social and cultural relationships between gender and society; the expansive nature and role of institutions in perpetuating elite interests, hierarchies, ideas, and ideologies; how mass-media can be rescued from anti-democratic interests for democratic purposes; the cultural potential and achievements of women; the role and potential of digital technology to transform cultural change, and its inhibitors, inter alia, the literary, theatrical, and cinematic aspects of film and other cultural texts; how to establish ideal speech conditions, evaluate politics and act collectively.

The German National Study also represents a problem and an opportunity for student-teacher exposure to and experience with the Habermasian notion of communicative action in situ. Through dialogic communication and dialectical analysis (Guilar, 2006; Mah, 2000) teachers need to offer a corrective to cultural edifice and artifice made merely to produce-reproduce power through cultural texts and educational processes oriented to instrumental purposes. An attempt to demonstrate the ideal speech situation in schools would offer an agenda for transformative emancipatory change beyond the technical knowledge constituencies of positivist and interpretive paradigms. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) By introducing an understanding of validity claims, relationship between objects and ideas, and the place of rational deliberation (Blake, 1995) in knowledge production, learners might eschew unproblematic assumptions about the relationship between objects and ideas, and the role asymmetry (Blake, 1995) characteristic of the majority of high school teaching episodes, to re-evaluate agency and begin to foster awareness of their position within the control centres of organisational ideologies, and participate fully in the cultural transformation of institutions through new paradigms that value freedom and promote it in practice.

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