

Magdalena Stoch

Pedagogical University of Cracow

## Men as Seen by Women: The Educational Potential of Contemporary Polish Feminist Literature

### Research problem

The goal of this article is to reflect on the rationale for the introduction of feminising works into the literary canon at the secondary school level. I have in mind three specific works: the novel *Biało-czerwony* [White and Red] by Dawid Bieńkowski, *Cwaniary* [The Hustlers] by Sylwia Chutnik and short stories from the book *Magiczne oko* [The Magic Eye] by Izabela Filipiak<sup>1</sup>.

I am interested in the usefulness of such texts for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the Core Curriculum<sup>2</sup>, (as one cannot avoid this kind of thinking when it comes to schools), and, first and foremost, in their critical potential. I will focus on one motif: the literary portraits of men created through the narration of the female protagonists.

In the title of the article, I have used the term “feminist fiction”. Because feminism is currently being experienced, practiced and described differently, for the purpose of the article I will use the definition of feminist literature as a distinctive kind of socially engaged literature which comprises a form of discourse, a use of literary language that, in the Polish social and cultural context, serves social change, based on such ideals as social justice, minimising unnecessary suffering and combating violence. Such values derive from the idea of preventing discrimination, which Polish schools are explicitly obliged to observe in the Core Curriculum (*Podstawa programowa 2008*, p. 3).

The primary aim of this kind of writing (and more generally – of literature) is emancipation, understood as being capable of conscious self-determination in various areas of activity, shaped through the reading experience. A feminist text (or feminising, as I find this term to be less essentialist), as I understand it, should

---

<sup>1</sup> I by no means think that these texts are representative of the canon of Polish feminising literature. The choice is subjective and limited by the length of the article.

<sup>2</sup> *Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego dla gimnazjów i szkół ponadgimnazjalnych* [General education core curriculum for lower and upper secondary schools] enacted through the Minister of National Education regulation of 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008.

be directed at deconstructing cultural scripts based on the categories of gender and sexuality, although the process of emancipation itself is situated only on the side of the reader. As I have stated in one of my previous conference presentations<sup>3</sup>, “feminising” literature is, to me, a fluid, individualised concept, grounded in interpretation, detached from specific texts, and at the same time highly connected with their narrative tissue. Anyone can write a feminist text regardless of their sex and gender, because the definition actually refers to the way of problematising specific issues and is, in the end, reader-oriented (as there is no guarantee that the reader will interpret a given text in the way intended by the author).

### The context – research on gender education in Polish schools

The primary context of this deliberation is the research on gender and anti-discriminatory education in Polish schools. According to the report *Wielka nieobecna. O edukacji antydyskryminacyjnej w systemie edukacji formalnej w Polsce* [The great absence. On anti-discriminatory education in the formal education system in Poland] by the Anti-discrimination Education Society (Abramowicz 2011), schools tend to socialise their students well to fulfil roles traditionally assigned to men and women, regardless of how the models of femininity and masculinity are changing under the influence of emancipatory movements. However, when it comes to anti-discriminatory education, Polish schools leave much to be desired. The key terms for such education, such as xenophobia, anti-Semitism, racism, discrimination, sexual minority, gender, stereotypes, human rights, exclusion etc. are, of course, mentioned in the Core Curriculum in the context of such subjects as civic education, history, minority languages or family life education, but almost never when it comes to Polish language education, as if literature did not refer to such issues, remaining indifferent to the problem of social injustice.

In turn, a report by the Heinrich Böll Foundation titled *Męskość i kobiecość w lekturach szkolnych. Analiza treści lektur w szkole podstawowej i gimnazjum z perspektywy równości płci* [Masculinity and Femininity in School Readings. An Analysis of the Content of the Assigned Readings in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Gender Equality] (MK 2014) determined that:

The traditional canon strengthens inferiority of women, by assigning to them passivity, submissiveness, protectiveness and self-sacrifice. Femininity is strongly connected with nature, often dependent on men/the family and assigned value based on appearance and not achievements, intellect or strength of character. Men, on the other hand, are identified with strength, courage and heroism (MK 2014, p. 12).

Although the authors of the report focus on the primary and lower secondary school stages, already in the assigned readings at these stages one can see that

<sup>3</sup> Conference presentation *Memory: Forgetting and Creating*, University of Gdansk, 11–12 August 2014

boys tend to fulfil the roles of little heroes who, more than their school duties, value spontaneous travels and adventures, during which they can prove their resourcefulness, bravery and optimism (MK 2014, p. 23). Unlike girls, they rebel against the school reality<sup>4</sup>. In most cases, boy protagonists:

already as children behave like men; they are active, brave, heroic; they don't express feelings stereotypically seen as feminine, such as sadness and fear; they initiate contacts with the opposite sex; face their foes; rescue girls; their lives are full of adventures; they rebel and resist, and the world is theirs; already in their childhood they prove that they are real men; as adults they constantly confirm their masculinity; as fathers, they are responsible mainly for their families' livelihoods (MK 2014, p. 56).

The Heinrich Böll Foundation report contains a recommendation to seek more varied gender role models, which, aside from changing the way the texts are being interpreted and reflecting on teachers' attitudes, seems to be an idea worthy of consideration.

Therefore, it is worthwhile to see school readings in the light of categories that are key to anti-discriminatory education and to put in motion a process of interpretation that will initiate critical thinking about modern culture and the power mechanisms it contains. This is connected with the necessity of reading old texts through the prism of new theories and the process of gradually introducing new texts into the school canon.

### Dawid Bieńkowski's *White and Red* as a novel on the changing model of masculinity

In *White and Red*, Bieńkowski encourages us to confront the stereotypical image of a macho man. The internal monologue of Paweł, the protagonist of the novel, deconstructs the processual nature and performativity of gender. The dilemmas of a young lawyer lead to a gender discourse, the constitutive elements of which (in the case of this specific text) include: a) the conviction that the two sexes are complementary, as conditioned by biological differences and God-ordained fate; b) attributing excessive emotionality to women, and only rational thinking to men; c) linking masculinity with public service, patriotism, power, control and politics, understood as ruthless rivalry, and linking femininity with gentleness, humility, the domestic sphere or professions connected with serving others (teacher, nurse).

Men were to conquer the world and women to fulfil the role of being decorations by their side. To feel like a real man, Paweł has to, at every step, prove to

---

<sup>4</sup> In Sienkiewicz's *The Knights of the Cross*, Zbyszko's manliness is confirmed through contrasting him with children and women. The novel does not, however, reflect on being faithful to one's homeland in the context of gender roles (MK 2014, p. 26). Fortunately, there are also characters such as the Little Prince, the Brothers Lionheart or Kuba from *Daleki rejs* [A Far Cruise], who are sensitive and guided by emotions, although they are seen more as little boys than men.

himself that he likes rivalry, dominance, striving for success. Such masculinity calls for a complementary and contrasting figure of a passive woman and defenceless child, for whom the man should sacrifice himself and whom he should protect. Masculinity and femininity are described in the novel through opposing pairs: hard-soft. Hardness generates Pressure, or sexual drive, which comprises the foundation of masculinity:

For what rules a man is Pressure. That's the truth, Paweł. A man has the Pressure all the time, bigger or smaller. It's the Pressure that drives a man towards all action, to all he does, pushes him to life as such. If a man didn't have the Pressure, he'd lie in bed and not leave his house (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 81).

All cultural changes and the model of a so called modern man are a threat to the traditional models of masculinity. Until now, its attributes consisted of: a socially respected, responsible and profitable job (e.g. a lawyer) and things derived from it: owning an expensive car, consuming expensive spirits, living in a large and elegantly decorated apartment building. The posture of the man was to be upright and stiff. Similarly, the rules of conduct and models of emotional reactions can be reduced to being stiff and serious, regardless of the context.

The key matter in the man's life was to be that of honour, derived from the aristocratic tradition and meant to be constantly defended. An honourable man does not allow himself to be insulted, does not get sick, does not lose a job, does not admit his family problems. He is ashamed to cook a meal for himself, as he then enters an area traditionally reserved for women. It is an identity built upon negation and a sense of danger, which is described, among others, by Jackson Katz in *The Macho Paradox* (Katz 2006).

The protagonist is trying to convince himself that he is:

very, very proud that every day he comes home so late, tired, dead-beat, washed out, as this is the dedication of the Head of the Family for his family (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 22).

The whole problem is that the protagonist – while defending the traditional macho model – cannot accept the new models of masculinity, while at the same time being aware that they are becoming a part of the reality he lives in. The possibility of expressing emotions evokes a sense of panic.<sup>5</sup>

To the rescue comes the Grandfather-Father in one person, a phantasmal figure personifying the patriarchal moral order. He binds together Polish religiousness and patriotism from the time of the national uprisings with the paradigm of macho masculinity. The gender role models turn out to be an element of tradition inherited from generation to generation, sprinkled with sentiment and the faith that

<sup>5</sup> "And, Paweł, you cannot admit that you are not and will not be a modern man, because you are simply a man. You either are a man or you aren't. And if you are a modern man that means you no longer are a man. As that is the Ancient and Natural Law, as given by the Highest Lawgiver, the Great Lawyer, that the bull snatches the cow and this cannot be changed" (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 24).

cultivating them will guarantee fulfilment in life. It is the Grandfather who accepts Paweł's dilemmas by asking:

For how can a man fight, give orders, when the soup is not waiting? Soup! [...] It always used to wait. How can a man fight when lovely nurses are not waiting with a stretcher? How can a man return, battle-weary, when the soup is not cooked? (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 53).

Soup, but also other traditional Polish meals such as bigos and żurek (written in capitals, and therefore appearing as *pars pro toto*) – which suddenly, because of a conflict with his wife, disappear from Paweł's home, symbolise the gradual downfall of the patriarchal order. The emancipation of women from the domestic realm becomes a rift in the traditional, militarised model of masculinity, where every day is a symbolic struggle for survival. The protagonist cannot come to terms with this thought:

A Polish man does not persuade, but shouts: Death, Beat, Kill! And compromise means for him treason, selling out, ultimate impotency. For a Polish man is a real Macho! (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 162)

In this model of masculinity, the woman and her life are relegated to the background. Paweł forbids his wife from doing scholarly work during pregnancy, while he himself does not involve himself in the upbringing of his son. At the same time, he feels that his marriage is falling to pieces.<sup>6</sup> The traditional division of roles in the family has failed. Paweł does not even believe in the possibility of a reconciliation with his wife, as he is guided by the conviction that only men think and speak rationally. Women's emotions do not even deserve attention.

Therefore, the protagonist believes that the sex of the brain determines the differences and lack of understanding between men and women, which is his justification for the breakup of his marriage. The myth of two complementary halves is contrasted with everyday life. The dialogues perfectly illustrate the couple's inability to communicate. By implementing the traditional model of manhood, the protagonist becomes a workaholic. Something is always "eating" away at him, and he feels that he is losing strength. The stable structure of reality is dissolving. Paweł confesses:

And I can't stand such situations, such variants, where something is mixed. I can't find the right procedures, the necessary clauses and adequate guidelines (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 70).

---

<sup>6</sup> The beginnings of the conflict are described thus: "And Majka stopped smiling on my return from work; she really became kind of grumpy. But the most important thing was that there was at least silence in the apartment, and the Kid was asleep and maybe then he woke up, but I was already asleep by then, I was so tired, so tired, as I had so many important and serious matters to take care of at the Firm, so I didn't know if she was grumpy or smiling, tired or well-rested" (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 36).

*White and Red* is, therefore, a grotesque image of the struggle of the sexes, at the same time amusing and upsetting. Men are both the perpetrators of violence and victims of the traditional gender model, who cannot cope with the internalised social pressure. A question remains: what is the educational value of the novel?

The most interesting aspect is the connection between gender roles and Polish patriotism. The nurturing of tradition, including traditional gender roles, is strongly linked with the gender stereotypes, which continually return in the novel. For example, the Grandfather states:

Death really suits a Polish man the most. And you have to remember this, Wiktor! And a Polish woman looks best in Tears and black. How beautiful they are then! (Bieńkowski 2007, p. 279).

However, this image is not coherent with the contemporary socio-cultural context. The models of masculinity and femininity change, as does the model of patriotism. This requires a discussion on the role of women and men, as well as transgender persons, in the contemporary society. Therefore, it would be an interesting idea to introduce Bieńkowski's novel as a school reading recommended at the secondary school level, in order to show how the cultural context inspires contemporary writers to approach the issues of gender and sexuality and how these issues can be juxtaposed with the traditional image of patriotism during the partitions of Poland and national uprisings. Essentially, it is about showing how modern cultural texts, through their specific language, refer to such values as tolerance, love, equality, and honour. Ultimately, even if we do consider these values to be universal, they can be viewed differently, based on such variables as gender.

*White and Red* is also worth comparing with the film *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity* (directed by Sut Jhally, 1999), in which the aforementioned Katz describes how the ideal of manhood in the media influences the life of boys and men, by pressuring them to be tough and to hide their weaknesses. This fact is confirmed by the statistics gathered by the General Police Headquarters of Poland relating to domestic violence in Poland [<http://statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/przemoc-w-rodzinie/50863,Przemoc-w-rodzinie.html> (accessed on 14.10.2014)], which would definitely prove to be interesting supplementary material.

### Violence begets violence – *The Hustlers* by Sylwia Chutnik

An interesting view of Polish society and its gender stereotypes can also be found in Sylwia Chutnik's *The Hustlers*. It is a story of women living in blocks of flats in Warsaw, struggling with housing problems and engaging in borderline illegal activities.

The main protagonist, Halina Żyleta, loses her husband Antek due to a feud between him and investors buying up old houses. She takes revenge, together with her friend Celina, on random men who catcall them or try to physically hurt them.

Who are these men in the eyes of the vengeful women? First and foremost, the men are the perpetrators of violence. When beating up two thugs, one of the women thinks:

For everything you have in your heads, for all you would like to do to us, and for the fact that you exist (Chutnik 2012, p. 51).

At the age of 16, Halina Żyleta was attacked by a stranger. The man was scared away by a neighbour, but the trauma of nearly being raped is soothed only through revenge fantasies. The girl cuts her wrists and is sent to a hospital, where a nurse gives her the following advice:

Revenge will set you free. Only revenge, girl. And this is the truth of life that you won't find in a newspaper. The kind of truth only handed down between those in the know (Chutnik 2012, p. 62).

Therefore, in Chutnik's novels, women appear in roles stereotypically assigned to men. Marked by their suffering, the women become active, even though they perpetuate the circle of violence. They do not receive any support from the state nor social institutions (schools, hospitals, family, the Church). Therefore, they act based on the rules of the game they recognise. The titular hustlers come from different social circles, but they are all connected by the feeling of grievance and the desire to avenge it. They invoke honour – a value conventionally ascribed to the male gender.

For example, Halina and Celina take revenge on a friend's husband, a perpetrator of domestic violence. The women kidnap him, beat him up and leave locked in the boot of a car. They justify their actions through these words:

In the name of Underground Women, beaten and tortured, we enact the sentence of revenge upon you (Chutnik 2012, p. 88).

The motif of the underground struggle and resistance returns, this time not in the face of a war between nations, but within a nation, not even between the sexes, but between the perpetrators and victims of violence. Halina explains to her mother:

I'm fighting what all those people in helmets and camouflage jackets fought for. I'm fighting for myself, for my friends, for justice (Chutnik 2012, p. 103).

Bronka, a friend of Halina and Celina, takes revenge on the men who make a row under the influence of alcohol, who dress up in SS uniforms or who "manspread" in the metro. Therefore, it is a reaction to macho masculinity, seen by the woman as appropriating the public space. The women also plan revenge on the landlord Kossakowski, a man who is dishonestly buying up old Warsaw houses and evicting families that had lived there for generations. The novel also

features the character of Jola Brzeska, an actual activist of Warsaw's tenants' rights movement, murdered by unknown perpetrators, likely connected with one of the local businessmen.

Therefore, men also appear in Chutnik's novel as the perpetrators of violence, local thugs, crooked investors. At the same time, it appears that the only rule governing urban communities is the motto "violence begets violence", regardless of gender. Therefore we have the question of the purpose of violence, justified through such circumstances as personal grievance or defending the national interest.

Can such violence, across gender borders and within them, be discussed at school? Of course, it can. For example, in the context of the well-known motif of crime and punishment. Justice is usually defined as the ability to punish the perpetrator of a crime, and actively opposing violence. The principal values are, in this context: self-determination and striving to regain the sense of dignity. But what about situations where this is hard or impossible to achieve through legal means? When family and state institutions fail? This is a question that students will surely eagerly attempt to find answers to.

Chutnik's novel, as an example of 21<sup>st</sup> century fiction, can be proposed at the expanded programme level, as an example of the way that the language of urban circles invokes certain values, as well as of what transpires in the situation where these values, such as honour, are being realised in a way that clashes with other values, such as avoiding violence.

### Izabela Filipiak's short stories from the collection *The Magic Eye*

The problem of violence connected with the standard model of gender roles is also shown in short stories by Izabela Filipiak. Here in the foreground we see the relation between victim and assailant.<sup>7</sup> Such a division seems to be generated by a presupposition that only the perpetrator operates actively, while the victim is always passive.

When reconstructing the system of social oppression, Filipiak usually gives the role of the victim to a woman, described through the metaphor of a doll<sup>8</sup>, a passive and submissive work of a man<sup>9</sup>. An independent woman is immediately objectified through violence (e.g. a sexual assault). A brothel and its distinctive rules begin to

<sup>7</sup> "To walk about alone at night is like provoking a tragedy, like calling at people who doubt in the profits that a humble and honest life would give them and as a consequence demand an evening tribute from those who, by giving up violence, put themselves softly and naturally in the role of a victim" (Filipiak 2006, p. 12).

<sup>8</sup> "The child-doll was created by an adult for a child, the woman-doll was created by a man for... a woman or for another man? [...] But it could not have been created by a woman, women and children don't come up with dolls, they just use them as mirrors" (Filipiak 2006, p. 18).

<sup>9</sup> "I'm using the type of exclusivity known to you. As the doll is completely mine, I cannot allow it to be touched by anyone else" (Filipiak 2006, p. 31).



function as a metaphor of a woman's existence, one that is not her independent choice, as a woman's body is always "political" – as states one of the protagonists of the short story "Ska" (Filipiak 2006, p. 142).

Filipiak writes:

To turn a person into an object, it's enough to make her body feel afraid. There's me and my body, whose frailty allows them to blackmail me (Filipiak 2006, p. 24).

The only way of freeing oneself from the thus understood frailty of the body is, for the protagonist of the short story *Zdobycz* [The Prey], its mutilation, practiced as a form of rebellion against the stereotypical image of womanhood which makes women vulnerable to violence. Men, in the eyes of Filipiak's female protagonists, are "descendants of a carnivorous species of conquerors" (Filipiak 2006, p. 29), striving to exclusively possess women, convinced of their own infallibility, using physical and sexual violence against their wives in order to "create them anew according to their own canon" (Filipiak 2006, p. 122)<sup>10</sup>. They're:

Heroes torn between two women, the girl they fuck as if they were about to be shot, and the wife they don't fuck, and who doesn't understand them (Filipiak 2006, p. 138).

In their brutal politics, they treat Earth as a "big, colour ball they play with" (Filipiak 2006, p. 186).

But the image of men painted by Filipiak is not entirely unambiguous. And here is the distinct value of her short stories, which on one hand deconstruct cultural scripts based on categories of gender and sexuality, and on the other show people who transgress the traditional gender norms. We read, for example:

Reportedly when we assume the honourable manly role, we kill the creative part of our being. I hate the roles that the world assigned to me, I object, I reject them [...] Women are not as different from men as both sides seem to think, at least when they function within the same system [...] Only very few can afford entirely contradicting it, not letting themselves be eaten by doubts, rejecting the system in all its limits [...] You don't have to be a woman to be raped (Filipiak 2006, pp. 95, 101, 104).

Filipiak describes the story of a man – a victim of domestic violence. Fearing ridicule, he tries to convince policemen, called for by the neighbours, that his injuries are a result of an unfortunate accident. The narrator comments:

<sup>10</sup> Much space in Filipiak's stories is dedicated to the problem of rape, especially in the short story *Magiczne oko* [The Magic Eye]. The victim, a woman, feels guilty, because she cannot find a logical justification for her situation. She is looking for it in her body and in the laws of culture. An unknown voice is telling her: "You better not think that you can just break out of the system [...] You are a victim or an aggressor. But you have the right to rebel" (Filipiak 2006, p. 197). The rebellion, however, is not easy, as it requires confronting both the stereotypical models of womanhood and manhood. Pain becomes a symptom of existence.

The version that the man assumed is the result of a choice between two different self-images that he made during the next few nights. Of himself – as the ridiculous weakling that he felt like, and the brutal nigger that he felt he would never be (Filipiak 2006, p. 165).

Biological sex, associated with masculine strength and brawn, intersects here with gender identity, as well as race and class. Another transgressive character is a gay man, who breaks the cultural norms by undermining the gender and sexual norms.

Like in the works of Bieńkowski and Chutnik, in Filipiak's short stories the model of gender roles is linked with the idea of the motherland:

Where he ends, she begins. Where Poland ends, monsters begin (Filipiak 2006, p. 152)<sup>11</sup>.

## Conclusions

The presented texts are neither meek nor apologetic. They excellently show how the issues of gender and sexuality are diffused with other variables: class, race, age, and ethnic and national ancestry. They link the issues of patriotism and family life with violence, calling for reflection on the traditional paradigm of masculinity, invoking honour, a fighting spirit and activity only in the public sphere.

The revaluation of the traditional model of manhood is being performed in the context of the emancipation of women and minority groups, which shines a new light on values that have long been recognised in the formal education system and mentioned in the Core Curriculum, such as love, truth, tolerance, honesty, responsibility, equality, solidarity or the homeland. Thanks to the new texts (and new ways of interpreting them, which warrants a separate article), it is possible to realise the idea of active, engaging and at the same time critical reading<sup>11</sup>.

## Literature

Abramowicz M. (ed.), 2011, *Wielka nieobecna – o edukacji antydyskryminacyjnej w systemie edukacji formalnej w Polsce. Raport z badań* [The Great Absence. On Anti-discriminatory Education in the Formal Education System in Poland], Anti-discrimination Education Society, Warszawa.

Bieńkowski D., 2007, *Biało-czerwony* [White and Red], WAB, Warszawa.

<sup>11</sup> The author also refers to the Polish model of a macho man, by writing: "In my country they ignored me or showed aggression, maybe not having the courage to adore me [...] They were as unreal as the world of chivalric stories [...] I noticed that seduction, which I treated as an art that should be perfected and performed often just for admiration of the art itself, for men is only a tool, the selection of which is based only on its usefulness" (Filipiak 2006, p. 22).

- Chutnik S., 2012, *Cwaniary* [The Hustlers], Świat Książki, Warszawa.
- Filipiak I., 2006, *Magiczne oko. Opowiadania zebrane* [The Magic Eye. Collected Stories], WAB, Warszawa.
- <http://statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/przemoc-w-rodzinie/50863,Przemoc-w-rodzinie.html> [accessed on: 14.10.2014].
- Katz J., 2006, *The Macho Paradox*, Sourcebooks, Naperville, USA.
- Jhally S., (dir.), 1999, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity*, USA.
- MK, 2014, *Męskość i kobiecość w lekturach szkolnych. Analiza treści lektur w szkole podstawowej i gimnazjum z perspektywy równości płci. Raport z badań* [Masculinity and Femininity in School Readings. An Analysis of the Content of the Assigned Readings in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Gender Equality], editorial team, Fundacja Punkt Widzenia, Wrocław.
- Podstawa programowa kształcenia ogólnego dla gimnazjów i szkół ponadgimnazjalnych* [General Education Core Curriculum for Lower and Upper Secondary Schools]: [http://bip.men.gov.pl/men\\_bip/akty\\_prawne/rozporzadzenie\\_20081223\\_zal\\_4.pdf](http://bip.men.gov.pl/men_bip/akty_prawne/rozporzadzenie_20081223_zal_4.pdf) [accessed on: 9.09.2014].

### Summary

#### *Men as Seen by Women: The Educational Potential of Contemporary Polish feminist literature*

Feminist literature provides a critical analytical lens for looking at current debates around gender, sexuality and cultural change in Poland. The article presents selected findings illustrating the changing male identities as seen by feminist authors. The author discusses also the educational potential of the contemporary Polish feminist literature.

### Keywords

image of men, feminist literature, emancipation, educational potential

*English translation: Anna Moroz-Darska*

Tłumaczenie sfinansowano ze środków Ministerstwa Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego na podstawie umowy nr 661/P-DUN/2018 z dnia 13 lipca 2018 roku w ramach realizacji zadania 1 – stworzenie anglojęzycznych wersji wydawanych publikacji w 2018 roku.

The translation was financed with funds made available by the Ministry of Finance and Higher Education under contract No. 661/P-DUN/2018 of 13 July 2018 as a part of the execution of task 1: the creation of English-language versions of the issued publications in 2018.