

The Amazing Story of How “Women” Conquered It All: The Production of Gender Scripts in the Chilean Curricular Documents of History and Social Studies.

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Abstract: This article explores the construction of the category “Woman” in the official history and social studies curricular documents distributed by the Chilean Ministry of Education to all public and charter schools in 2014. It answers two major questions: what are the characteristics and acceptable gender performances of the category “Woman” in these Chilean curricular documents? Are there differences in the expected/acceptable performances of “Woman” according to her categories of ethnicity/race or social class? I will argue that these curricular documents construct a historical narrative where two archetypal categories represent possible, oppressive gendered citizens. Students that wish to be identified as “Woman” will be able to read these categories as scripts for gender performance. The objective of this paper is to disrupt untroubled “inclusive” historical narratives.

Key words: Gender, citizenship education, Chile, Latin America, history education, Woman, inequality

Introduction

Chilean researchers in the educational field are perplexed by the persistence of the problem of gender inequity. Even though the conditions for women have changed, discrimination, poverty, stereotyping, and inequality of access to certain careers and jobs persist (Binimelis, Blázquez, & Hernández, 1992; Avalos, 2003; Guerrero, Valdés, & Provoste, 2006; Poblete, 2011; Castillo, 2011). The constancy of this problem is particularly puzzling in a country that has elected a female president twice in the past ten years.

In this article I argue that the “woman problem” in Chilean education does not reside exclusively in the disadvantaged situation or mistreatment of women, but in the construction of the category (Butler 1988, 1990). This paper analyzes the social construction of the category “Woman” in the nationally defined curricular documents of history and social studies in Chile. I will argue that the consensual historical narrative of the nation can become a gender script for the responsible citizen. In the paper I will answer two major questions: what are the characteristics and acceptable gender performances of the category ‘Woman’ in the Chilean curricular documents? And second, are there differences in the expected/acceptable performances of women according to their categories of ethnicity/race or social class?

I first review some of the extensive research that has been produced in the last two decades on curricular documents regarding gender, “Woman” and LGBTQ issues. The second section of this paper is the theoretical framework, where I construct a post-structuralist feminist lens to understand the problem of gender inequality and the category “Woman” as a particular gendered citizen. I then

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analyze the historical context of production of Chilean curricular documents, and I describe the curricular documents, the research, and the analytic methods used in this study. In the four following sections I present the data and findings, and argue that the Chilean curricular documents construct two archetypal categories of 'Woman' representing two possible and thinkable parts of a gender continuum. Finally, in the conclusion, I analyze these findings, explain possible strategies to work through these issues, and propose areas for future research.

Literature Review: Varied "Concerns" on Gender, "Woman," and Diverse Sexual Orientations

Textbook and curricular analysis is considered a valuable practice: it provides insight into the ways in which the "official knowledge" (Apple, 1993) is designed (Lebrun, et al., 2002; Nicholls 2003). This research practice has been used in feminist and queer studies to determine the state of the "official knowledge" regarding their particular concerns. In these fields there has been a prolific amount of textbook and curricular documents analysis for nearly five decades (Blumberg, 2008).

There are essentially three different "concerns" that drive this type of research. The first group is concerned with issues of inclusion, exclusion, and stereotyping (Binimelis, Blázquez, & Henández, 1992; Osler, 1994; Sruvastava, 2005; Blumberg, 2008; Vandergriff, 2008; Alayan & Al-Khalidi, 2010; Smolkin & Young, 2011). Among the motivations in these studies are to find out how consistently women and LGBTQ individuals are represented, and to analyze these characters' complexity. The second group of studies analyze textbooks or curricular documents as a part of larger oppressive structures in society that undermine the position and possibilities of women and the LGBTQ population (Wright, 1995; Commeyras & Alvermann, 1996; Low & Sherrard, 1999; Hall, 2000; Terrón & Cobano-Delgado, 2008; Schoeman, 2009; Aoumer, 2014). They primarily focus on exposing the ways in which textbooks maintain an oppressive social order. The third group of studies analyze the construction of the binary normal/abnormal in educational discourse (Temple, 2005; Schrader & Wotipka, 2011; Schmidt, 2012).

Even though these articles seek to expose hegemonic social structures, they specifically do so by focusing on processes of gender and sexuality normalization. The discourse contained in textbooks is pervasive enough that it "determines what kinds of intelligible statements can be circulated within a given economy of thought" (Wilchins, 2004, p. 59). It works as an artifact of oppression that makes the own student police herself, perpetuating the hegemonic social order. Discourse should not be understood "as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to content and representations) but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). Similarly, Schmidt (2012) argued that history curriculum works as an identity behavior handbook, and suggested that researchers analyze gender norms in the few representations of women and LGBTQ individuals, rather than focusing solely on their absence. In view of these constructions the role of 'woman' is specifically focused upon in this study.

Theoretical Framework: The Nature of the Construction of "Woman" as the Responsible Gendered Citizen

"Woman" is an historical socially constructed category that varies among societies and over time. One is not born a "Woman" but is turned into one. Butler (1988) explained that;

To be female is (...), a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have become a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman' to induce the

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body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project. (p. 522)

Conforming to the (re)produced historical idea of “Woman” means to materialize this idea in one’s body over and over again, restricting one’s possibilities and committing to this gender “project” over time. In order to turn our own body into a “cultural sign” of “Womanhood” (or other gender identities), one has to “do” or perform gender. We have to signal to our spectators that we possess the ‘natural’ characteristics of that category and should be recognized as such. The idea of “Woman” is then embodied by these performances: “Woman” is not a mere abstract construct defined by external discourse, but an embodied (re)produced self (Butler, 1988).

Gender can be performed for a public or for oneself, and it has to be performed “right.” It is restricted by the social constraints of the specific society that expects such performance. Straying too far away from the acceptable set of gender performances would mean being disciplined (Butler, 1988). To avoid punishment and to be fully accepted in the community as “naturally” gendered, the individual has to conform, and to apply herself to do her gender “right.”

Gender scripts are everywhere; we perform and witness them in every aspect of our lives. The same performances of others – when acting as gendered selves – conform to various scripts from where people get information on how to do “Woman” (or other gender categories). Nevertheless, these performances do not function in a social vacuum. Gender is a social construct that relates to specific historical societies. In each of these societies, there are discourses that are defined and sustained through a variety of mechanisms, predetermining the gender scripts that are going to signal who is “Woman,” and who is supposed to be considered abnormal or even dangerous. The created “compulsory” conjunction between sex, gender, and sexual desire has a cultural, rather than natural, meaning, and responds to a particular set of rules, determined in a particular context (Butler, 1988, 1990). The gender script is (re)produced by social institutions signaling what it means to do gender right. The educational system has officially great responsibility in this process to instill norms in the citizens-to-be.

The power of the state and other institutions over the gendered subjectivities should not be understood as a purely coercive rule that forces people to do gender in a certain way. It is true that sometimes individuals must feel that way regarding certain aspects of the expected performances they have to do, but most of the time, we comply “freely” to gender norms, and to the range of “acceptable” possibilities that society determines comes “naturally” to our sex. Liberal democracies do not forcefully coerce people to act and think in certain ways; rather they create the conditions where a particular kind of freedom and agency is possible, but is restricted enough that it provides only a limited number of ‘thinkable’ possible choices and thus outcomes. This is called governmentality (Foucault in Friedrich, 2010). If we think about governmentality in terms of gender, it could be argued that individuals are being managed in this way to ascribe “freely” to a predetermined unnatural category “Woman,” and to perform it in a manner that maintains the established social order.

Even though there are many ways in which the state and other institutions can work to create the conditions necessary to produce such governmentality, Friedrich (2010) focused on the role of historical consciousness as a pedagogical device in the process of (re)producing the responsible citizen in schools. As a pedagogical device (constructed by educators and educational researchers), historical consciousness is understood as an acquired skill to understand the past. This “skill” “(...) relates to the

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intrinsic worth that teaching history possesses for *instilling sets of values and desired behaviors*" (Friedrich, 2010, p. 656, italics added). In schools, history would have then the potential to become a moral fable, and historical consciousness would be the skill that would allow the student to draw predetermined lessons from historical narrative. In this way, the production of this disposition in students would make possible the previously described governmentality. The subject uses her historical consciousness (acquired and learned in school) to draw specific lessons from the historical narrative, in this way guiding/limiting her future choices and acts in concordance to the project of the nation. This pedagogical device creates an economy of thought that makes thinkable some possibilities and unthinkable others.

The concept of governmentality in a gender framework can serve to (re)produce a *gendered responsible citizen*. The gendered responsible citizen is choosing her future performances "freely," basing her choices both on her reasoning and on a consensual predetermined historical narrative, allowing her to learn the range of possible gender performances that are acceptable within the Nation's project. The responsible gendered citizen learns to understand the official historical narrative as a gender script that allows her to hold certain values regarding gender and to perform accordingly. Such production requires a singular predetermined historical narrative (the content of the fable).

It is important to note the pervasive nature of this kind of gender governmentality. Gender is assumed as arising from nature, thus it is not approached in schools and history and social studies classrooms as a separate theme or subject. There is no section in the history textbooks that says "let's learn how to act as a woman!" but this does not mean that the singular historical narrative does not teach about how to perform "Woman" or that the skill "historical consciousness" does not allow students to draw moral lessons on how to perform "Woman" from such a narrative. The invisibility of these lessons further naturalizes them, and this naturalization increases control over the possible outcomes of individual behavior and how the gendered responsible citizen thinks about the world and about herself (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2005).

The predetermined historical narrative of the nation in school shows students – in multiple and reiterative occasions – a spectacle of gender performances from different historical characters through time, emphasizing specific performances over others. The narrative gives the individual a sense of what comes "naturally" from sex (even centuries ago) through the power of reiteration. This constructs a script: it (re)produces the possible and thinkable ways in which the individual will be able to do gender within minimal variation.

A nationally defined history curriculum – as is the Chilean case – could signify the collective witnessing of this gender script in the process of reading the official curricular documents. The collective aspect of this process is another form of governmentality in regards to gender: not only the individual learns what "Woman" is supposed to be by reading the curricular documents and working on learning lessons from the past, but because every other student in the classroom (and in the country) is reading the same documents, she also understands that everybody knows what "Woman" is supposed to be. This works as a form of personal/public surveillance (Foucault, 1972): the individual will police others and her own gender performances driven by the knowledge that everybody is conscious of the way she should perform in order to be considered "normal." A close scrutiny of curricular documents in history provides some clarification of the narrative of "Woman."

Chilean Historical Context

In Chile the curricular documents, distributed freely to every public or charter school in the country, have been disputed by different political entities, and yet they have facilitated “consensus” after the dictatorship of Pinochet and during the new neoliberal regime (Cox, 2006). The terrible specter of “non-democracy” haunts educational policymakers. Curricular reform still demonstrates the need to maintain a harmonic consensus for the sake of democracy, although since 2006 civil society has challenged this by demanding radical changes in education. In the past years there have been three complete or partial reforms of the national history and social studies curriculum (2009, 2012, and 2013). Even though the ruling party changed through those years (Concertación from the center left, or Alianza for the right), consensus between these different curricular documents was reached, and even the presentation of the official curricular documents produced by the ministry under different administrations was unified to look the same.

For this research I selected two specific types of curricular documents provided by the Ministry of Education in 2014: the programs and the textbooks for grades one through twelve. The programs include the “learning objectives” (or expected “competences” that consist in content knowledge and ability), a suggested organization of the academic year, activities, and evaluations. These documents are constructed by the ministry for teachers and are widely used as a guide to design classroom instruction. The second type of document is the textbook, created for teachers and students at each grade level. The Ministry buys them from publishing companies that compete and enter a public tender. In the area of history and social studies, the textbooks include: content or the historical narrative, activities for instruction, and evaluations. The Ministry of Education delivers the textbooks and programs to every public and charter school in Chile. National Standardized Tests, like the national system of evaluation of the “quality” of education (SIMCE), or the testing system to get into college (PSU), apply extra pressure on schools to use the ministry elaborated programs and approved textbooks. The results of SIMCE have high stakes for schools (diminishes student enrollment, funding, teachers’ salary, and even leads to threats of closure), and PSU results are publicly paraded in the newspapers and mass media as a sign of the “quality” of schools.

Research Method

I focused on reading and analyzing the sections in the programs and textbooks that deliberately included “Woman” as a subject to be studied. I selected the parts where the “learning objectives” mentioned “Woman” or “women.” I also searched for the words “Woman” and “women” in the documents (programs and textbooks) and read those sections closely. While reading all these sections, I was writing down every description, taking notes on the activities and evaluations that were centered on “women’s issues.”

After collecting the data, I coded it and identified recurrent themes that could answer the research questions. As other academics have done in the past (Harris, 2004), I present and analyze the data by creating two archetypical characters that represent two sections in the “thinkable” Chilean gender continuum: “Pauper-Woman” and “Active-Woman.” As I organized and analyzed the data, I realized that the intersection of issues related to race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class were central to understanding the curricular documents’ gender script. The construction of these archetypes is not constant nor perfectly rounded. They do not account for age, or all social class, ethnic, or racial variations. Nevertheless, they are two distinguishable characters that emerge from the curricular documents historical narrative. “Pauper-Woman” is the cautionary tale, the morals of the story

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(pauper as a person without any means of support who constantly needs assistance), while “Active-Woman” is happiness and the model to be followed.

I did not focus on the frequency of inclusion of females in the constructed historical narrative, but just to satisfy curiosity on how much “equitable inclusion” of “Woman” was done in the selected documents, I counted four of the twelve textbooks: 1st grade, 4th grade, 8th grade and 12th grade. The results confirm what many other studies cited in this paper have concluded over the years: there is no “equal inclusion” in the documents, just small concessions and additive information (75% characters identified as “man” and 25% as “Woman”). Regardless, it is important to emphasize that the issue of exclusion/inclusion is outside the scope of this paper. The only quantitative observations I make are related to the repetitive association of “Woman” with certain characteristics. This is important for the purposes of this study, considering that this reiterative spectacle/performance/script is being exposed to students over and over again in order to produce a particular understanding of this category.

Finding 1: The Interconnections of Caring Motherhood, Working Mothers, and Activism

“Woman” and ‘Pauper-Woman’ are mothers. “Woman” is going to be characterized in those terms. This is almost monolithically consistent throughout the curricular documents from first grade until twelfth grade; it is repeated 68 times in historical and contemporary descriptions. In an activity in the first grade textbook, students are supposed to demonstrate reading comprehension by examining a letter and answering questions about family vacation. In the letter, the mother of the family is described as “caring, and cooks nice meals”¹ (Moreno, Paulsen, Valdés, & Villarreal, 2013, p. 44). In the fifth grade textbook, there is an excerpt from a Chilean historian describing the activities of a colonial family in the 1600s, explaining that the use of wet nurses “prevented mothers the possibility of caring for, and caressing their children” (Álvarez, Barahona, & Cisternas, 2013a, p. 81). Finally in 12th grade, when discussing the laws of maternity leave – and failing to mention even once that this is a benefit that fathers can take – there is a picture of an informative poster about the new law presenting a mother naked and covered with green leaves, hugging and pressing her face to her baby’s head with closed eyes and a peaceful smile (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 242). “Woman” and motherhood are irrevocably linked in an image that is set to evoke nature: skin, green leaves, smiles, peace. It is impossible not to wonder what the poster would be like if it promoted fathers staying at home.

“Active-Woman” breaks into history and acts politically because she is worried and cares about her children and the world they are going to live in: she can be a Canadian woman going on a strike so her children learn the value of being tidy (Gumucio, Muñoz, & Ponti del Valle, 2013, p. 13); a mother with her child in one arm and a flag waving in the other in a 30s poster calling to a feminist congress (Álvarez, Barahona, & Cisternas, 2013b, p. 136); a mother voting with her baby in her arms or her children observing nearby (Amengual, Gutierrez, Cot, & Moran, 2013, p.16; Álvarez, Barahona, & Cisternas, 2013b, p. 147); and an upper or middle class woman challenging the established government marching in the streets making noise with her saucepan protesting food shortage that does not allow her to feed her children (Álvarez, Barahona, & Cisternas, 2013b, p. 161; Quintana,

¹ This and all other quotes from the textbooks and programs are my own translations.

Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 169). These are all safe and acceptable performances for “Active-Woman”: all are related to the caring love that “Woman” “naturally” holds for her children.

Not every mother is “Active-Woman.” “Pauper-Woman” is portrayed as a passive victim, guilty of abandoning her children. In an activity that describes the working condition of poor women in the first decades of the 20th century in Chile, the text describes women’s labor hours in these terms: “Their workday lasted 12 to 15 hours, which implied that they practically had to *abandon their family and children* for most part of the day” (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 124, italics added). “Pauper-Woman” is abandoning her children and family because she is a victim of her condition. Her lack of a husband and her impoverished state can also endanger the life of her children:

If the woman had no man responsible for the baby, or if she did not have family ties, she had to work immediately after having the baby, which endangered her own life and the life of the baby. During the 20th century, public policies were developed oriented to diminish the children’s and maternal mortality (...). This protection in the working class sectors consisted in accommodations where the parturient could be for some days, providing counseling for a safe birth at home, and the visit of a social worker that persuaded working class mothers not to abandon their babies, between other help. (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano & Thielemann, 2013, p. 126, italics added)

A passive victim of her condition of poverty and/or lack of husband, “Pauper-Woman” is constructed as a failure in the most important aspect of what it means to be “Woman”: she neglects her own children, endangering their lives. Notably, men and their work are never described in relation to their children.

Finding 2: Everyone Wants to Have a (White) Husband, or Compulsory Monogamous Heterosexuality

A monogamous and heterosexual relation must always frame “Woman’s” and “Pauper-Woman’s” maternal condition. This “natural” attraction to men seems compulsory in the narrative of the curricular documents –heteronormative couples appear at least 59 times in the programs and textbooks – and impregnates everything in “Woman’s” life. It does not matter if the topic is families today (Moreno, Paulsen, Valdés, & Villarreal 2013, p. 187) or with the Incas and their societal organization (Amengual, Gutierrez, Cot & Moran, 2013, p. 132); all these couples are constructed as heterosexual and monogamous.

Both “Active-Woman” and “Pauper-Woman” seem to want a (white) sexual partner (regardless of their own ethnicity). The difference is that “Active-Woman” devotes herself in a number of ways to get that partner, while “Pauper-Woman” (gladly) accepts the (white) sexual partner that it is violently imposed on her:

[European] women that decided to go to America came with the intention of bettering their social condition by linking themselves romantically to a conquistador. (...) Most of the women came to be protected [by men] and get a better future in a world ruled by men. In spite of being submitted to the control of their husbands, women played a

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fundamental role as transmitter of the material and domestic culture of Spain, and, above all, religious beliefs. Meanwhile native women did not reject Spaniard men. Even though many were forced or violated by the conquistadors, many quickly willingly became their concubines and mothers of the first mestizo generation. (Álvarez, Barahona & Cisternas, 2013a, p. 52)

“Active-Woman” knows that a better future for her is dependent on having a powerful man for a sexual partner, and she is “smart enough” to go out and risk herself to find him. “Pauper-Woman,” on the other hand, while equally heterosexual and monogamous, has a sexual partner as a part of her “condition,” which she gladly accepts even though there may be violent encounters: “Pauper-Woman” is forcefully taken. The idea that in spite of the sexual violence of the conquest native women accepted and even wanted these relations with the conquistadors is repeated 11 times in the curricular documents.

Compulsory heterosexuality is not disrupted until three short sections in the eleventh and twelfth grade textbook (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano & Thielemann, 2013, p. 135, Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano & Thielemann, 2013, p.273; Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 156). In the twelfth grade textbook the case of Judge Atala is mentioned. Karen Atala is a Chilean judge who divorced her husband and moved in with her female partner, taking her children with her. Her ex-husband sued for full custody, arguing that she and her partner were a negative influence on the socio-emotional development of the children. The Chilean Supreme Court ruled in his favor, but Atala appealed to the International Court of Human Rights. This court ruled in her favor, forcing Chilean law to back down. The description available for students about this case is the one offered by “El Mercurio,” a recognized conservative newspaper. “El Mercurio” characterizes the ruling of the International Court as a “harsh sentence,” while explaining that Atala’s ex-husband had provided psychological reasons to the national courts (Latorre, Henríquez & Rocha, 2013, p. 156).

In this narrative, Judge Atala broke the rules: even though she possesses the qualities of “Active-Woman” – a mother that deeply cares about her children and fights for them – she challenges the state from her non-heterosexual condition, actions that turn her into a dangerous outcast. These sections round up one of the essential messages intrinsically valuable for governmentality in neoliberal democracies: while individuals of diverse (in this case) sexual orientations must be tolerated, and maybe granted second class rights, they should not endanger the unity and consensus of the “Nation” by pursuing their own political agendas. Atala is outside the continuum of possibilities for gender performances, and even though she is within the given economy of thought, she is produced as an annoying hiccup in the saga of the nation. She is there to signal the danger of performing “not-heterosexual” and challenging the consensus of the democratic state.

Finding 3: Framing It Safely: On Whiteness, Social Class, Rights, and Political/Social Change

“Pauper-Woman” is neither white nor upper class; she is (re)produced as a pitiful “other,” unrelatable in her misery, a part of a uniform mass of others like her. She is the poorest of the poor, othered by her race or ethnicity. The curricular documents frame working class and/or native/black women at

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least 20 times in this way. There are two significant photographs and descriptions that provide evidence for this. The first one, taken by Obden Heffer around 1890, shows a Mapuche home or “ruca,” and two females in it, an old woman sitting in a dirt floor working on a loom, while the young woman looks directly at the camera from the back of the room. The description at the bottom says, “The life in the reductions provoked changes in the way of life of Mapuches, worsening their economical precariousness and social discrimination” (Mendizábal & Riffo, 2013, p. 197). The second photograph shows a small space, with dirt floors covered with trash. On the floor, two adult women are sitting with fixed stares on their faces; a child (almost a baby) is holding one women’s skirt. The description at the bottom says “a mousetrap where a family lives, 1910” (Mendizábal & Riffo, 2013, p. 285). Both photographs are framed in narratives about exclusion and misery. Even though these sections are supposed to incorporate the Mapuche and working class women into the narrative, this imagery of poverty and misery is also used as a warning to those who dare not jump onto the train of economic progress and neoliberal democracy: in today’s world “Woman” must work hard and perform her role right, or else she will find herself sitting in a dirt floor. The depiction of misery and poverty can be used to praise individual effort, and to foster charitable feelings in students. These photographs seem to be pointing out that sitting around in the dirt only brings more poverty, misery, and defeat. In order to be praised and to have a name that is recognized and spoken, one needs to work hard and reject the old traditional ways. “Pauper-Woman” signals the thinkable-but-not-preferable gender performances available.

On the other hand, “Active-Woman” is almost always upper class and/or white-mestizo-looking. There are at least 21 white-looking and rich women chosen and presented as “distinguished” or “accomplished” identifiable characters. She has a role in the tale of social and/or political changes in the historical narrative, but framed by her condition of companion or subordinate to a “man,” the true hero. In developing activities related to the narrative of Chilean independence, the sixth grade program includes one where students are supposed to learn about the “participation of women during the independence” (Chile. Ministry of Education. Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, 2013f p. 103). They are supposed to write a review of the “life and importance of the women that stood up in this process.” All the offered examples are white-mestizo upper class women that were related (wives of, daughters of) to some Chilean ‘founding father’ or whose importance is framed by a relationship with one of the “founding fathers.” “Active-Woman” is not autonomous, and needs the help of “man,” even in the pursuit of her own political agenda. The historical narrative about female access to education and vote in Chile reiteratively entitles a “man” with the final responsibility of granting such right or benefit. For example, the responsibility of giving women access to higher education is assigned to Miguel Luis Amunátegui (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 125), and the responsibility of granting women the right to vote is given to Gabriel González Videla (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 127). “Active-Woman” has a role in those struggles, but at the end, the narrative frames her actions as previous steps to actually getting to the goal, which is achieved by a reflexive “man.”

Another example of this secondary role can be found in the narrative about the incorporation of white European working class women to the war efforts during WWI. The text frames the social changes in women’s condition in Europe as a causal effect of men going to war, and extols women’s work in the factories of the time explaining that they “had to participate in the *hardest kinds of jobs*, such as coal extraction and ship construction” (Gárate, Rodríguez, Castillo & Morales 2014, p. 33, italics added). “Active-Woman” is praised for doing the same jobs that men did. The narrative points out that not

only was she working because men left, but also that she is doing a job that is not meant for her – is too hard, too physically challenging – but given the circumstance, she is praised for doing.

Other changes in the social condition of “Active-Woman” that are constructed as independent from “man” are characterized in a specific way. The “Roaring 20s” and women’s newfound freedom are examples of this phenomenon: two different textbooks, from two different publishing companies, that describe two different historical contexts (Europe and Chile) end up constructing a very similar (and daunting) narrative:

Society changed its costumes, especially women, whose fashion and behavior acquired a more liberal character. The skirts were shortened, makeup was remarked, and new hairstyles were developed mimic men’s styles; women also started to consume tobacco and alcohol, and to participate in night parties. (Gárate, Rodríguez, Castillo & Morales, 2014, p. 44)

During those years, expressions of nonconformity started to arise in women, many started to use makeup, smoke tobacco and show their legs. Makeup development and the establishment of beauty saloons helped in this process. (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano & Thielemann, 2013, p. 126)

“Active-Woman’s” grand solo rebellion is to use lipstick, show her legs and cut her hair in a “bob.” While society is in turmoil, “Active-Woman” goes to the beauty salon to be ready for her partying, drinking, and smoking at night. It is possible that these sorts of behaviors could be read as ways in which individuals can actively resist social impositions while staying in the frames of what is acceptable – a very privileged way to resist – but that is not the way this story is constructed. This is a meaningful way to do “Woman,” while “man” would never be characterized in the same manner. It is interesting to consider which kinds of women will have the privilege to participate in this “thinkable” way of rebellion: women that can pay for the beauty salon, the booze, and the partying, and can afford to lose that precious time. Other rebellions, like the one enacted by “Guerrilla-Woman” will be erased.

“Active-Woman” is not always (re)produced as the featherbrain of the “Roaring 20s” or as the upper class wife; sometimes “Active-Woman” is a working or middle class mestizo woman who is a renowned artist, politician, musician or poet to whom the “unsafe,” “unsettling,” or conflictive characteristics are trimmed off. Violeta Parra, a famous musician and artist with a well-known extreme left political affiliation, is reduced to being the author of pretty songs in the first and sixth grade textbooks (Moreno, Paulsen, Valdés, & Villarreal, 2013, p. 152, Álvarez, Barahona, & Cisternas, 2013b, p. 156) and a line mentioning her social critiques is in the eleventh grade textbook (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyan, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 185). Gabriela Mistral is recognized as the very first women and Latin American to win a Nobel Prize in literature, but her personal complex life and her female romantic partner are left out (Moreno, Paulsen, Valdés, & Villarreal, 2013, p. 150; Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013; p. 133).

Finding 4: Her Right Place in the Job: Domestic Labor, Competing in the Labor Market, and Subordination

The Ministry programs clearly reject gender stereotyping in relation to labor. The first grade program includes an “observation for the teacher” that points out that it “is important not to incur in gender stereotyping when addressing the issue of different types of jobs” (Chile. Ministry of Education. Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, 2013a, p. 91). What is really interesting here is not the advice, but the model that the ministry constructs of “avoiding gender stereotyping.” One page before this “observation for the teacher,” the program offers an activity for the classroom about different kinds of non-remunerated jobs:

Guided by the teacher the students name the people who labor without receiving a monetary remuneration, like *the stay-at-home mothers* or the voluntary services for the community like firefighters, red cross, the “Hogar de Cristo,” and “Un techo para Chile,” between others. (Chile. Ministry of Education. Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, 2013a, p. 90, italics added)

The usage of the female article (in Spanish *las dueñas de casa*) to mention the stay-at-home mothers is very telling. This is supposed to be an example of an activity that is not using gender stereotypes to address the labor of “Woman,” but clearly frames her work in the domestic sphere. “Woman” are described at least on 52 separate occasions as working almost always in domestic labor, jobs that mimic domestic labor (similar to cooking, caring for children, washing, steaming and/or repairing clothes, cleaning), or holding unremunerated jobs.

The differences between “Active-Woman” and “Pauper-Woman” on this matter are sometimes not related to their social class or ethnic background, but with the constructed emergent “needs” of the historical time in the curricular narrative. Two already analyzed examples are useful to point out this difference: while a woman that works 12 hours a day as a washer to feed her family is victimized but charged with “abandoning her family and children” (Quintana, Castillo, Pérez, Moyano, & Thielemann, 2013, p. 124), another one is praised for doing “the hardest kinds of jobs” (Gárate, Rodríguez, Castillo, & Morales, 2014, p. 33) when men have to go fight “for their country.” One is “Active-Woman” and the other is “Pauper-Woman”; both may be working-class, but the labor of one is allowing the master narrative of men to stand up, while the other one shows a time where things were not as “great” as the present day. One fits the heroic epoch of the nation while the other signs a warning that shows the “bad times” that could return. In present-day narratives this dichotomy is also identifiable. “Active-Woman” is distinguishable in a section about the Chilean labor market: she is an example of non-remunerated labor in a photograph of voluntaries in charitable collection (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 231), or an example of independent labor in a photograph of a hairdresser (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 232). On the other hand, “Pauper-Woman” is characterized as the ethnically “diverse,” and poor ‘other’ that needs assistance from the 1st world countries to insert herself in the global market (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, pp. 252-253).

Even though “Active-Woman” has a place in the labor force of the nation (apparently only from the 20th century until today, according to the historical narrative), she is doing jobs subordinated to positions occupied by men. This hierarchy is constructed as the way in which the market works: the invisible hand of the economy places in higher-ranking posts the most suitable candidates. The fact

that they are men is just a coincidence. A great example of this (re)produced subordination of “Active-Woman” in the job market can be found in the twelfth grade textbook. In a section about the labor market the textbook explains the following:

An important factor during the last century, and especially in the last 50 years in Chile has been the **incorporation of women to labor**; aspect that influences the labor market, because they constitute a new labor force that competes for the available job posts. (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 228, bolds in the original text)

This text explains to students that women compete with men for the same job posts. The same textbook includes different infographics that show the results of this competition. The first one shows how the penal system works in Chile. This image includes six “men” and five “women,” but “men” get to be the Supreme Court general attorney, a regional prosecutor, the judge of warranty, a court judge, while the highest position “women” reach is a regional prosecutor (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 39). The second one is an infographic about the process of selection of presidential candidate, in which “women” only get to be pre-candidates, and “men” are pre-candidates and the selected candidates (Latorre, Henríquez, & Rocha, 2013, p. 81), even though in Chile we have a woman president for the second time. “Active-Woman” has a subordinated position because she is not as qualified as “man.” “Woman” should work outside the home, but she must not have a job that is too high in the hierarchy of a company or the country.

The narrative regarding work and the public sphere determines that “Woman” enjoys all the same political and social rights as men today, allowing her the “freedom” to individually choose her own destiny:

Today, Chilean women, without consideration of their social condition, have the right to vote, study in the university if her economic condition allows it, work outside the home and hold political office, but this was not always like this. (Álvarez, Barahona & Cisternas, 2013b, p. 135)

This fragment and at least 16 others show how the narrative is framing “Woman” in a progressive conception of history. The lesson of the fable is clear: things for “Woman” have changed; today she is able to do almost anything, and she can even work outside her home and go to college if she has money. By creating the sense of freedom to act and choose so relevant for neoliberal democratic governmentality, the placement of “Woman” in the discussions about historical social change related to social and political rights becomes particularly meaningful. Consensus has been reached, equality has been achieved, and order must prevail.

Conclusion

In this article I have made the case for understanding the Chilean curricular documents of history and social studies as a script for the gendered responsible citizen. I have argued that the defined historical narrative (re)produces a particular understanding of what it means to do “Woman” right. Using Butler’s (1988, 1990) and Friedrich’s (2010) theoretical ideas, I have claimed that in Chilean neoliberal democracy, governmentality of the future gendered citizens is promoted by defining an historical

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narrative in acceptable gender codes and giving access to it in the national curricular documents. These documents (re)produce a specific economy of thought about “Woman” allowing some freedom of choice but at the same time restricting the available gender performances.

These restricted performances go from one archetypal character – “Active-Woman” – to another “Pauper-Woman” – one being the desired outcome, and the other the cautionary tale. “Active-Woman” is an involved mother who fights for her children, and who actively seeks the (white) man she wants to marry and form a family with. She is a white-looking upper class woman or a working class mestizo woman safely framed. “Active-Woman” works in what she does best – domestic-like labor – and in this way contributes to the international market. She does not want nor can she handle more responsibility. On the other side of the spectrum, we find the “Pauper-Woman” as a passive victim of her condition, a bad mother that endangers her children or neglects her family by working long hours, and also meekly resigns to a male sexual partner that conquers her by force. She is a working class mestizo/native (or ethnically “diverse”) woman who has no identifiable name or and does not contribute to economic growth. She is a problem that has to be handled in the present, and a sign of how things have changed for the best in the past. “Pauper-Woman” is constructed in the curricular documents to show the gendered citizen that striding too far away from “Active-Woman” is not praised but disciplined.

This paper seeks to deconstruct the category “woman,” and to provide clues into what is still problematic in the Chilean approach to gender equity in education. The oppressive gender norms for “Woman” identified in the Chilean curricular documents signify an important problem on the road to achieve gender equity in the country. They could be read by students as the only possibilities to recognize as ‘Woman’ as a political subject, while promoting acceptance of the current state and role of women in society instead of the disruption of gendered assumptions. In this sense, one can be understood as “Woman” if one performs as a mother, performs as a heterosexual, and performs domestic or domestic-like subordinated work; but in all of these performances there is a range of possibilities. Other possibilities are prohibited, policed, and erased. They are made invisible for students, because they do not contribute to maintain stability and consensus, and they even attempt to trouble the social order. This historical narrative does not trouble “Woman’s” caring labor, or any other redistribution matters. Addressing the issue of gender equity from this critical perspective can provide important answers regarding the persistence of “Woman’s” oppressed situation in Chilean society. It is not enough to change curricular documents so that ‘Woman’ is more included or recognized. The normalization of certain characteristics, and attention to the redistribution of caring labor, are central matters to consider. Educators and researchers can use this critical reading to disrupt “happy” narratives regarding gender equity in Chile and other countries.

I have examined curricular documents of history and social studies as a gender script, but it is not possible to infer what this gendering processes through historical narratives looks like in classrooms. These processes might be already challenged and emotionally resisted by students and teachers. On paper, the curricular documents can be understood as a system of indirect control, but the definition of the national historical narrative is only one process by which the “ponderous, awesome materiality” (Foucault, 1972, p. 216) of the category ““Woman” can be controlled. It is important to conduct research that focuses on the embodied experiences of students and teachers, and their own troubling of the historically constructed category “Woman.”

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