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Sources for Research on Childhood and Childhood History in Poland in the 19th and Early 20th Century – Selected Problems

<http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/PBE.2021.042>

Abstract:

The aim of the present article is to draw attention to the informative value of selected types of source materials which may provide a basis for research on childhood and childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, an attempt will be made to indicate the sorts of research problems which can be analyzed using these sources. Some types of sources will be discussed in more depth, with emphasis on those that are particularly rich and valuable in terms of information about children and childhood, but have not yet been fully exploited by researchers in historical and pedagogical analyses, have been used only occasionally, or have even been ignored altogether.

The informative potential of the source materials for the study of history of children and childhood will be presented using the examples of such written sources as women's, family and children's press, diaries and memoirs, children's literature, guidebooks, as well as iconographic sources. Comparing and combining sources, as well as considering them in a complementary manner may contribute to reconstructing the as yet incomplete picture of childhood and children in the Polish historiography of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Keywords: history of children and childhood, historical sources, press, diaries, handbooks, iconography.

Introduction

Issues related to childhood and children form a very broad, complex, multithreaded and interdisciplinary area of research. In the context of present-day studies on children and childhood, what is also important is the historical perspective, in which children and childhood are understood to be categories constructed socially and culturally, in a specific time and place (De Mause, 1974; Aries, 1995; Badinter, 1998; Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002). Treating childhood as a historical, social and cultural phenomenon allows researchers to adopt a perspective on the social history of upbringing and on the history of everyday life (Jakubiak & Jamrożek, 2002; Jundził & Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002; Bołdyrew, 2008; Pachocka, 2009; Żołądź-Strzelczyk & Kabacińska-Łuczak, 2012; Walasek, 2015). It should be emphasized that historical and pedagogical research on childhood and children, situating the child as the subject of analysis, is part of the current of considerations defined as pedagogy of the child (Śliwerski, 2007).

Discourse on the history of childhood still encompasses the belief that in past centuries, until the modern period, the world of children was part and parcel of the world of adults, complementing the latter. Childhood did not always function as a separate significant period of human life. Thus, in a cultural sense, no clear boundary could be set between childhood and adulthood (Aries, 1995). Similarly, the issues of the child and childhood, considered unimportant and not contributing key findings to scientific development, were not the subject of research for a long time. The originator of systematic studies on the history of childhood was Philippe Ariès, who initiated extensive and in-depth analyses in this area with his seminal 1960 monograph entitled *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* [English translation: *Centuries of Childhood. A Social History of Family Life*] – his work was published in Poland in 1995. It was also Ariès who posited that in the Middle Ages people had no special sense of the uniqueness of childhood, nor did they realize that a child is different from an adult (Aries, 1995, p. 131). Further, the high mortality rate among children meant that no special importance was attached to their life and functioning. According to Aries, childhood as a notable separate period of human life was noticed and ‘invented’, ‘discovered’ only at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, and in practice only in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ariès’s work and his claims continue to arouse controversy among researchers, as numerous analyses indicate that since antiquity there have been source materials – written, iconographic, as well as material – confirming interest in childhood and the world of the child (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2002; Brzeziński, 2012).

Modern times have seen a gradual transformation of the image of the child and childhood in the European cultural sphere. During the Enlightenment and in the 19th century the child was treated objectively, perceived as a ‘project’ to work on and assign specific goals, such as extending the family line, altering reality, serving the family, the state, and the nation. The 20th century, defined by Ellen Key as “the century of the child”, along with the New Education movement, changed the understanding of children, who turned from “projects” into intrinsically valuable creators of their own development, with the right to create themselves and their own reality. Postmodernity continues the treatment of the child as a subject, a partner in relations with adults (Garbula & Kowalik-Olubińska, 2012, p. 27).

The results of interdisciplinary research on the child and childhood of recent decades show a rich diversity of childhood in different historical periods, cultures, groups and social strata. This is because childhood – with its uniqueness, its course, and its stages – has always been determined by the context in which the child lives and functions, and not only by the biological dimension. Hence the conclusion that there is no single, universal childhood, but rather many types of it. It is also important to take into account such factors as gender, ethnicity, and social background. According to the constructivist perspective, childhood is understood a socio-culturally constructed category (Jarosz, 2017, p. 59).

Historical-pedagogical research on the history of children and childhood uses various types of sources. The most prevalent of these sources, i.e. the ones most frequently used by researchers, are written materials. Nonetheless, interdisciplinary research on children and childhood also necessitates analyzing other types of sources which carry valuable information. Various complementary sources enable reconstructing the specific character of childhood in a given historical period or at a specific moment, or help capture the evolution of a particular aspect of childhood over time.

The more recent the examined period, the richer and more detailed is the history of childhood and children reconstructed using various source materials. This is because with the passing ages, not only are there more types of sources available, but also the information that these sources carry is more accurate and comprehensive. The selected source materials discussed here come from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was a period characterized by dynamic development and popularization of the press, calendars, pedagogical literature, guidebooks, and children’s books, in parallel with the invention and development of photography, and wider distribution of postcards and advertis-

ing graphics. Thus, the possibilities of finding sources for research were significantly broadened and enriched.

The aim of the present work is to draw attention to the informative value of the selected types of sources, which may provide a basis for research on children and childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the same time, an attempt will be made to indicate the types of research problems which can be studied with the use of these sources. Selected types of sources will be discussed, including those that carry particularly rich and valuable information about children and childhood, but have not yet been fully exploited by researchers in historical and pedagogical analyses, have only been used occasionally, or even ignored altogether. The findings presented here are obviously not exhaustive.

Material sources

Material sources provide the researcher with valuable information about children and childhood. Artifacts gathered in indoor and open-air museums as well as private collections allow researchers to reconstruct the material background of childhood in different social strata – the world of a rural child had a more modest material background than that of a child from a well-off family. Among the material sources, there are items and equipment that accompanied a child at birth, and throughout the successive stages of childhood, sometimes to its death, which after all was a more frequent occurrence in the past. These artifacts include furniture and utensils (e.g. cradles, cribs, beds, bottles and dishes for feeding, bathtubs, changing tables, high chairs for feeding and playing, baby strollers (full-sized and lightweight), baby walkers, enclosures for learning to walk, bicycles, benches for home and school study, learning aids and utensils), toys (for children of both sexes at different ages), clothes (for both girls and boys, from newborns to teenagers, both casual and for special occasions, e.g. for Christmas or funerals, which allow researchers to learn about fabrics, cuts, clothing styles, decorations and accessories), shoes, children's jewelry, items and accessories related to religious rites, e.g. baptism, holy communion, and finally sarcophagi, headstones and coffin portraits. Analyzing these material sources, one can observe and describe their appearance, size, colors, method of manufacturing, materials, workmanship, and quality, but also the ways in which they were used. We can draw conclusions about the universality of certain solutions, timeless elements of material culture related to the child, or modern and innovative solutions of a given era or period in this regard.

Written sources, in their turn, provide the richest information about different aspects of children's lives in the past. At the same time, they constitute the most diverse group of sources and include legal, judicial and statistical materials, various reports (e.g. inventories, books of accounts), documentation related to the activity of schools or churches and parishes (e.g. registry books, inspection reports, books of miracles), personal sources, including wills, personal diaries, and correspondence, (Żołądź-Strzelczyk, 2011) as well as press, fiction, pedagogical literature, guidebooks, children's literature, and calendars.

Women's and family press, and children's magazines

In the nineteenth century, the number of magazines published in Polish territories increased systematically. Women's press and family magazines gained popularity (Lewartowska, 1975; Sokół, 1983; Franke, 1999, 2000). Particularly dynamic development of this type of publications took place in the 1860s and 1870s, mainly in the Kingdom of Poland (notably in Warsaw), although they were also published in the regions of Galicia and Greater Poland. This state of affairs was influenced by many factors, including a gradual increase in the level of education in the nineteenth century, followed by the development of reading, technical progress, political and socioeconomic changes, and the resulting emancipation movement of women.

Women's and family magazines contain a great deal of valuable information about childhood and children. Periodicals addressed to ladies of the house – wives, mothers, housekeepers, which were essentially social and literary magazines, besides texts on such topics as marriage and family, its social role and function, household management, care for the sick and health-care, fashion trends, political, cultural or moral life, the social situation of women and their aspirations regarding education and gainful employment, also contained texts on the development and upbringing of children. The results of scientific research, also concerning the child, were popularized in the press, which could contribute to the dissemination of proper educational practices. Moreover, the press was easily accessible and relatively affordable (in comparison with guidebook literature, for instance), which enabled it to reach a wide range of readers. It should be emphasized that those magazines were addressed mainly to landowner and intelligentsia families, and members of the bourgeoisie. However, the model of family and upbringing was universal enough to be attractive, understandable and accepted by families of different social strata (Jakubiak, 2003).

In women's and family press, researchers of the history of children and childhood will find a great deal of valuable information on various aspects of the child's life and functioning in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Articles published in these magazines mainly concerned advice and guidance on bringing up children. They addressed all aspects of the child's development – from conception, through the neonatal period, infancy, all the way to adolescence. They dealt with the problems of childcare, all areas of upbringing – physical, moral, religious, aesthetic, sexual (the so-called gender issue), training the mind, home schooling, organization of the child's space, creating conditions for its development, family roles and relations. They also addressed such issues as the importance of the family in a child's life and proper development. The issues touched on these articles also included the choice of institutional education, the role of school in a child's life, school hygiene, as well as homework and tutoring.

It should be emphasized that magazine articles concerning these issues were also published in popular informative, political, social, and literary dailies and weeklies. In many cases, these were excerpts from guidebooks which were planned for future publication, or fragments of already published works. Of special importance here are pedagogical journals, as their program and content dealt with various issues related to child development and upbringing, both at home and in various institutions. These journals reflect the understanding of children and childhood in line with the trends in pedagogy current in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (from Romantic pedagogy, through Positivist pedagogy, to notions of the child present in developmental and educational psychology, as well as the study of children, i.e. pedology itself). However, due to the vastness and complexity of the issues they dealt with, their more detailed characteristics will not be dealt with here at any length.

In the nineteenth century, the development of children's press also took place on Polish lands (Grabowski, 2001; Olszewska & Łucka-Zajac, 2013; Kolaszka et al., 2018). It was initiated by Klementyna Hoffmanowa, née Tańska, who published *Rozrywki dla Dzieci* [Pastimes for Children] in Warsaw (1824–1828). In the first half of the nineteenth century, only a handful of magazines for children were issued in Poland. In the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century, they experienced rapid development – more and more titles for younger and older children appeared on the publishing market, as well as supplements for children published with press destined for adult readers. Most of them, however, were relatively short-lived projects. The longest-operating periodical was *Mały Światek* [Little World] in Lvov (1887–1939) and the Warsaw *Przyjaciel*

Dzieci. Pismo tygodniowe [Friend of Children. Weekly Magazine] (1861–1915, from 1914 entitled Friend of Youth). In these magazines, as in the literature for children in the second half of the nineteenth century, positivist educational tendencies prevailed. Periodicals in the early twentieth century, apart from content addressed to young readers also began to publish texts by well-known educators, educational activists and writers. More attention was paid to graphic design. New trends were introduced, related to the principles of the New Education Movement and the assumptions of the “Century of the Child”. Despite being affordably priced, they mainly reached children from bourgeois and gentry families, and homes of urban-dwelling intelligentsia.

These magazines addressed to the youngest readers provide a wealth of information about the child and the child’s world. Their layout, content, and design allow us to learn about the joys and sorrows of children from affluent and poor families alike. They were often illustrated, educational and entertaining in character, and their content was meant to teach by playing. Their thematic sections included, among others, biographies of meritorious people, articles on ethics, morality stories, historical accounts, poetry and rhymes, literary miniatures and short stories (often by prominent Polish writers from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), descriptions of places and outings, folk customs, talks about nature, fairy tales, comedies, riddles, charades, ideas for games and activities for children. The magazines could complement home or school education and make it more attractive; they were supposed to shape children’s moral and patriotic feelings and provide them with worthwhile leisure activities.

Children’s magazines were attractive mainly to young readers, but also to their parents, educators and teachers, and constituted a valuable source of pedagogical knowledge. Some of the magazines published separate sections with educational tips and advice. These included articles on home, physical and moral education, notes on child development, answers to letters on educational matters, news on pedagogical books, publications for children, games, plays, toys, teaching aids, offers of employment for teachers, and information on school recruitment, among much else.

Researchers analyzing texts published in children’s magazines can determine what content was addressed to children at a certain age, what educational ideals were passed on to them, what attitudes were considered worth instilling, what forms of children’s activity were popularized through articles, stories, rhymes or graphics, including games, brain-teasers (charades, puzzles, rebus-es), and handicrafts. It is easy to assess the extent to which the content conveyed

to the youngest readers had moralizing and didactic overtones, and the extent to which it met the expectations related to children discovering the world in the spirit of pedagogy. Very important was also the iconographic component of the magazines, as the illustrations often presented scenes with children, set in different spaces and reflecting a variety of childhood-related themes.

Guidebooks and manuals

In the nineteenth century, particularly in its second half of it, manuals and guidebooks were a popular form of passing on practical information to wide audiences (Gajda, 2020). Their number grew with the passing decades of the nineteenth century, and the subject matters concerned a wide variety of issues. Among the books published, there were guides on running a household, housekeeping for women, furnishing houses and apartments, cooking, and good manners (*savoir-vivre*), along with guides addressed to parents, guardians and educators, devoted to the care, upbringing and education of children and youth (Małek & Nawrot-Borowska, 2018; Małek, 2020). These publications were usually postulative in character, illustrating the responsibilities related to the care and upbringing of children, often based on scientific knowledge, and their authors sought to change the existing practices in these areas, popularizing proper approaches to upbringing. These guides also described various types of incorrect practices, actions and methods of upbringing, criticizing the prevailing superstitions and pointing out errors. For this reason, these sources also contain descriptions of actual practices and upbringing activities, and they share some characteristics with reports. They present knowledge about children, childhood, and upbringing in an accessible way, as their function was to disseminate scientific knowledge – mainly in the area of pedagogy and psychology, physiology, and hygiene. These guidebooks also contained advice, tips, information and solutions that could be applied in the care and upbringing of children. They were addressed to parents (especially mothers, but also to home teachers or tutors), mainly among the nobility and gentry, as well as intelligentsia, bourgeoisie, and small *petit-bourgeois* families.

Written both by professionals, i.e. educators, doctors, hygienists, members of the clergy, but also by other people interested in bringing up the young generation, the guidebooks addressed a number of problems concerning the practice of providing care and upbringing to children, including health, hygiene, physical development, moral and religious upbringing, mental development of the child, as well as home schooling.

Another valuable source of knowledge about recommendations for children's health and hygiene, deserving of a separate note, are hygienic and medical guides. Written by specialists, they contained a compendium of knowledge on healthcare and health promotion from the moment of planning the conception of a child (recommendations on selecting appropriate spouses in terms of health), through indications concerning the healthy course of pregnancy, neonatal period, infancy, early childhood, school age, to adolescence, and the juvenile period. There were guidelines regarding the care of younger and older children, body hygiene, nutrition, clothing, housing (children's room or playroom facilities), physical exercise (sports and games), prevention and treatment of diseases, and providing help at home before the doctor's arrival. This interest in health education, as one of the main tasks of bringing up a child in the family home, was certainly related to the rapid development of pediatrics, which took place in the nineteenth century. Thus, the principles of hygiene and health were promoted in accordance with the latest scientific findings of the time. The information and advice in the guides illustrate changes in the perception and understanding of the principles of hygiene, healthcare and promotion of a healthy lifestyle of children and adolescents, which occurred as a consequence of developments in medicine, hygiene and pedagogical science (Małek & Nawrot-Borowska, 2015).

The guidebooks are also a valuable source of information for research on many different aspects of children's life, including care, upbringing, education, health, and hygiene. Analyzing such sources allows us to learn about the state of knowledge at that time – pedagogical, medical knowledge about child, its development, living conditions and upbringing. They reflect the scientific discourse within many sciences whose scope of interest included children and childhood, allowing us to observe the degree of interest that journalists showed in this issue and the changing approaches to it, resulting from various factors – scientific development, technological progress, as well as socioeconomic and cultural changes. Particularly valuable information for the study of children and childhood is quite obviously found in pedagogical guides concerning the upbringing of children, but also in publications on health, hygiene, running a household, and on customs, which were numerous at the time.

Children's literature

Books for children and teenagers are a relatively recent branch of literature, both in Europe and in Poland (Kuliczowska, 1975; Kaniowska-Lewańska,

1980; Waksmund, 2000; Adamczykowa, 2001). Literature for children and youth flourished on Polish soil in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the Romantic period, writing of fiction was born, which produced morality stories and novels of manners (e.g. by Klementyna Hoffmanowa, nee Tańska, and Stanisław Jachowicz). The second half of the nineteenth century, i.e. the Positivist period, saw further development of literature for young readers. Numerous thematic and genre variations were created – stories, novels, miniatures, novellas, poems, fairy tales and legends. Stories and novels of manners were strongly associated with the positivist ideology, the slogans of ‘work at the grassroots’ and ‘organic work’, characterized by a strong interest in childhood and children (Czechowski, 2007, p. 9; Grefkowicz, 2005; Boczar, 2010).

A characteristic feature of nineteenth-century children’s literature is didacticism, i.e. the informative and educational function of this type of literature. The first of these functions consists in providing the child with a wealth of information about the surrounding world, the second – in instilling the moral principles, patterns of proper conduct and convincing the reader about the necessity to observe them in everyday life. The didactic approach is based on the principle that a good book for children should teach through fun. Analyzing such sources will allow researchers to determine which educational principles were promoted in a given period. Through carefully selected characters and examples of behavior, the authors illustrated the main idea of their works, and included numerous moralizing remarks in order to promote understanding of the work’s message and its application in life. Less important were the artistic and aesthetic values of the work, which were not lacking in children’s literature, but in the period discussed under discussion, the didactic qualities certainly prevailed. This didacticism – also described as rhetorical and heavy-handed – was present throughout almost the entire nineteenth century and manifested in children’s works in the rules, orders, prohibitions, instructions or idealized patterns. Only the turn of the twentieth century, the “century of the child” proclaiming slogans of respect for the child’s individuality, treating childhood as a value, and taking into account the psychophysical condition of the child, made the proportions between didacticism and artistic values change significantly in children’s literature. Authors writing for children underscored children’s tendency to play, pursuing their desire to satisfy children’s needs and expectations. Didacticism did not disappear completely, but it ceased to play the dominant role, which does not mean that it did not fulfill its informative and educational function (Adamczykowa, 2001, pp. 25–50). Other observable tendencies at the time included a change of the construction of the child protagonist, discussed

further below, a change in his or her social status, the introduction (under the influence of modernism) of fairy-tale fantasy, and care about careful and aesthetically pleasing graphic design of the published works.

Analyzing children's literature, it is possible to determine the models of upbringing resulting from the sociopolitical situation and literary trends propagated at the time (e.g. literature with a positivist bias). Protagonists of stories for children in the nineteenth century usually had a simple psychological construction and reflected in their attitude or behavior. Books for children often referred to the "problems" of the children's world, set in a specific space – the playroom, home, garden, park, street, etc., showing scenes from children's lives, usually described in a moralizing way, aimed at shaping specific attitudes or behaviors of small readers. They show children's cares and joys, everyday life and holidays, peer and family relations, and although they are literary creations of their authors, they do reflect the realities of the children's world at that time.

Memoirs and diaries

A great deal of valuable information about the specificity of childhood is contained in recollective literature (e.g. diaries, memoirs, biographies, journals, autobiographies, biographical notes on specific topics), which particularly flourished in the nineteenth century (Wojtkowiak, 2001; Kicowska, 2002; Szulakiewicz, 2013). Among the many recollections, published in print, but also kept in archives in the form of manuscripts, we find ones whose authors came from wealthy families, as well as those written authors from the middle-class and poor social layers. Not only do they reflect the way of life and testify to the personality of their authors, but they also reflect the mindset of the social group from which the author originated and which he or she represented (Kabziński, 1996, p. 33).

Researchers of childhood history should also pay special attention to the so-called home or family diaries, created spontaneously, on the author's own initiative, written for oneself and one's family, rather than initiated by external incentives or competitions (Jakubczak, 1972, p. 86), often continued from one generation to another, containing dates important for a given family and its environment, facts, adventures, experiences, opinions, worthy of being passed on to posterity and for learning the history of the family. In these types of recollective texts, the narrative is mainly devoted to home and family life, while the political, social or cultural context is in the background of the events. This does not mean that their source value is decreasing, as they may devote a special

place to the author's own childhood, or that of his or her children or other family members and loved ones.

Childhood is a period to which the authors of memoirs are relatively eager to recall. Their more or less extensive remarks and descriptions of the author's childhood are usually placed at the beginning of the work, as the chronological order is prevalent. It does happen, however, that some authors devote separate chapters or even entire books to childhood. The latter works are obviously the most valuable sources from the perspective of research.

Analyzing such sources as diaries and memoirs, we can find a good deal of information about childhood and children, e.g. relations with the closest family – parents (more often with the mother, but there are also memories related to the father), siblings, grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, but also with neighbors, friends from near and far, peers and even animals. Various situations involving these persons are described, along with sympathies and antipathies, the authors' emotional attitudes toward them and vice versa. The authors quote facts that are particularly memorable, important, and often accompanied by a considerable emotional charge.

A good deal of space in memoirs is devoted to descriptions of the specifics of the author's education, both at home and at school. The authors, regardless of the social layer they came from, described parental roles, educational methods, and religious, moral, patriotic, physical, health-related and sexual education. Coming from affluent, intelligentsia families, they reminisced on the home-schooling organized in their family homes, they wrote about the subjects they were taught, compulsory reading, the organization of a typical school day, educational outcomes; they recalled their home tutors and teachers, their maîtres and their relationships with them, as well as interesting events, including pranks and other adventures. There is also no shortage of information about school education – in addition to the specifics of organizing the educational process in schools under the Partitions, both at the elementary and secondary level, i.e. the subjects, methods, characteristics of well-liked and disliked teachers. A great deal of space was devoted to relationships among classmates and friends, to common games, to anti-partition and patriotic activities, and to first love.

We find much less information in these sources on early childhood, no doubt because young children only begin to recall facts of their lives at the age of several years at the earliest. However, using information from their loved ones, diarists describe their mothers, nursery maids, nannies and certain facts of their surroundings, often passed on in the form of family anecdotes of adventures or accidents.

Memoirs also contain information, and at times even detailed descriptions of children's spaces – playrooms, children's rooms, favorite corners of the house, playgrounds, gardens, parks, fields, forests and meadows, often with an indication of the types of games and entertainment taking place in these spaces, ways of spending time, and fascination with the natural world. Researchers will also find valuable information about children's games, including the time, place, and manner in which they were played, who their participants were, and what emotions accompanied them. Sometimes the authors provide descriptions of the rules of their favorite games and activities, e.g. team games. Analyzing such memoirs provides us with information about games and activities organized according to sex, age, place of residence, time of year, company, as well as available props for playing – most often toys. It is possible to determine what kind of toys younger and older children, girls and boys played with, what they looked like, what they were made of, how they were used, from whom and under what circumstances they were received, and even where they were purchased.

Those childhood memoirs whose authors came from rural or working-class families provide information about the duties of children of different ages, often involving backbreaking work, helping on farms, in craftsmen's workshops, or taking cattle out to pasture. We learn about strict parenting methods, frequent hunger and cold, modest living conditions, parents' attitudes toward school education, and self-education.

Diarists tend to describe their everyday life, but also special or exceptional days, such as holidays, birthdays, name days, celebrations of religious character (especially Christmas and Easter, but also e.g. national anniversaries, baptisms, communions, weddings, often characterized by the ways in which they were celebrated, including special traditions, family customs, the atmosphere accompanying preparations for these special days, the tension of waiting for them, and finally their course.

Iconographic sources

In the discussed period, there is a significant increase in the types of iconographic sources that researchers can use to describe the child's world (Nawrot-Borowska, 2018; 2018a; 2018b). The number of publications illustrated with graphics grew rapidly at the time, and later also photographs were added. These sources include magazines addressed to women, families, children, as well as sociopolitical and literary magazines described above, stories for younger and older children, illustrated primers, and educational charts for learning various

things. The Daguerreotype process became available, which made photography more popular, and postcards were published en masse (Pilarczyk, 2003; Kempf, 2013; Kamisińska, 2015).

Iconographic sources are often a recreation of a certain vision, an interpretation of reality filtered through the views and skills of their author. For this reason, some graphic images, pictures, or postcards may show content that is ‘distorted’ in comparison with the real conditions. An exception in this group are photographs which are faithful representations of reality, even though the content they presented was also a creation of the photographer or the people portrayed. This is why the researcher needs to be aware that “iconographic carriers of historical information are burdened with a potentially high risk of misinterpretation and they require special care in verifying their authenticity” (Dragan, 2016, p. 21).

The primary task of the researcher of childhood and childhood history is not showing the artistic value of iconographic materials, their technique, artistic style or transformations taking place in this regard. Rather than that, iconographic material is treated as yet another source of information for reconstructing the world of children, and illustrating this world according to the historical period it represents. Analyzing the iconographic material from a historical-educational standpoint, the researcher of childhood history can observe many interesting aspects – the appearance of children from different social strata, their clothing, behavior, everyday activities, uncommon activities, education practices, ways of spending their free time, playing, toys, children’s spaces – interiors, the surroundings in which the children were staying, the equipment they used, and finally also relations with adults, peers, and even animals. Although the world of children, presented in iconographic materials is an artistic creation of the author of the illustration, image, or photograph, these creations usually refer to the real world, reflecting its specific character.

Speaking about the informative value of press graphics, it is necessary to emphasize that informationally rich sources also include patterns and styles of children’s clothes, as published in women’s magazines (Nawrot-Borowska, 2018). Clothes for boys and girls at different ages are presented in these sources in specific circumstances, as part of scenes involving having fun, walking, or studying. These graphics are perfect for learning about children’s fashion, but also, for example, about children’s toys or equipment which was frequently presented as accompanying children. Also worth noting are advertising graphics for various goods, including those produced for children or with children in mind, allowing the researcher to recreate the material side of the children’s world (Janiak-Jasińska, 1998).

Analyzing the iconographic materials from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries decade by decade, we can see the changeability of the children's world, including clothes, equipment, toys, but we can also discover some elements that are fixed and permanent, such as forms of play, entertainment, ways of spending time, elements of clothing, and some timeless toys.

Visual history, as a sub-discipline of history dealing with the analysis of visual representations in a historical context, is still not very advanced in the area of history of upbringing. Research on the visual history of children and childhood requires interdisciplinary knowledge of history, fine arts, photography, and the media, and it requires knowledge of research methods useful for analyzing visual representations of the past. This is not an easy task and history of upbringing it is still seen as a secondary alternative to analyzing written sources (Rose, 2010; Burke, 2012).

Summary

To summarize, the number of sources for studying childhood and childhood history by decades of the 19th and 20th centuries is growing. Their diversity is also increasing, as is the richness of their content. To study childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we already have a significant number of sources, both material, written, and iconographic. Of particular importance for research in upbringing history conducted from a social perspective are private sources, which provide a great deal of information about the child, its functioning in the family and society, allowing us to learn the particulars of childhood in a given period.

The richness of the source materials notwithstanding, the fact remains that research and reconstruction in this area requires extensive searches and queries of different types of sources. Comparing them and using them to complement one another, as well as considering them in a complementary manner will allow researchers to reconstruct particular aspects of children's lives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The available publications devoted to this subject are not exhaustive thus far, which is why it is necessary to undertake further, extensive and in-depth analyses of source materials, using a diverse base of source materials.

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