Understanding gendered language and knowledges in history education for schools in Victoria, Australia

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History education plays a critical role in gendered socialisation and the construction of young-peoples' values. This paper aims to understand how representations and knowledges within history education at the secondary level in Victoria are influenced by gender. Structured to follow self-study (Samaras, 2011) and autoethnographic methodologies, the author reflected on her teaching practice, conducted an analysis of the Victorian Curriculum and Victorian Certificate of Education Study Design for 2022-2026, and a quantitative content analysis of Victorian textbooks. I found that gender inequality remains an institutional obstacle, with continued disparities in representation and characterisation of the field. Although individual action can be taken by educators to combat negative gender experiences, the author calls for wide-scale change to teacher-training, resources produced for teachers, and for further research into gender-based inequalities in history education, textbooks and their authors, and the Victorian Curriculum as the subject's guiding structure.

Introduction

> The fans above me are turned up all the way to combat the heat of the classroom. The windows are open to let the air in. I am sat next to two friends I haven't spoken to in years now. I'm in my own world, as I always was.
>
> In the front row, boys swing on their chairs. Behind us, loud conversations take place. Somewhere, amongst the noise of the fans, classmates on the other side of the room are arguing over their work. My pen is scratching the paper frantically as I get my answers down. I don't want homework.
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> In the time it takes to cross a 't', the girls in my row freeze. The three of us slow our pens; our highlighters pause on primary sources. The heat still suffocates the room. But now a chill runs down my back. We sit with heads down as we listen to the student in front of us. He's speaking to those around him about his future plans. Details about the violence he wants to inflict on women, on little girls half our age. Powerless, unable to do anything, to say anything. Not to be believed. The boys around him laugh. The boys behind us egg him on.
>
> Our teacher puts a stop to it and then asks them to stay back after class. They move on unfazed. I continue to sit frozen. Should I leave the room, yell at him, or cry because another friend had been assaulted just weeks before? I can't move, so my decision is made. I keep working. I leave with the bell.

Each time that I have begun writing about the research I have conducted, memories from my encounters with history education have flooded back to me. Each time, this moment from when I was sixteen, sitting in my Year 11 Modern History class, has been at the front of my mind. But I have pushed it aside, looking for an anecdote more 'fitting' to introduce the inquiry.

A *moment* in 2023, when I noticed a textbook was written to focus on the man who killed Medusa, instead of the conflicting narratives about the mythical woman's life. A *memory* of a seventeen-year-old me sat at home, researching women of the French Revolution on JSTOR because the materials provided in class were insufficient for the essay I was writing.

There have always been other tales to foreground why it is important to look at how history education in Victoria[1] currently represents women in the field. Another which exemplifies how views of the history discipline, the subject in schools, and the past as we know it, have formed. Exposure of this moment has felt too personal and disconnected from my project. However, it gets right to the root of the problem I aim to address; the questions that linger across my research and teaching practice, that I want to prevent my own students from having to ask:

> If women were not people in the past, with minds and souls, and the ability to influence the world around them, what right do they have to the future? What right do we have to exist outside of the context of the world that men envision for us? What those boys felt empowered to dream for out loud?

Gender in Australia

Currently, gender-equality has not been met in Australia. The nation, like every other, continues to struggle with a myriad of issues, from domestic and intimate partner violence (Johnston, Flynn & Gordon, 2022), to the rise in 'trad-wife' and white nationalist content online which glamorises domestic labour and traditional gender roles in such a way that neglects the harsh realities that previous generations had to survive (Zuckerberg, 2018).

Pauline Grosjean (2022) discussed the culture of gender discrimination, with an outline of how toxic and hegemonic masculinity have contributed to "a culture of violent sexism" (p.11), that permeates through the nation and our history. Robyn Moore (2021) acknowledged that colonial-era power dynamics, which established the culture necessary for Grosjean's observations, have yet to be overcome (see also Conrad, 2022). Johnson (2014) further argued that men and masculinity have become "core cultural ideas about what is considered good… and normal" (p.7) in patriarchal societies, to the detriment of women, femininity, and men themselves, where they cannot escape "the cultural imperative of patriarchal manhood" (p.212), without substantial risk (p.226).

Language and power

Where Arimbi and Kwary (2016) explained that norms are ingrained within language itself and power dynamics enacted to influence socialisation and culture can become instinctual,

[1] The state of Victoria occupies the unceded land of various Indigenous nations who have historically, and continue to, encounter violence within and as a result of education institutions. Cognizant of my position within the system, I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which I live, work, and learn, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that my research has or will interact with.

Israt Jahan (2021) highlighted how gendered language has the power to determine whether cultural and social conceptions of gender and identity are challenged or confirmed. This is of concern where language in all its forms "is a fundamental aspect of human communication and cognition" (Jahan, 2021, p.3525), and that "structural biases in language contribute to subtle but impactful discrimination", on the basis of gender (Harsiwi, Fatimah & Alfarisy, 2024, p.19).

Gender in education

Where Lara Lee (2010) argued that "teaching and learning is derived from society," and Moore (2021) noted that education plays a major part in the reproduction of society, the structures that Grosjean (2022), Moore (2021), and Johnson (2014) each described extend into the education our students receive as well (Lee, 2010).

Despite feminist shifts in education from the late-20th Century onwards, institutional challenges continue to befall girls in schools (Pomerantz & Raby, 2011; Russell, Lerch, and Wotipka, 2018). Gannon, Higham, and Smith noted that within Australian education specifically, "gender continues to profoundly and unevenly shape the lives of people in schools and wider society," (2024, p.836). The presentation of masculinity and femininity continues to marginalise, deny importance, and devalue, women and feminine individuals (Chisholm, 2018). Negative gendered biases thus continue to permeate expectations placed on students (Pomerantz and Raby, 2011), perceptions that they construct through encounters at school (Leslie, 2021, p.90), and the content they are exposed to (Chisholm, 2018).

Curriculum biases

What is neglected can impact socialisation just as much as what is included (Chisholm, 2018). Thus, Losioki and Mdee (2023) connected the issue of null or hidden curriculum in education to issues of gender inequity. They have found that gender inequality continues to be present within education due to the biases and stereotypes that are infused within the choices made by those who develop educational resources and facilitate learning; findings shared by Gannon, Higham and Smith (2024) as they collated research conducted on gender within Australian schooling. Where learning environments operate in conjunction with content knowledge, subject curricula and the absence of just representation must be overcome alongside challenging existing societal and cultural biases (Losioki & Mdee, 2023; Castro, 2023).

Jenni Conrad (2023) mirrored the argument with regard to racial bias in Australian education, stating that colonial legacies will not disappear through changed teaching practices singularly. Instead, combining such with a critical curriculum is necessary to combat what Moore (2021) described as the white solipsism that narrows Australian history education to curricula which upholds white power and subsequent gender ideals.

Textbooks as representatives

Representative of curriculums and history education content (Selzer, 2008), and an impactful means of gender socialisation (Dong and Li, 2023), studies have emerged in order to address and analyse textbooks. Anita Selzer (2008), one of few researchers who has studied gender in Australian history education this century, considered textbooks from the 1960s and 1980s, which cover Year 12 Australian History. They contend that authors need to view power as multiple and the nature of textbooks as in a position to "illustrate whose presence is de/valued as in/significant in their representations of Australian history" (Selzer, 2008, p.19).

Further research finds a consensus that gender continues to negatively influence representations in history textbooks and those of other subjects, worldwide (Tabatadze, 2023; Dong and Li, 2023; Chisholm 2018; Lee and Collins, 2009; Dominguez, 2003; De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022; Koster, 2020; Barton & Sakwa, 2012). The prioritisation of male over female representations in texts have been found to contribute to students' "disparate perception… of whose contributions to history are valued" (Leslie, 2021, p.90).

Literature findings

The literature acknowledges gender imbalance and inequity within classrooms worldwide, influenced by pedagogy, curriculum, classroom resources, and language use. With little research based in Australia however, there is not enough data to understand how gender and Victorian school history education intersect.

Research questions

Therefore, I aim to answer two questions.

The first: *how are representations and knowledges in Victorian history education currently influenced by concepts of gender?*
The second: *to what extent has gender equality been met within the Victorian history curriculum and content knowledge that is taught in secondary schools?*

This paper will demonstrate that Victorian history education standards and providers continue to minimise the contributions of women and those who challenge traditional gender roles throughout history, through the continued use of negative and biased gendered language and knowledges. Additionally, I argue that efforts must be taken to expand research into the field and to support the provision of equitable and gender-conscious history education to Victoria's high school students.

Method

Within the framework of the Master of Teaching's capstone project guidelines at The University of Melbourne, my research has been conducted in line with the self-study research methodology of Anastasia Samaras (2011). After wondering about and reflecting

on my practice, I engaged in a "personally situated inquiry" (Samaras, 2011, p.26), that involved critical collaborations with peers and focused on the improved learning of the researcher.

Additionally, "a transparent and systematic research process", the generation of knowledge, and presentation to peers occurred to support the process (Samaras, 2011, p.26). Throughout, the approach taken in self-study leaned further into autoethnography practices, where my own experiences have sown together and created pathways for discussion about the factors which influence this area of education (Ellis, Carolyn, and Adams, 2020, p.360).

Where Ellis, Carolyn and Adams (2020) acknowledged various concerns with autoethnographic research when conducted without accountability and reflection on the researcher's own biases, the prioritisation of documentation within self-study methodology (Samaras, 2011, p.19) enabled the institution of checks and balances to ensure ethical research was conducted throughout. Prior to publishing, biases were mitigated through collaboration with a critical friend group, tutor, and others whom I have shared my work with at The University of Melbourne. As well, through the inclusion of quantitative data and strong boundaries established for the research.

Revisions were conducted before publishing to update the data and analysis produced originally in 2024, to reflect the current History landscape.

Research boundaries

All qualitative data is clearly labelled, and quantitative data has been highlighted to substantiate findings and observations. Furthermore, data collection was restricted to that which relates directly back to gender in history education. Although impactful, due to the scope of the study and the lack of established research, identities such as race, ethnicity, culture, religion, class, and sexuality, were suspended from inclusion in quantitative data collection. Gender fluidity and non-conforming identities have been under-examined and represented in this study due to the constraints of time, space, and research focus as well. Instead, the binary of men and women, and at times men and non-men or masculine and feminine, has been used to establish patterns in the data encountered.

Observations have been included within the analysis portion of the inquiry that touch on intersectional experiences. However, these points are best acknowledged as threads for future research to unravel. Such identities, I insist, require specific and in-depth projects of their own to be justly acknowledged and assessed in relation to history education in Australia.

Research plan

With general areas of focus established, I collected data from my own teaching practice, curriculum analysis, and a selection of Victorian history and humanities subject textbooks. All qualitative observations were conducted with a focus on text and teacher actions and

language, the way in which gender is discussed and represented, and an acknowledgement of any instances where acts of exclusion occurred. Quantitative data collection was counted manually and based upon the aforementioned binary of male versus female-coded identities included or excluded from materials.

Textbook analysis

Additional research methods specific to textbook analysis were also established. First, the selection of textbooks was narrowed. The sample includes history and humanities textbooks sourced during initial data collection in 2024 and a small sample of textbooks published in 2025 and 2026. They were to be published no earlier than in 2015, unless no others for the subject could be accessed. At least two different textbooks for each year level were analysed to ensure that the subject level was considered from multiple angles. 25 textbooks across years 7 to 12, produced by 6 different publishers from 2006 to 2026, were analysed in the end.

Second, the pages analysed were restricted randomly to ensure the task was feasible and content selected unbiased. Analysis began at the 16th subheading, and spanned 12 pages of each textbook, regardless of content. Finally, the analysis process was established, based upon the combined textbook analysis methodologies of different researchers and centred around critical discourse analysis (De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022).

Data collection started with tallying rates of the inclusion of men and women (Selzer, 2008; De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022; Koster, 2020). Inclusion was based on specific mentions of men/women, groups of men/women, and traditionally male/female actors (e.g. nurses) where no indication of gender neutrality was included. The inclusion of trans and non-binary people was not noted as each group failed to appear in any of the twenty-five texts. With the results, I determined the gender parity index (GPI) (UNESCO IIEP et al., 2014) and gender equity index (GEI) (López-Navajas, 2014), as explained in the text accompanying Table 1.

Then, active or passive representations were tallied (Tabatadze, 2023; De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022). Individuals and groups were noted to be active where texts provided them autonomy and/or power in their representations. Passive representations were alternatively noted when actors were presented as powerless within the text. For example, in the following excerpt, the white militia, through their exertion of will (i.e. use of the active voice, 'met'), are presented as active, whilst the slaves, having been impacted by an outside force, are presented as passive (i.e. use of passive voice, 'killed').

> A white militia *met* with the mob near the Stono River. Half the slaves were *killed* in the ensuing battle and the other half were *decapitated.* (Perfect and Erikson, 2016, p.35).

Included individuals and groups were additionally sorted into the categories of general or specific people with names (De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022), individuals or related to others through familial connections like 'mother' or 'uncle' (Tabatadze, 2023; De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022), and their function (career or role) or their

identities (familial connections or gendered identifiers like 'man' or 'girl') (Dominguez, 2003; De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022). Furthermore, pronouns used were counted (Dominguez, 2003), and the location of representations within the text were noted (De la Torre-Sierra and Guichot-Reina, 2022). Tone was also recorded (Selzer, 2008; Jahan, 2021), based upon a combination of the representation's position as active or passive and the positioning of the actor/s within the spectrum of dominant (masculine) versus submissive (feminine) characteristics provided (Jahan, 2021).

On top of the text, images were analysed based upon an adapted model by Schmitz from 1975 (Koster, 2020) to consider who holds power, who is present, and who is valued or degraded in the images. The source origins and historians that were cited within the textbooks, were recorded to understand the spread of perspectives and the representation of the field of history itself.

Results and discussion

Classroom experiences

Research into the state of gender within history education began in the classroom, with a reflection on my own emerging teaching practice. Now employed as an English teacher, my direct interaction with the History curriculum has been sparce. However, despite this, even my limited experiences are indicative of a system wrought with concerns.

It was made clear whilst teaching a Unit 3 History Revolutions cohort on my final teaching rounds that the inclusion of accurate and appropriate representation to ensure gender equity is a difficult task for teachers to bear on their own. Throughout the four-week teaching period, I found that including women into lessons requires engagement in independent research and working overtime to accomplish. In order to include female historians and perspectives, I had to move away from the two separate textbooks and resources provided to conduct further research. Additionally, including the experiences of women relied on finding technicalities to ensure that lessons remained within the bounds of the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Study Design 2022-2026. One of these 'technicalities' was the inclusion of the context behind Vladimir Lenin's 1923 *Political Will*. Through discussions about how Nadya Krupskaya, Lenin's wife and scribe, could have influenced the source, conversations about authorship and the hidden efforts of women were able to occur. However, the activity was justified only as an opportunity to develop source comprehension and argumentation skills (Levesque, 2008).

Though limited, my teaching experience supported observations that teacher content knowledge, curriculum constraints, and individual practice, influence gender experiences within history classrooms. My experiences since have only strengthened my understanding of the tense relationship that exists between teacher and curriculum influence on the classroom – and how educators must navigate it amongst other constraining factors such as time allocation for lesson preparation and marking, face-to-face teaching time, and student engagement.

The curriculum

Whilst important, classroom and teacher constraints only provide a small, individualised glimpse into history education as a whole. The focus thus turns to the Victorian Curriculum 1.0 and 2.0 and VCE History Study Design for 2022-2026 as the subjects' guiding structures.

Generally, in each level and subject across Victorian curriculums, numerical equity has not been reached between the genders, and gender-diversity is neglected. However, though this can be dissected further, two problems arise. First, curriculums are open-ended. Second, an analysis of the curriculums cannot reveal how the content and interpretations are transmitted within classrooms.

For example, the Units 1 and 2 Modern History Study Design, could be assumed to not support gender equity, due to how prominent women are mentioned at a ratio of less than 1:3 compared to men (VCAA, 2022). Comparatively, the inference that women are included more in levels 7 to 10, due to elaborations that specify women, not men, could be made (VCAA, n.d.-a; VCAA, n.d.-b). This may also contrarily lead to women being lumped together in one short lesson, then neglected as other elaborations are taught.

It is hard to determine how the curriculum translates into classroom experiences. Thus, different avenues are required to dissect the curriculum's implementation. One, is to analyse the experiences of history educators as above. Or, to conduct a more comprehensive and arguably objective study through the analysis of textbooks crafted to address each curriculum description and elaboration directly.

Victoria's History textbooks

Where De la Torre Siera and Guichot-Reina (2022) argued that they "form the basis for a standardized learning and shared culture," (p.2), textbooks can shed light on how the curriculum most regularly and uniformly reaches teachers and students. Accordingly, the following results provide a snapshot of Victorian history education over the past decade or so.

Quantitative results

What is noticeable first and foremost is that the language found in Victorian textbooks is heavily biased against non-men and expressions of femininity.

The results show that across the 300 pages analysed, women were included or mentioned 286 times, compared to the count of men 2383 and total persons 2669 ('Total' row, Table 1). Thus GEI (gender equity index) is 286/2669=0.107. Similarly, GPI (gender parity index) is 286/2383=0.120.

Table 1: Inclusion within textbooks

Textbook	Year	Included (Women)	Included (Men)	Total	GEI (W/total)	GPI (W/M)
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	73	82	155	0.471	0.890
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	8	76	84	0.095	0.105
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	11	71	82	0.134	0.155
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	17	67	84	0.202	0.254
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	4	99	103	0.039	0.040
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	2	70	72	0.028	0.029
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	4	130	134	0.030	0.031
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	2	61	63	0.032	0.033
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4th Ed.	2021	4	171	175	0.023	0.023
Cambridge Analysing the Amer. Rev.	2016	1	134	135	0.007	0.007
Cambridge Analysing the Russ. Rev., 3rd e.	2015	4	143	147	0.027	0.028
Good Humanities 9	2021	3	40	43	0.070	0.075
Good Humanities 7	2021	10	34	44	0.227	0.294
Good Humanities 8	2021	2	69	71	0.028	0.029
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	4	136	140	0.029	0.029
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	10	111	121	0.083	0.090
HTAV American Revolution	2016	14	113	127	0.110	0.124
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	14	98	112	0.125	0.143
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	11	12	23	0.478	0.917
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	7	132	139	0.050	0.053
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	65	110	175	0.371	0.591
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	3	33	36	0.834	0.091
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	5	102	107	0.047	0.049
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	8	129	137	0.058	0.062
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	160	160	0	0
Total		286	2383	2669	0.107	0.120

The GEI results indicate that amongst the 2669 gendered individuals or groups described, only 10.7% were women, girls, or groups of traditionally and historically female individuals (López-Navajas, 2014; Table 1). The GPI between men and women similarly rests at a ratio of 8.34: 1 (UNESCO, 2020; 'Total' row of Table 1).

Table 2 continues to probe the disparity, indicating that active persons make up 87.2% of all male representations, compared to 74.4% of women. Additionally, that women are almost two times more likely than men to appear as passive within the texts (Table 2). Such representations are bolstered by the *types* of representations that women and men receive.

Where women in the texts are represented as named individuals 42.36% of the time, men with specific identities total 62.28% of all men, 12 times the number of named female individuals (Table 3).

Table 2: Active versus passive representations
(use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	Active (women)	Active (men)	Passive (women)	Passive (men)	Total	Prop. women active overall	Prop. men active overall	Prop. women active	Prop. men active
Oxford Hum. 7, 2nd e.	2022	22	44	21	7	94	0.142	0.284	0.301	0.537
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 10, 2nd e.	2020	6	63	1	5	75	0.071	0.750	0.750	0.829
Oxford Hum. 8, 2nd e.	2022	3	67	1	1	72	0.037	0.817	0.273	0.944
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 7, 2nd e.	2020	8	33	3	3	47	0.095	0.393	0.471	0.493
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	2	84	1	1	88	0.019	0.816	0.500	0.848
Jacaranda Hum.s Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	30	2	9	41	0	0.417	0	0.429
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	1	59	0	11	71	0.007	0.440	0.250	0.454
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	23	0	3	26	0	0.365	0	0.377
Cambridge Analysing The French Revolution, 4th e.	2021	1	71	0	6	78	0.006	0.406	0.250	0.415
Cambridge Analysing The American Revolution	2016	0	57	0	17	74	0	0.422	0	0.425
Cambridge Analysing The Russian Rev., 3rd Ed.	2015	0	51	0	8	59	0	0.347	0	0.357
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	15	0	0	15	0	0.349	0	0.375
Good Humanities 7	2021	3	11	0	1	15	0.068	0.250	0.300	0.324
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	19	0	10	30	0.014	0.268	0.500	0.275
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	2	73	0	15	90	0.014	0.521	0.500	0.537
HTAV 20th C. Post-War	2016	0	44	2	9	55	0	0.364	0	0.396
HTAV American Re.	2016	1	37	2	5	45	0.008	0.291	0.071	0.327
Oxford Hum. 8, 3rd e.	2026	3	41	0	5	49	0.061	0.837	1	0.891
Oxford Hum. 7, 3rd e.	2026	5	8	0	0	13	0.385	0.615	1	1
Oxford Hum. 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	4	82	1	7	94	0.043	0.872	0.8	0.988
Oxford Hum. 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	54	73	6	22	155	0.348	0.471	0.9	0.768
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	2	21	0	0	23	0.0870	0.913	1	1
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	5	67	0	15	87	0.057	0.770	1	0.817
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	2	101	3	7	113	0.018	0.894	0.4	0.935
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	138	0	16	154	0	0.896	0	0.896
Total		125	1312	43	183	1663	0.075	0.789	0.744	0.878

Table 3: Generalisation versus specific representation

Textbook	Year	General (Women)	General (Men)	Specific (Women)	Specific (Men)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	37	49	36	33	155
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	4	28	4	48	84
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	1	31	10	40	82
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	11	61	6	6	84
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	2	4	2	95	103
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	2	34	0	36	72
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	1	18	3	112	134

HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	5	2	56	63
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4th e.	2021	1	34	3	136	174
Cambridge Analysing American Rev.	2016	1	79	0	53	133
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd e	2015	1	25	3	118	147
Good Humanities 9	2021	2	9	1	32	44
Good Humanities 7	2021	6	5	5	26	42
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	7	1	62	71
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	2	35	2	108	147
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	2	7	8	104	121
HTAV American Revolution	2016	11	55	3	58	127
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	36	13	62	112
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	7	6	4	6	23
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	5	43	3	85	136
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	60	87	5	23	175
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	1	16	2	17	36
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	1	70	4	32	107
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	6	23	2	106	137
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	131	0	29	160
Total		166	898	122	1483	2669

Tables 4 and 5 indicate that women are more likely than men to be identified by their identities and relational status, as opposed to their roles. Women are furthermore represented through their identities 2.27 times more frequently than the functions they provided to their respective societies, compared with 0.145 times for men (Table 5).

Table 4: Individual versus relational representation

Textbook	Year	Individual (Women)	Individual (Men)	Relational (Women)	Relational (Men)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	35	33	14	37	119
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd e.	2020	3	71	0	1	75
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	5	23	3	3	34
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	9	48	1	5	63
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	2	76	0	5	83
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	65	1	5	71
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	3	127	0	0	130
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	2	58	0	1	61
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4 e.	2021	3	156	1	0	160
Cambridge Analysing Amer. Rev.	2016	0	133	1	15	149
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd e.	2015	1	136	2	0	139
Good Humanities 9	2021	2	38	0	2	42
Good Humanities 7	2021	5	26	2	1	34
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	66	0	3	70
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	0	134	3	2	139
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	8	110	1	1	120
HTAV American Revolution	2016	3	110	8	0	121
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	13	86	3	2	104

Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	11	12	1	0	24
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	6	125	1	0	132
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	60	88	1	2	151
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	2	30	0	0	32
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	5	92	0	2	99
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	5	128	0	0	133
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	139	0	0	139
Total		184	2110	43	87	2424

Table 5: Functional versus identity-based representation

Textbook	Year	Functional (Women)	Functional (Men)	Identity (Women)	Identity (Men)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	10	30	32	16	88
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2 e.	2020	3	20	3	19	45
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	5	20	3	3	31
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd e.	2020	3	53	9	9	74
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	2	18	2	11	33
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd e.	2020	0	38	2	7	47
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	38	1	3	42
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	14	0	3	17
Cambridge Analysing French Rev, 4 e.	2021	0	88	1	4	93
Cambridge Analysing American Rev.	2016	0	60	1	13	74
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd e.	2015	1	44	0	7	52
Good Humanities 9	2021	2	9	1	2	14
Good Humanities 7	2021	2	1	7	6	16
Good Humanities 8	2021	0	29	1	4	34
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	1	49	2	4	56
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	2	23	0	1	26
HTAV American Revolution	2016	1	75	11	3	90
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	3	42	3	3	51
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	6	10	6	22
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	3	82	6	10	101
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	20	67	40	10	137
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	1	23	1	0	25
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	4	81	0	2	87
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	58	7	10	75
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	126	0	3	129
Total		63	1094	143	159	1459

Additionally, textbooks centre men as they used the term 'they' to refer to men without context indicating that the subject was male, more frequently than they used 'she/her/hers' pronouns (Table 6). Thus, contributing to the construction of men as the default or norm (Johnson, 2014).

Table 6: Pronouns
(use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	She/ Her	He/ Him	They as one person (neut.)	They as all (neut.)	They as object/ state/ animal	They as men (no context)	They as men (with context)	They as women (no context)	They as women (with context)	Total
Oxford Hum. 7, 2 e.	2022	30	4	0	11	9	2	8	0	19	83
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 10, 2 e.	2020	1	8	0	1	2	0	13	0	1	26
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	22	0	78	15	7	6	0	0	128
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 7, 2 e.	2020	3	10	0	35	6	3	3	0	1	61
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	0	38	0	2	8	0	1	0	1	50
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 8, 2 e.	2020	0	19	0	26	5	13	2	0	0	65
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	22	0	11	2	1	1	0	0	37
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	18	0	12	1	0	0	0	0	31
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4th Ed.	2021	1	62	0	10	2	12	4	0	0	91
Cambr. Analysing Amer. Rev.	2016	0	18	0	13	0	20	6	0	0	57
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd Ed.	2015	0	31	0	19	4	6	3	0	0	63
Good Humanities 9	2021	1	4	0	136	6	4	1	0	0	152
Good Humanities 7	2021	0	9	1	175	9	0	2	0	0	196
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	27	0	93	1	1	7	0	0	130
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	1	46	0	18	9	0	4	0	0	78
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	2	38	0	42	8	0	2	0	0	92
HTAV American Revolution	2016	2	13	0	26	7	10	18	0	1	77
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	20	0	30	8	3	4	0	0	65
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	14	6	0	0	0	0	20
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	14	0	47	4	6	6	0	2	79
Oxford Humanities 10, 3 e.	2026	6	4	0	4	1	8	9	0	8	40
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	1	0	21	5	2	0	0	0	29
Cambridge Investigating Humanities Vic. Curriculum 8	2025	0	0	0	9	2	22	2	0	0	35
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	34	0	15	1	5	3	0	0	58
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	10	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	24
Total		48	472	1	855	121	132	105	0	33	1767

The tone used for women and men again displays a skew, where men experienced positive representations at a higher rate than women and a lower rate of negative representations (Table 7). Ultimately, the statistics of tonal representations reinforce the position of men and women on the good and dominant as masculine to bad and submissive as feminine spectrum (Johnson, 2014).

Table 7: Tone of representations (use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	Positive (Women)	Positive (Men)	Neutral (Women)	Neutral (Men)	Negative (Women)	Negative (Men)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2 e.	2022	13	43	45	34	15	5	155
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 10, 2 e.	2020	0	11	1	55	2	1	70
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	4	10	7	58	0	3	82
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, e.	2020	9	26	6	39	2	2	84
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	0	10	2	86	2	3	103
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	22	0	39	2	9	72
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	26	4	84	0	20	134
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	15	2	44	0	2	63
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4 e.	2021	0	35	4	132	0	4	175

Cambridge Analysing Amer. Rev.	2016	0	16	1	112	0	5	134
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd e.	2015	0	10	4	122	0	11	147
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	12	3	26	0	2	43
Good Humanities 7	2021	1	8	9	25	0	1	44
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	18	1	47	0	4	71
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	0	11	4	102	0	23	140
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	0	11	7	79	3	21	121
HTAV American Revolution	2016	0	12	12	86	2	15	127
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	15	13	82	0	1	112
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	1	10	11	1	0	23
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	15	6	107	2	9	140
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	25	55	65	9	21	176
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	2	18	1	15	0	0	36
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	5	44	0	48	0	10	107
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	21	8	104	0	4	137
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	19	0	122	0	19	160
Total		38	454	205	1724	40	195	2656

Furthermore, within the structure of the text, women are less likely to be mentioned first when listed amongst men, than men are to be listed before women (Table 8). Women also appear within the main text less than within questions and additional sections combined (Table 8). Men are alternatively showcased within the main text primarily, then additional text, and then in questions, where they again outnumber women considerably (Table 8).

Table 8: Location within texts
(use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	Women First	Men First	Main Text (Women)	Main Text (Men)	Addit-ional (Women)	Addit-ional (Men)	Ques-tions (Women)	Quest-ions (Men)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	7	27	43	33	30	13	9	162
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 10, 2 e.	2020	0	0	0	29	7	34	1	13	84
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	0	1	19	10	40	0	12	82
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 7, 2 e.	2020	0	4	10	41	5	23	2	3	88
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	0	0	2	76	1	11	1	12	103
Jacaranda Hum Alive 8, 2 e.	2020	1	1	0	45	2	19	0	6	74
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	1	0	74	4	56	0	0	135
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	0	0	31	2	30	0	0	63
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4th e.	2021	0	0	1	120	3	47	0	4	175
Cambri. Analysing Amer. Rev.	2016	0	0	1	99	0	33	0	2	135
Camb. Analysing Russ. Rev., 3rd e.	2015	0	2	3	49	1	85	0	9	149
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	0	0	8	1	16	2	16	43
Good Humanities 7	2021	0	3	2	12	5	22	3	0	47
Good Humanities 8	2021	0	0	1	27	1	32	0	10	71
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	0	0	2	94	2	27	0	15	140
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	0	2	4	62	6	42	0	7	123
HTAV American Revolution	2016	0	0	9	57	5	52	0	4	127
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	2	28	12	49	0	21	112
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	2	2	6	6	5	4	0	2	27
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	1	4	111	0	10	3	11	140
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd e.	2026	0	0	47	89	8	11	10	10	175
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	1	0	9	3	19	0	5	37

Cambridge Investigating Humanities Vic. Curric. 8	2025	1	1	3	57	2	24	0	20	108
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	2	3	59	5	43	0	27	139
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	132	0	15	0	13	160
Total		4	27	128	1377	123	774	35	231	2699

In the case of historical perspectives, Table 9 shows that there were 110 primary sources created by men compared to the 4 from women. It should also be noted that 92 male historians were cited in comparison to just 10 women (Table 9). Thus, representations of historians and the field join those of historical figures and societies within textbooks, in their biases towards men and male perspectives of history.

Table 9: Primary and secondary source representation
(use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	Primary (Women)	Primary (Men)	Secondary (Women)	Secondary (Men)	Source not spec./ organis-ation	Total	Propor-tion Men Total	Propor-tion Women Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	0	0	2	12	14	0.143	0
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	2	0	1	16	19	0.158	0
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	5	0	0	12	17	0.294	0
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	1	0	0	13	14	0.071	0
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	0	8	0	0	13	21	0.381	0
Jacaranda Hum. Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	1	0	0	9	10	0.1	0
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	10	3	15	6	34	0.735	0.088
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	12	2	13	9	36	0.694	0.056
Camb. Analysing French Rev., 4 e.	2021	0	5	0	25	15	45	0.667	0
Cambr. Analysing Amer. Rev.	2016	0	10	0	1	10	21	0.524	0
Cambr. Analysing Russ. Rev., 3 e.	2015	0	9	0	1	6	16	0.625	0
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	5	0	2	9	16	0.438	0
Good Humanities 7	2021	0	3	0	0	11	14	0.214	0
Good Humanities 8	2021	0	0	0	5	9	14	0.357	0
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	0	2	0	0	21	23	0.087	0
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	1	10	1	13	11	36	0.639	0.056
HTAV American Revolution	2016	0	1	3	9	4	17	0.588	0.176
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	4	0	0	11	15	0.267	0
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	0	1	4	11	17	0.235	0.118
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	7	0	0	9	16	0.438	0
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	2	1	0	0	15	18	0	0.111
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	2	0	0	3	5	0.4	0
Cambridge Investigating Human-ities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	0	3	0	0	9	12	0.25	0
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	9	0	1	7	17	0.588	0
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	13	13	0	0
Total		4	110	10	92	264	480	0.421	0.029

The images included in the textbooks follow suit, with 52.5% including men compared to just 17% showing women (Table 10). Of such representations, when divided by their overall appearance within images, women are portrayed in the sole position of power in

29.4% of images they appear in, as opposed to the 45.16% of men who hold power exclusively (Table 10; Table 11).

Table 10: Presence within images

Textbook	Year	Women	Men	Both	Neither	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	4	3	2	3	12
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	3	9	0	6	18
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	6	0	9	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	4	2	7	13
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	1	4	3	11	19
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	2	0	7	9
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	4	0	2	6
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	3	0	3	6
Cambridge Analysing the French Rev., 4 e.	2021	0	13	4	0	17
Cambridge Analysing the American Rev.	2016	1	10	0	4	15
Cambridge Analysing the Russian Rev., 3 e.	2015	0	5	2	2	9
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	5	2	5	12
Good Humanities 7	2021	1	2	1	8	12
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	5	0	5	11
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	2	14	0	5	21
HTAV 20th Century post-war	2016	1	5	3	3	12
HTAV American Revolution	2016	0	1	0	1	2
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	1	2	1	9	13
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	1	0	11	12
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	5	1	6	12
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	4	6	2	3	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	1	0	1	2
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	0	4	5	2	11
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	1	4	1	6	12
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	8	2	3	13
Total		20	126	31	122	299

Table 11: Power within images

Textbook	Year	Women	Men	Equal/ Neutral	Other (countries/ animals)	Total
Oxford Humanities 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	4	4	1	3	12
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	2	9	2	5	18
Oxford Humanities 8, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	6	0	9	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	5	1	7	13
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	1	4	1	13	19
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	2	0	7	9
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	4	0	2	6
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	3	0	3	6
Cambridge Analysing French Rev., 4 e.	2021	0	14	3	0	17

Cambridge Analysing American Rev.	2016	0	11	0	4	15
Cambridge Analysing Russian Rev., 3 e.	2015	0	5	1	3	9
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	4	1	7	12
Good Humanities 7	2021	1	2	1	8	12
Good Humanities 8	2021	1	5	0	5	11
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	1	14	0	6	21
HTAV 20th Century Post-War	2016	1	5	2	4	12
HTAV American Revolution	2016	0	1	0	1	2
Oxford Humanities 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	2	1	10	13
Oxford Humanities 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	1	0	11	12
Oxford Humanities 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	5	0	7	12
Oxford Humanities 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	4	5	1	5	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	1	1	0	2
Cambridge Investigating Humanities for the Victorian Curriculum 8	2025	0	4	4	3	11
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	3	2	7	12
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	8	2	3	13
Total		15	127	24	133	299

Men are additionally 5.417 times more likely to be portrayed in valued positions in comparison with women, who are more likely to be degraded than their counterparts (Table 12).

Table 12: Value within images (use web or PDF reader 'zoom in' function to read)

Textbook	Year	Women valued/ Men degraded	Men valued/ Women degraded	Both valued	Both degr-aded	Women valued	Women degr-aded	Men valued	Men degr-aded	Neutral / no People	Total
Oxford Hum. 7, 2nd Ed.	2022	0	1	1	0	4	0	3	0	3	12
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 10, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	1	0	1	2	0	8	0	6	18
Oxford Hum. 8, 2nd ed.	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	9	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 2nd Ed.	2020	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	7	13
Oxford Humanities 9	2016	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	13	19
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 8, 2 e.	2020	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8	9
HTAV 20th C 00-45	2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	6
HTAV 20th C 45-00	2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	6
Cambr. Analysing French Revolution, 4th Ed.	2021	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	0	3	17
Cambr. Anal. Amer Rev.	2016	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	1	4	15
Cambridge Analysing Russ. Revolution, 3rd Ed.	2015	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	3	9
Good Humanities 9	2021	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	8	12
Good Humanities 7	2021	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	8	12
Good Humanities 8	2021	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	5	11
Oxford Humanities 10	2016	0	1	0	0	1	0	13	1	5	21
HTAV 20th C. Post-War	2016	0	1	2	0	1	0	4	1	3	12
HTAV American Rev.	2016	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2

Oxford Hum. 8, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	11	13
Oxford Hum. 7, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	12
Oxford Hum. 9, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	10	0	3	0	9	12
Oxford Hum. 10, 3rd Ed.	2026	0	0	1	0	4	1	4	1	4	15
Jacaranda Humanities Alive 7, 3rd Ed.	2025	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Cambridge Investigating Humanities Vic. Curric. 8	2025	0	0	2	1	0	0	4	0	4	11
Good Humanities 9, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	9	12
Good Humanities 10, 2nd Ed.	2026	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	5	13
Total		0	6	9	3	15	2	115	4	145	299

Significantly, when isolated, the 8 textbooks published and produced to be used alongside the updated Victorian Curriculum 2.0 in 2026, maintain the concerning unequal representations that earlier texts include. Although some statistics trend in a positive direction, such as the GEI which increases by 2% in comparison to the rates including all textbooks (Table 1), the change is not substantial.

Overall, the quantitative data highlights a significant disparity between the women and men included in textbooks. When included, women are more likely to be represented as undervalued members of their societies. The discipline is furthermore portrayed as a male field of study as relatively few women are acknowledged for their contributions. The images support gendered representations through the visual communication of the text as well.

Qualitative observations

There are further concerns with the content which could not be counted numerically. There is a consistent minimisation or neglect of feminine-coded labour and experiences throughout all textbooks. With either little or no attention given to the impact that domestic labour would have had on the societies and historic events discussed. With this, came a limitation on men's representations as well. Traditional gender roles and masculine traits were celebrated, whilst engagement in feminine-coded behaviour or events was positioned as a negative.

Additionally, each textbook includes harmful language choices such as the use of the term *slave/s* instead of *enslaved peoples*. Which, without broader context, can minimise the violence inflicted on and recognition of the stories of a whole subset of the population. In particular, enslaved women are buried by the language used, after their voices have already come to us distorted "through encounters with power," (Fuentes, 2016, p.127). Although there are different views on the issue (see Burns, 2023), where Lee argued that "the lines of objectification among things and beings become blurred due to the underlying dominant language driving a socially constructed reality" (Lee, 2010, p.59), and Haynes, Stewart, and Allen (2016) highlighted how Black girls are often left to deal with a "hidden curricula of anti-Blackness, misogyny, and anti-Black(girl)ness," (Castro, 2023, pp. 4-5), this issue requires re-evaluation.

Whilst the scope of my study meant restrictions to data collection, it was clear when reading each text that intersectional identities resulted in further minimising of the statistics for non-men. With more instances of passivity, negative representations, or simply omission when individuals intersected with identities of race, class, etc.

Conclusion

As research on gender in Australian history education is sparse, intersectional identities were regretfully neglected. However, despite the constraints, much was discovered about the current state of history education in Victorian secondary schools and how educators can intervene to ensure gender equity.

Women are sidelined and forgotten in history education despite efforts towards change. Victoria's history curriculums leave ample room for women to be under-represented, and this can and does bleed into classroom units. The study of textbooks demonstrates a clear disparity between men and women across a range of criteria, with race, class, sexuality and gender identity influencing representations further. It's of note that representations of men often support traditional gender roles as well, which can be harmful due to the stereotypes and power dynamics communicated.

Future action

There are things that educators can do to combat such gendered representations and standards. From conducting additional research to update resources, to the use of sources such as Lenin's *Political Will*, alongside contextual information, to support students to critically engage with sources and histories which highlight and question the impact of women throughout history. Further research, engagement in professional learning and with gender-conscious alternative education spaces, and de-centralisation of the textbook within lessons could also support up to date, unbiased, resource use within the classroom. In sum, teachers need to make efforts to ensure that they are not "the direct source of students' subjugation", but continue to "employ strategies for upending it" (Castro, 2023, p.17).

Despite individual action however, history education in Victoria requires substantial change to combat the types of gendered language and knowledges that currently impair the efforts of non-men throughout the course and discipline of history. In future, progress and equity cannot be left to educators to implement on their own. There must be large-scale institutional change.

Professional development opportunities must be established as new understandings of our practice and content knowledge develop over time. Where educators have a responsibility to keep up with updates, education institutions must ensure reliable resources and protected time for professional development and unit planning are provided to do so.

Additionally, as teacher training programs train the educators who enter into schools, their contents and standards must also be re-examined. Where Ortega-Sanchez (2019) has

argued that pre-service teachers need further support to learn the critical teaching skills necessary to overcome contemporary social issues, universities have a responsibility to ensure their programs properly prepare teacher candidates for their future roles.

Despite efforts here, upon reflection on the data collected and the general lack of literature, further research into the content of textbooks and Victorian curriculums, with relation to gender and interconnected factors, is required to appropriately understand how all groups are represented in Australian education. As well as the authors who create them and research into how public memory has influenced and is impacted by history education.

Gender equality in the history education provided to Victorian students has not been met. Nor has gender equity been a large concern within research into Australian education, textbooks, and resources. Therefore, future action to combat the language use and knowledges shared which perpetuate gendered stereotypes, violence, and omit non-men from their extensive roles throughout history, must be multidirectional.

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