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THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLISH ANDRAGOGICAL THOUGHT – BETWEEN THE PAST, MEMORY AND HISTORY

**Teoretyczno-metodologiczne rozważania nad rozwojem polskiej myśli
andragogicznej – pomiędzy przeszłością, pamięcią a historią**

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Abstract

The article considers the theoretical and methodological analyses of research on the development of andragogical thought in Poland. The main goal of the article is to justify the change of the research perspective, the need for a constructivist approach, taking into account the diachronic and synchronous context. The need for a different theoretical and methodological approach has been shown against the background of the discourse on the past, memory and history, as well as in the context of the research findings of the subsequent stages of the Polish andragogy development. The author showed that the lack of andragogical references to its past and history in contemporary discourses leads to uprooting from the native tradition and is one of the most important reasons for the problems of the identity of Polish andragogy, which is still ungrounded among the science of education, functioning mainly on the outskirts of pedagogy. The article ends with conclusions summarizing the conducted analyses.

Keywords: andragogy, Polish andragogical thought, theoretical and methodological aspects of research, past, memory, history.

Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje rozważania dotyczące teoretyczno-metodologicznych analiz badań nad rozwojem myśli andragogicznej w Polsce. Głównym celem artykułu jest uzasadnienie zmiany perspektywy badawczej, konieczność podejścia konstruktywistycznego, uwzględniającego kontekst diachroniczny i synchroniczny. Potrzeba innego podejścia teoretyczno-metodologicznego została ukazana na tle dyskursu wobec przeszłości, pamięci i historii, a także w kontekście dotychczasowych ustaleń badawczych kolejnych

etapów rozwoju polskiej andragogiki. Autorka wykazała, iż brak obecności we współczesnych dyskursach andragogicznych odniesień do jej przeszłości, historii, prowadzi do wykorzenienia z rodzimej tradycji oraz jest jednym z ważniejszych powodów problemów tożsamości polskiej andragogiki, ciągle nadal o nieugruntowanej pozycji wśród nauk o edukacji, funkcjonującej głównie na obrzeżach pedagogiki. Artykuł kończą wnioski podsumowujące przeprowadzone analizy.

Słowa kluczowe: andragogika, polska myśl andragogiczna, teoretyczno-metodologiczne aspekty badań, przeszłość, pamięć, historia.

Introduction

Undoubtedly, considerations around the theoretical and methodological questions of research on the development of Polish andragogical thought require multilateral analyses from different perspectives. It is not possible to accomplish this task with limited text. Therefore, it will be only a sketch, in which some selected threads will be outlined that, in my opinion, may be of interest to contemporary researchers of the andragogical thought formation. This article should be taken as an opening to discussion, rather than a fully mature statement and rather as a contribution to summarising and addressing the stages of development in adult learning research. At the same time, I undertake methodological analyses of the research approach. I am particularly interested in advocating for changing the research perspective in dealing with the history of andragogy so that research is conducted in both a diachronic and synchronic context, which seems to be rarely used today. Without this approach, the historical awareness of contemporary andragogues, researchers of adult learning, will have a short time horizon only. As Timothy Snyder (2017) writes, ahistoricity is a characteristic feature of modern generations, therefore, in order to avoid the pitfalls of both the past and the future, one must keep on learning about history in order to be able to create it. This disturbing phenomenon does not concern only andragogy, it has a broader dimension as well; it is particularly visible in andragogy though.

Andragogy and history

To begin with, I would like to pose a question whether we use the achievements of our predecessors in contemporary discourses and narratives concerning adult education, in building own group identity by andragogues, educators, trainers, etc? Is there knowledge of who we used to be in the collective memory of the andragogical community, what activities we undertook, what imaginaries (Charles Taylor) shaped people professionally involved in adult education? As David Lowenthal writes, “(...) A common vision of the past – is an essential element of the identity of those who treat this past as theirs, and the answer to the question ‘Who we are’ must somehow refer to the question ‘Who we were’” (quoted after: Kapralski 2010, p. 10). It is important what kind of past has preserved and functions in the memory of the contemporaries because what we tell about our past, what meaning we ascribe to it and what interpretations of

the narrative about the past we consider our own, significantly define the present and set out the future (Szacka, 2015). Finally, it is also important who is presenting this story, who is telling it, because every perspective, every outlook has its own story.

However, I have to answer critically to this question. In the contemporary discourses on adult education, including andragogical ones, the Polish tradition in this area is completely absent. In andragogical publications, and even on the history of upbringing/education, but also in andragogy textbooks, we find no references to the history of adult education and andragogy¹. The reader has no opportunity to learn about Polish concepts, approaches and methods of analysis of this issue, or to learn about any practical and institutional achievements in the discussed area. Contemporary representatives of andragogy very rarely refer to the achievements of Polish andragogical thought, and if they do, it is not a subject of discourse, but is only a peculiar ornament, most often an introduction to the topic, weakly or most often in no relation to the content of the publication at all.

On the other hand, publications on the history of andragogy are also not generally known to pedagogy students, as well as even to people researching adult education, they are also rarely the subject of any discourse, they are rather unnoticed (Michalski, 2019). Of course, it can be said that this is a weakness of historical and andragogical publications, but it is more disturbing that contemporary researchers do not feel the need to search for the genesis of various andragogical phenomena, adult education institutions, and do not ask questions about the past of Polish adult education. It is as if they adopted the assumption that there is no institution or concept of adult education in the Polish history. I find this a very disturbing phenomenon. We do not have a common social memory of the roots of Polish andragogical reflection, we can even speak of collective oblivion, or at least a forgotten history. This uprooting from the native tradition is one of the most important reasons for the problems with the identity of Polish andragogy, still of an undeveloped position among the science of education, functioning mainly on the outskirts of pedagogy. Historical works simply must be included in the adult education/andragogy discourse. Without this perspective, the discourse will be barren, and our narratives will be shallow. The drastic reduction of the time horizon of reflection only to recent facts, situations and beliefs makes the social memory dead (Szacka, 2006; Kwieciński, 2004; Snyder, 2017).

There are many reasons for this phenomenon, they are complex and undoubtedly their analysis is necessary; however, it requires a separate treatment. At this point, I would just like to indicate that, regardless of the sources, collective oblivion is often accompanied by resistance to getting to know and referring to the past (Hirszowicz,

¹ There are some exceptions obviously. Some historical references can be found in works of Tadeusz Aleksander and Józef Półturzycki.

Neyman, 2001). As Aleida Assmann writes (quoted by: Wylegała 2014, p. 67; A. Assmann 2009, p. 101 et seq.), memory functions through communication and cultural frames of reference, when it is not there, it is forgotten. The past is not static, it must be constantly re-constructed and re-presented. It remains to be hoped that the memory of our andragogical achievements has not been completely lost, only temporarily unused and still recoverable. The past should be brought into the light in the present, as Paul Ricoeur (2007, p. 470) writes, and the creation of social bonds and group identity of our environment should be focused on the question posed by Jan Assmann, “What must we not forget?” (Assmann, 2008, p. 46; Assmann, 2009, p. 60).

Stages of Polish andragogy development

Overall, it can be said that andragogy, but also adult education and adult learning, has long past, but short history. Based on the research of various authors and my own on the history of andragogy, I believe that in the most general terms, four basic periods can be categorised justifying their distinction with certain specificity of the research undertaken. These periods are parallel to the broader, more general stages of the historical development of Poland. This is a characteristic feature for the development of adult education in general, which was already pointed out by Helena Radlińska when she undertook the first research on the history of adult education and demonstrated some close links between the development of adult education and political and social changes, but also analogically to andragogy. In Poland, this general tendency is more expressive, inextricably linked with the meanders of Polish independence, freedom and statehood (Stopińska-Pająk, 2015). Following these criteria, I have distinguished four stages of the andragogy development in Poland; in each of them, certain substages of development can also be seen (Stopińska-Pająk, 2018).

The first – I have named it as pre-scientific and pre-institutional, the beginning of which can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century and finalised with the publication of the first Polish textbook of andragogy in 1913, entitled *Praca oświatowa. Jej zadania, metody i organizacja* (Educational work. Its tasks, methods and organisation)² (Stopińska-Pająk, 2012). This was an extraordinary period. Although, as I have already written, scientific and research institutions of andragogy were established only in the Reborn Poland, many pioneering activities were undertaken during the captivity

² *Praca oświatowa. Jej zadania, metody i organizacja. Podręcznik opracowany staraniem Uniwersytetu Ludowego im. A. Mickiewicza.* (1913), (eds.) T. Borowski, Z. Daszyńska-Golińska, J. Dziubińska, Z. Gargas, M. Heilpern, Z. Kruszewska, L. Krzywicki, M. Orsetti, H. Orsza, St. Posner, M. Stępowski, T. Szydłowski, Wł. Wejchert-Szymanowska. Kraków; see also: A. Stopińska-Pająk (1997). Pierwszy polski podręcznik andragogiki. in: E. Sapia-Drewniak and A. Stopińska-Pająk (ed.), *Z tradycji polskiej teorii i praktyki andragogicznej*. Toruń.

period. Educational societies established at the end of the 19th century conducted educational and cultural activities among adults, and undertook the first research and publishing works, especially periodical and popularisation works in the field of theoretical andragogical issues. They were a substitute for scientific and research institutions, they took on functions that are normally performed by the state, local governments and scientific corporations. These societies gathered a very diverse group of people around them, both activists involved in specific educational activities among adults in various areas, as well as researchers and scientists. It is worth emphasising that the path to adult education for the precursors of andragogical thought was diverse. Moreover, they were representatives of various sciences, journalists who included andragogical issues in their interests. There are many works that analyse mental work, issues of self-education, learning methods, and learning motives in the achievements of Polish scientific thought in the 19th century. These were pioneering works not only in Poland (on Polish land), but also in Europe. Among the authors, apart from those already mentioned, there were Józef Kalasanty Szaniawski, Michał Wiszniewski, Adolf Dygasiński, Julian Ochowicz, Jan Władysław Dawid and Edward Abramowski.

The discourse conducted in the 19th century among scholars and journalists was reflected in practice. Various educational institutions emerged that were active in relation to people of all ages, including especially the adults. The best example of an educational institution for adults was the so-called Flying University, which was established in 1885 in Warsaw, mainly thanks to the efforts of Jadwiga Szczawińska-Dawidowa, and can be classified as a general, open university. The institution functioned secretly, the lectures were constantly transferred from one place to another and so the University was given the term “Flying” and “Woman”, because the female gender dominated among the students, especially in the initial period of their activity. As Stefania Sempołowska wrote, “In the period of the struggle for the right of women to higher education, Warsaw had an exceptionally large number of women educated thanks to an organisation unknown anywhere in the world, and bearing a strange title: ‘Flying University’” (Sempołowska, 1960, p. 549). Bohdan Cywiński wrote that the establishment and activity of the Flying University “(...) was an ambitious response of the emancipated generation to the slogan of equal rights for women by the positivists” (Cywiński, 1996, p. 57). I believe that this aspect gives this institution an additional value. Not only does it show the enormous educational needs of women, who at that time had limited opportunities to satisfy them, but also activity and determination in the learning effort³.

One of the significant achievements of this period was also the publication of *Poradnik dla samouków* (*Guide for the self-taught*), around which, at the end of the 19th century, various activists and scholars gathered. *Poradnik dla samouków* was created in

³ It is worth mentioning that in the 20 years of the university's operation, about 5,000 women graduated from it (Cywiński, 1996, p. 65).

1897, it was published from 1898 under the editorship of Aleksander Heflich and Stanisław Michalski. As Stefania Sempołowska wrote – *Poradnik* as an idea was a peculiarly Polish product. “At the end of the 19th century, and at the beginning of the 20th century, *Poradnik dla samouków* (Al. Heflich and St. Michalski, published by Kasa Mianowskiego) aroused astonishment and was appreciated at educational conventions in Western Europe. The idea, plan and form of the publication were admired” (Sempołowska, 1960, p. 549). This publication is the culmination and reflection of the achievements and experiences of the self-education movement, which developed very intensively in the 19th century, despite lacking scientific support. *Poradnik* was supposed to help learners on their own, both for people with elementary preparation and for people with higher education⁴.

This first pre-institutional stage in the development of andragogical thought, as already mentioned, ends with the publication in 1913 of the first textbook of andragogy, entitled *Praca oświatowa. Jej zadania, metody i organizacja* (*Educational work. Its tasks, methods and organisation*). This is an excellent work, the value of which cannot be overestimated. The texts included in it (19 studies, 13 authors) exemplify the first research attempts on adult learning and teaching, on the cultural activity of adults, aesthetic education, on the methodological aspects of working with adults and others, creating the foundations for the development of andragogical thought in Reborn Poland. The work is the result of qualitative, participatory research, showing adult education in a new perspective, as primarily a space for human creation. Finally, all analyses are presented in a broad socio-cultural perspective.

Aside from these considerations, it is worth adding that it is a pity that Polish andrologists so rarely use the dissertations presented there for their own analyses.

These are of course only examples. There were many more similar activities and they were addressed to various groups of adults and of different socio-cultural status. This period requires re-examinations and analyses, taking into account categories that are also important for andragogy today, e.g. the category of adult learning. This will allow to see aspects that have not been analysed so far in the development of andragogical thought.

The second period – is marked by the years of the Second Polish Republic, i.e. 1918–1939, partly also covering the period of World War II. In the independent Poland, andragogy, although not generally, won a place in university scientific circles, among them the most important two were: Warsaw and Poznań. At that time andragogy

⁴ The editors wrote that the term ‘self-taught’ is often misinterpreted, that it would be more appropriate to speak of ‘non-taught people’, and these could include everyone, ranging from a craftsman with elementary education to university graduates. See: b.a. (given publishers): Wstęp. In: A. Heflich, S. Michalski (Ed.): *Poradnik dla samouków*. Część I. S. Dickstein, J. Ejsmond, S. Kramsztyk, L. Krzywicki, A. Mahrburg (Ed.) *Matematyka. Nauki przyrodnicze*. Warsaw 1898, p. III.

was developed as a science among other social sciences, humanities and culture sciences.

The andragogical research and discourses undertaken at the time covered various topics. I will only pay attention to some selected problem areas that complement each other and are an excellent example that they can still be a source of reading and interpreting various aspects of adult education. These were andragogical considerations around: the scientific status of andragogy, issues of psychological and social determinants of adult activity in education, research on the motives and needs of adult participation in education, teleological considerations on the goals of adult education, discourses on the forms and methods of educational work with adults and the role of an adult teacher and its competences and others.

In the Second Republic of Poland, andragogy as a science and its scientific status were discussed. Although it should be noted that they were undertaken quite rarely and rather occasionally, but the very discovery of these problems, their formulation, and the formulation of research needs were, I believe, of fundamental importance both for the development of andragogical thought itself and for the formation of andragogy as a new scientific discipline among the sciences on education. Addressing the issues related to the scientific status of andragogy as a science showed at the same time that it entered a more mature phase of development. Andragogues' interests included terminological issues, the subject and needs of andragogical research, and the relationship of andragogy with other social sciences (Helena Radlińska, Andrzej Niesiołowski, Kazimierz Korniłowicz, Irena Drozdowicz-Jurgielewiczowa, Józef Chałasiński, Wojciech Gottlieb).

Psychological possibilities and conditions of adult education

This trend includes research of Stefan Szuman on the properties of a mature psyche, Leopold Blaustein on the psychological factors of the abilities and learning outcomes of adults, and Maria Lipska-Librachowa on the specificity of low-culture mentality, from which important conclusions concerning adult education were drawn that, in addition to psychological conditions also environmental ones, which were not noticed formerly, were important. Moreover, it was showed that age was not a significant obstacle in undertaking education, and individual differences between adults so clearly observed, also occur among children, although with human development these differences deepen significantly, which was explained mainly with the lack of care for childhood and with socio-cultural factors. In this trend, one should also mention the research by Marian Wachowski on adult farm-workers students, research by Józefa Joteyko, Stefan Błachowski and others. There were not many of these studies, but also in Western Europe, studies in this regard did not have too many supporters (including Ch. Buhler, E. Thorndike, F. Gruber, R. Lochner, B.A. Yeaxlee); anyway, Polish researchers also used their work and research.

Social determinants of adult activity in education

In this area of research, we find the largest number of different issues under study. These include, first of all, the sociological research of Józef Chałasiński, Florian Znaniecki, Eustachy Nowicki, Wojciech Gottlieb, but also research of other scientists, undertaken from the perspective of various sciences – social, economic, pedagogical – showing social factors, barriers and various conditions limiting and hindering adult participation in education. Józef Chałasiński in his excellent work entitled *Tło socjologiczne pracy oświatowej (The sociological background of educational work)* (Warsaw 1935) showed both the evolution of the social meaning of human age, which, with the emergence of dynamic and variable societies, ceased to be a barrier to learning, and noticed that an individual should not be left alone in the effort of education and learning, especially those coming from culturally neglected environments. Finally, he appreciated the importance of people's social aspirations, especially those related to cultural and social advancement, or resulting from the need for recognition, as an extremely important sources of all educational activity. Importantly, J. Chałasiński showed that they characterise individuals from all levels of social stratification. In my opinion, very interesting analyses of these issues can still help in understanding and interpreting the determinants of educational activity of adults from various backgrounds and at every stage of life.

Motives and needs for participation in adult education

These were multidirectional and interesting research carried out in various aspects. They were undertaken, inter alia, by Wojciech Gottlieb, Leopold Blaustein, Helena Radlińska, Kazimierz Kornilowicz, Andrzej Niesiołowski, and in the context of adult education goals also Sergiusz Hessen, Władysław Radwan, Irena Drozdowicz-Jurgielewiczowa, Ignacy Solarz and others.

Teleological problems of adult education

These were extremely interesting and significant considerations for the development of andragogical thought, which I believe can inspire us today and also become a source of discourse on the current goals of adult education. Basically, everyone who took up andragogical issues commented on this topic. The concepts of adult learning potential, adult subjectivity and freedom in choosing values were introduced into the discourse; these categories are gaining importance in andragogy also today.

Discourses on the forms and methods of educational work with adults

The achievements of andragogy in this area are characterized by an unusually large variety of issues and a multitude of articles, dissertations and various studies. They concerned both more general issues, e.g. extensiveness and intensity in adult education,

meaning whether you should go more “broader” or “in depth” when working with adults, issues of heteronomy and autonomy in adult education, and issues of particular importance for educational practice concerning the forms of adult education and their classification in the context of both educational goals and the adult learner him/herself as the subject and his/her role in a given educational form.

Andragogical pedeutology – the role and functions of an adult teacher

These were interesting analyses also undertaken by many authors. They showed that a teacher is necessary in adult education, that s/he should have appropriate preparation (College of Socio-Educational Work at Free Polish University), and constantly develop, that s/he must be a person, as Kazimierz Korniłowicz wrote, who cannot ‘stand’, s/he must constantly ‘grow’, s/he must not ‘become’ steadily, and that the adult teacher should be a professional worker.

It can be said that the Second Republic of Poland is the founding period of Polish andragogy; forgotten and unused to this day, as I mentioned at the beginning. Research on this period of andragogy is still needed because many issues have not been addressed at all, and many require a different methodological perspective.

The third – the longest period, these are the years after World War II, which can be described as the period of the Polish People's Republic (PRL)⁵. Of course, it should be mentioned right away that this period is not a uniform picture, it is not homogeneous and certain phases can be distinguished in it, also related to political events. It should also be remembered that this is a period of functioning of Polish andragogy without tradition or with reference to a foreign, imposed tradition.

In fact, this period requires separate analyses and has not yet been thoroughly subjected to such a critical analysis, which I believe is very welcome.

Identifying the research conducted in this period, their directions, tendencies, and methodological foundations pose multiple problems. On the one hand, we observe the development of andragogical research in various areas, undertaking research on various aspects of adult education and achievements, especially quantitative, are quite significant, on the other hand – we observe a dramatic turn in the perception of adult education. The term was often not used but instead the concept of *the working-people education* was used, which, apart from other aspects, suggested that an adult can only learn a profession, at the same time infantilising an adult student, limiting his or her subjectivity, breaking research continuity and, above all, exposing institutional forms of adult edu-

⁵ It functions in the social discourse under this name, although the official name of the People's Republic of Poland was introduced only from 1952 (previously 1944–1952 – the Republic of Poland) and lasted until 1989. From 1989, when the name – Rzeczpospolita Polska was introduced (29/12/1989 enactment of the act on the amendment of the constitution, on 31/12/1989 the act entered into force).

cation. Thus, andragogical research focused mainly on problems arising from institutional forms of education. I believe that this is the dominant feature of the research of this period.

Of course, this does not mean that no attempts were made to research on other problems. However, they remained in the minority and were often pacified and reduced to the proper dimension. For example, research on self-education of adults – to counter-balance them, a rather bizarre concept was introduced: guided self-education and research on its effects was carried out.

Adult education had one goal – the indoctrination of adults and the formation of a “new” adult who, when undertaking education, was primarily to see the development of the socialist state, and not his/her own, or to consider them identical.

The fourth period, which is still going on, and the beginning of which is 1989, i.e. the year when Poles broke with the old system and started building a democratic state, making a fundamental social change, generally speaking.

It is worth emphasising that this is a period, in which we also function without tradition. This time – not so much forgotten, after all, one can forget what one once had in his/her memory, but above all unaware or with the memory of the previous period – neglected and depreciated. The ahistorical nature of modern times, as I have already mentioned, is particularly pronounced in andragogy.

For the development of andragogy and adult education, it is a time of flourishing research, various concepts, the implementation of many foreign andragogical theories, and a significant increase in adult interest in participating in education and learning, the emergence of many different forms and institutions of adult education. It is a period of over 30 years which should certainly be included in a historical reflection (Dubas, 2018; Stopińska-Pająk, 2018). In a nutshell and simplification, the dominant research trends can be indicated. First, the most pronounced shift in research is the definite move towards adult learning research and the shift away from adult learning in institutions, and the associated paradigmatic or post-paradigm shift that is taking place. There has emerged research that can be broadly defined as biographical research, based on qualitative research procedures within the phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches and their gradual domination in andragogical research. Finally, research of theoretical and methodological nature, searching for the identity of andragogy, the subject of research and its methodological aspects, pointing to neglected research areas, among which I would include research on the history of andragogical thought, research on European (though not only European) systems of adult education, or research on everyday life as a space for adult learning.

The growing importance of andragogy is evidenced, in my opinion, by the establishment of a separate Section of Andragogy at the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences and a subsection of the history of andragogy within the Section of the History of Pedagogy.

It is worth noting, as I have already mentioned above, that the third and fourth periods require a separate and in-depth analysis. Therefore, in this text I only write about them very generally, I do not indicate in detail the research trends, directions and problems undertaken, nor do I refer to the achievements of andragogy researchers. Such analyses will be the subject of a separate article⁶.

Research on the history of andragogy in Poland against contemporary challenges

In the context of the above considerations, I would like to strongly signal that for us, researchers of the andragogical past, the main task is to include research problems that are important for andragogy and adult education today, in order to introduce the knowledge about Polish achievements and traditions of adult education and the achievements of Polish andragogical thought to the collective consciousness. At the same time, a critical analysis of these works is also necessary. The dissemination of knowledge about the history of andragogy has also a wider justification, both in the European dimension and in our native one, to fill in the gaps, those “white spots” in the history of European and Polish andragogical thought. Only then is a dialogue and scientific discourse possible between various scientific and methodological traditions around questions and problems fundamental to andragogy.

When talking about the past, it should not be treated the same way as history. History is a story about the past, a narrative about it which, as Jerzy Topolski writes (1983), organises the experience of the past, and therefore is always someone's narrative; moreover, not necessarily a linear narrative. Since the past is existing in the present, historical narratives about it can also be different. One can write about history in the context of both the present and the future, and the work of the historian, as Ewa Domańska (2005, p. 7) writes, speaks more about her/his times than about the past. This is a fundamental change in the historical approach to the past. Referring to the methodological considerations of Domańska, I mean not only the learning objectives related to the knowledge of the heritage of andragogy. Following Domańska (2005), I adopt a perspective defined by the question “why”. Why do I need this knowledge, to what challenges of our era I can find answers that will allow me to tell about a human – an adult learning person, undertaking educational challenges in an unfavourable world, full of risks resulting from all phenomena of postmodernity. This is an extremely important perspective of historical research, if it is to serve us today and tomorrow, and if we want historical research to be used by contemporary researchers of adult learning.

⁶ Attempts to present the achievements of andragogy after World War II and after 1989 have already been made by researchers, including: Dubas (2018); Solarczyk-Szwec (2014); Alexander (2002); Hellwig (1986) and many others.

Yuval Noah Harari⁷ presents this issue in a very interesting way. In his famous work entitled *Homo deus*, he concluded that it is history that allows us to become aware of certain possibilities that we generally do not take into account. “Scholars in every field often try to broaden our horizons, thus opening up new and unknown paths to the future. This is especially true of history. While historians rarely try their hand at prophesying, the main purpose of studying history is to make us aware of possibilities that we normally do not consider. Historians study the past not to repeat it, but to free themselves from it” (Harari, 2018, p. 138). It allows us to look with the past to start thinking and dreaming differently as he wrote.

Any new social movements that call for a different world, for self-recognition, begin by writing their own history through which they can reimagine the future. This analysis of the past shows that our current situation is neither natural nor eternal – e.g. labour movements, feminist movements⁸, movements against racial, gender discrimination, etc. as well as from our area, meaning education – initially available to a few, gradually encompassing more and more social groups, including finally adults, also of both sexes and relatively recently also old people. So adult education/andragogy also has to rewrite its history – often many of its different topics – and that is a challenge for us. This will allow us to organise our future differently than we used to, although we will never completely free ourselves from the past, but we can significantly change our way of looking at the possibilities of the future and imagine an alternative destiny. This is extremely important for shaping adult learning awareness.

We must also bear in mind, as Harari wrote, that “History is not a single narrative, but thousands of alternative narratives. Whenever we decide to tell one, at the same time we decide to remain silent about the others” (Harari, 2018, p. 380). Therefore, it is important to be aware of what we talk about, and thus what we omit. This is essential in terms of education. Since we are to talk about adult education, about its past’s future, it is impossible to see it in isolation from what we understand today as adult education and what educational practices we implement, as it was once understood, but also from other stages of education, as well as primarily from the vision of understanding human, his/her place and role in the universe and the evolution in this respect that has taken place over the centuries. This presents us as researchers in the

⁷ Israeli historian and professor at the Department of History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Best-selling author: *Od zwierząt do bogów. Krótka historia Ludzkości*. Transl. J. Hunia. (2012, Polish edition 2014) and *Homo deus: krótka historia jutra*. Transl. M. Romanek. (2016, Polish edition 2018); *21 lekcji na XXI wiek*. Transl. M. Romanek. (2018b). Krakow: Wydawnictwo Literackie Sp. z o.o.; issued in millions of copies; nominated for the Nobel Prize.

⁸ Still the history of women, their gaining of subjectivity is not included in social history, the textbooks lack their achievements, as if in the past there were only Queen Jadwiga and Maria Skłodowska; recently, there have appeared some studies showing the activity of women in the past, also in education, which shows the scale of neglect in this area even more!

history of andragogy and adult education with new research challenges that will provide opportunities for us as historians of andragogy to participate in this discourse.

Interesting analyses and inspiration in this regard are provided by the concept of a rescue history described by Domańska (2014). The rescue story is directed towards the future, to save it, to make it happen, to be in the future.

It is not the time to analyse this concept here, but in my opinion, it can be an inspiring research perspective in the history of andragogy and adult education. Especially from our point of view, the perspective in which Domańska understands the history of the rescue as an existential history seems remarkable. "It is holistic in its ambition to reflect on being and knowledge, on the relations between them and the changes in priority over the other that occur depending on the existential situations in which the individual and the community find themselves" (Domańska, 2014, p. 18). This task is combined with the need for historical research that will allow us to shape the future in harmony with nature. "By being interested in anthropogenic changes in the environment and the role of nature in shaping culture, the history of rescue also becomes a critical discourse towards the ideology of human uniqueness, the mechanistic vision of the world and the instrumental treatment of nature as a resource for satisfying human needs" (Domańska, 2014, p. 21). It is to provide arguments for building, as Domańska (2014) puts it, alternative visions of the future, but also performs an ethical and educational function. Piotr Filipkowski (2014) sees this as a subjective perspective that may have emancipatory values. What, I believe, is precisely the challenge for education, especially adult education, is to ask anew questions about the human condition and to extract these alternative approaches from the history of adult education and andragogy.

Summary

The presented analyses of some theoretical and methodological aspects of research on the development of andragogical thought allow for the formulation of the following conclusions:

- there is a need for further research on the history of andragogy, extracting unknown and not described so far both theoretical analyses of adult education and various forms of educational practice with adults, supplementing consciously omitted topics, verification of research findings, especially made in the third period of andragogy development in Poland that I have distinguished;

- it is necessary to change the research perspective, move away from the reconstructive, positivist methodology in favour of a humanistic, constructivist approach, allowing for the interpretation of the andragogical past in the socio-cultural context of a given period, but at the same time for the story to serve contemporary adults in understanding the essence of learning, education and their meaning for life in a postmodern,

fluid age. As Chantal Delsol writes, people need a narrative and each subsequent generation needs a new version (Delsol, 2003; Delsol, 2018). This is convincingly justified by Yuval N. Harari: “*Homo sapiens* are a genre of storytellers who think with narratives rather than numbers and graphs (...). When we are looking for the meaning of life, we expect a narrative that will explain what is actually going on and what is the specific role of each of us in the cosmic drama. This role involves me in something greater than myself and gives meaning to all my experiences and decisions” (Harari, 2018b, p. 343). The need to create a new narrative about the human past is also a challenge for education, for andragogues, educators, historians. It should be based on the memory of the individual, but also of entire social groups, which will not be manipulated by cynical time management only for the current benefit (Auge, 2009);

– it is a challenge for researchers to introduce knowledge about its past to the discourse of contemporary andragogy. It should be bear in mind that collective memory, in this case the memory of andragogues, is changeable and dynamic (Szacka, 2006; Nora, 2002), therefore it even imposes an obligation on researchers of the history of andragogy to follow contemporary andragogical discourses and refer to these historical narratives, which create spaces for the “remembering community” (Kwiatkowski, 2008, p. 20).

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