

Marta Tużnik*

Blood, Death and Fear – Philosophy and Art in Relation to the Myth of Womanhood

Abstract

Mythologies from different parts of the world have always used female characters. Most of these are not positive ones, quite the reverse.

Nowadays, our generally accepted attitude towards womanhood and women has barely anything to do with the emotions which were triggered by such mythical creatures as lamias, mermaids or vampires. Furthermore, equal rights are perceived, today, as integral to a healthy society. Yet, there are some aspects of womanhood that are not only absent in public discourse, but also trigger such extreme emotions as fear and disgust. One such trigger is menstrual blood.

The aim of this article is to present negative images of the woman in mythology, with all their consequences, as well as to show how feminist reflections and artistic activity negate this understanding of womanhood and sexuality, frequently employing controversial and inconvenient themes in the furtherance of that goal.

Key words

womanhood, sexuality, blood, menstruation, mythology, nature, culture, feminism

The end of the twentieth century brought crucial changes to the perception of – *and the ways in which we talk about* – women and womanhood. She is no longer seen as a feeble creature, which, as Anna Małyszko points out: “should be subordinate to man, should be obedient to him, as a dependent creature, less rational than him and with weakness of mind – imbecillitas.”¹

¹ A. Małyszko, *Bestie i ofiary. Przemoc wobec kobiet w filmie współczesnym* [Beasts and victims. Violence against women in contemporary film], Gdańsk 2013, p. 67 (translation mine).

* Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology
Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin
Email: marta.anna.tuznik@gmail.com

This belief in the inferiority of the woman was refuted long ago. Theories which have been developed and which have multiplied over the years, are no longer in contention with present day notions of equality between the sexes. Instead, contemporary feminists are trying to portray women as having always been changeable and contextual throughout history. Still, that part of the subject matter which deals with the idea of a woman – and especially with her corporeality – arouses anxiety, or even stirs controversy. One of the less acceptable aspects of womanhood is menstrual blood.

Blood, in general, is very colourful in its symbolism. In one context, blood has positive associations because it evokes the beginning of new life. In another context, however, it is solely associated with death and pain, and is its constant companion.

However, no blood ever aroused such extreme emotions as the blood which flows naturally arouses. Menstrual blood, virtually absent in public discourse, is still a skillfully avoided taboo. Mass culture disfigures the image of womanhood and manhood, rejecting and losing those aspects of sexuality that are inconvenient for postmodern culture; but neither do they fit the perfect image of a woman.

The aim of this article is, firstly, a brief investigation of the history of the cultural status of the female especially in ways which highlight her dissimilarities. This historical, cultural status is rooted in philosophy as well as in mythology and is the result of a specific, dualistic vision of the world. The second aim of this article recalls and takes account of those feminist theories which jettison the functioning of binary opposition: man/woman, culture/nature, which would have women inferior to men. Those ideas seek to form theories based on an embodied, changeable, fluent subject, involved in a cultural context.

Thirdly, the goal of this article is the presentation of several pieces of feminist art, both American and Polish, which complement those theories to some degree, by negating an anachronistic mindset and using the theme of transgression as a tool for disenchanting the *menstrual blood* discourse.

The opinion which proposes that woman is nature orientated and that man is culture orientated is an old, widely developed idea, which has been variously criticised since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the history of philosophy, as well as in sociological and cultural reflections, a tendency towards that association can be seen. Nature has been understood as ambivalent – life-giving on one side, but wild and dangerous, on the other. Thus, the image of a woman has been ambivalent too.

Woman, as the embodiment of natural forces, was simultaneously worshipped and cursed; she was perceived as a vehicle of unbridled passion which had, at all times, to be held in check by man. Some ancient philosophies such as Aristotle's reflections on human nature, linked manhood with rationality, reasonability and objectivity. Womanhood was associated, in some measure, with such attributes as irrationality, chaos and subjectivity.² Therefore, it was man's paradigm that prevailed and rendered as irrelevant, woman's perception of the world.

The best way to cope with fear and anxiety, caused by the negativity associated with womanhood, was to create a collective memory with images of female figures which had specific, negative connotations. It is worth mentioning that the majority of female monsters and ghosts are attractive in appearance which seduces and deludes potential male victims.

One example of an ancient female monster is the vampire – *Empusa* – one of the phantoms that had her place in Hecate's entourage. The etymology indicates gluttony and impetuosity, because *Empusa* means "she who invades by force." This character, strongly associated with eroticism, was believed to have abused men and to have rendered them impotent, thereby causing their deaths. *Empusa* in Latin is *Lamia*, which is derived from another word – *lamyros* which is translated as "voracious." This word is also connected with eroticism as it conjures up the possibility of ascribing such attributes as promiscuity.³ Another *femme fatale* from Greek mythology is the mermaid. This was a woman with a human head and trunk but with a bird's legs and claws, all of which fitted the Greek idea of the soul as a winged demon, craving for blood and love.

In eastern mythology – or to be more terminologically exact – in Slavic mythology, there are also legends in which such a female character is also to be found. One of these is *Strzyga*, whose name is derived from the Latin *strix*. She was a demon with a bird's claws who fed on human blood. "According to folk etymology, 'Strzyga' is a demon who damages clothes."⁴

The origin of the word is Greek – στρίξ, and hence the Latin – *strix*, *strigis*, which means an owl- or eagle-owl, ultimately translating as *striga* – or

² Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, trans. A. I. Peck, Cambridge 1943, I 728a 18–21, p. 103.

³ E. Petoia, *Wampiry i wilkołaki* [Vampires and werewolves], tłum. A. Pers et al., Kraków 2003, p. 34.

⁴ R. Dźwigoł, *Polskie ludowe słownictwo mitologiczne* [Lexicon of Polish folk mythology], Kraków 2004, p. 67 (translation mine).

“witch.”⁵ Those dark, parasitic demons were the forerunners of the vampire, who, in western culture, were deemed to have been possessed of a wild sexuality and have become a symbol of female eroticism hidden by patriarchy.

Although the myth of vampires is universal in terms of sex, there are, as can be seen in Maria Janion’s book, divisions derived from a gender background. This distinction is closely related to the human reaction to death. Janion talks about two different discourses, typical of a given sex. There is the neurotic, male discourse, which is characterised by fear and lack of acceptance of death, as well as the tendency to control everything that is vague and unclear. Whereas the female discourse equates with the lack of a strong identity and acceptance of death.⁶ Those attributes make womankind more susceptible to the influence of a vampire by becoming the object of a vampire’s attack, thereby becoming, herself, a vampire. Another argument in favour of speaking about women, as creatures more susceptible to vampirism, is a woman’s physiology and her connection to nature. As Janion indicates, the reason why women very often became protagonists, or at least main characters in vampire literature, is the fact that everything connected with the nature of womankind is fatalistic. Thus, the literature dealing with vampirism and menstrual blood creates women as strange, alien and dangerous creatures.⁷ Any explanation of that image is closely related to the issue of blood – a taboo and very complex symbol.

“Closely connected with images of death, and more often with life, which eventually always wins, blood was considered both dangerous and healing, bringing both bad luck and good luck, at once unclean yet pure.”⁸ Blood is a paradox among symbols. The most intriguing is the “unbearable concurrence of contrasts.”⁹ The whole web of paradoxes is caused by the fact that blood is connected both with death and life. The ambivalence of blood puts the human being in a difficult situation, which makes it impossible to overcome the fundamental vagueness caused by the symbolism. Blood accumulates opposing values and contradictions.

In spite of the fact that, in various cultures, blood is understood differently, it was always treated as a substance with special attributes and

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ M. Janion, *Wampir. Biografia symboliczna* [Vampire. Symbolic biography], Gdańsk 2008, p. 35.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 227.

⁸ J. P. Roux, *Krew. Mity, symbole, rzeczywistość* [Blood. Myths, symbols, reality], tłum. M. Perek, Kraków 1994, p. 8 (translation mine).

⁹ Ibidem.

is both revered and cursed at the same time. Blood is both fascinating and an object of worship but it is also feared; contact with it is avoided. Blood, when connected with death and suffering, is repulsive. Besides its connotation with the process of dying, the sight of blood is terrifying in its unpredictability. Its loss always indicates the weakness of the organism. It does not matter if this loss is a real danger for the human being. People always feel unsafe at the sight of running blood. It evokes very strong emotions. One particular feeling accompanying the sight of blood is disgust. Coming *face-to-face*, so to speak, with this bodily fluid invariably evokes the most unpleasant of feelings and instigates that most basic of human reactions *viz.* the *fight-or-flight* syndrome.

It is known that blood, generally, is a taboo subject, but if one were to start talking about menstrual blood, then that would quite over-step the boundaries of decency, as can be seen, in that the very mention of it is completely absent in public discourse. Although the loss of menstrual blood is a natural – and even a desired – process as an indicator of a woman's health, any mention of such, immediately stirs up discomfort and disgust.

In western cultures, female physicality has always evoked anxiety and ambivalent feelings towards it. The female body has always been an object of desire and love but it also nauseates and repels a man because of the malodorous secretions which accompany the processes of giving birth and the puerperium. Due to the fact that the female menstrual cycle is governed by the moon's phases, womankind is placed closer to the darker side of nature and, because the night is thought to be a very dangerous and mysterious period of time, this has automatically influenced the perception of women. All negative attributes of blood are transferred to the woman, because she is the one who comes into contact with blood more often than does the man. What is the reason for this menstrual blood to be commonly perceived as being so unclean and so desecrated? Girard, in the book *Sacrum and Violence*, explains this attitude towards menstrual blood as being a primitive taboo linked to violence and sexuality. Blood is sullied when it is shed otherwise than ritualistically. Where menstrual blood is connected with sexuality, both sexuality and menstrual blood are perceived as lascivious.¹⁰

Until recently, almost every reflection about women began with the recollection of opposition, namely, the nature/culture debate, which, with

¹⁰ R. Girard, *Sacrum i przemoc* [Sacrum and violence], tłum. M. i J. Plecińscy, Poznań 1993, p. 44.

other, similar pairs, such as form/matter, active/passive, mind/feelings, was the foundation of dualistic thinking on the subject. Now, although still present, it has become old-fashioned and is criticised as outdated. The aforementioned criticism of this view has come about through different paths. This article will focus on ideas which rely on the assumption of a non-dualistic definition of the body, which claims that answers to questions about the body, and the relation between corporeality and subjectivity, cannot be based on a binary pattern. This kind of understanding of corporeality is based on reflections of such structuralists and post-modernists as Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze.

Judith Butler, the American, feminist philosopher, inspired by Derrida's deconstruction and Foucault's philosophy, as well as by the philosophies of Lacan, Nietzsche and Althusser – and who is also the author of a dissertation entitled *Gender Trouble* – analysed the concept of womanhood. She theorises – as did Nietzsche, Foucault, and Althusser before her – about subjects being the effects of repressive power regimes. Butler suggests incorporating the so-called feminist genealogy of a woman into feminist theory, as well as rejecting binary opposition, so prevalent in western tradition.

Butler's theory assumes that sex and gender are culturally designed and manipulated. According to her, sex is part of a regulative practice which creates bodies. For the purposes of this article, the most significant part of Butler's theory is its reference to Aristotle's theory of matter and form. According to this philosopher, women are imperfect and less valuable creatures, whose sole *raison d'être* is to reproduce, whereas men are the *prime-mover* – or initiator – and as such, are possessed of much higher status in the process of reproduction.¹¹ Because women are perceived as not being fully formed human beings, when compared to men, they are regarded as passive matter, requiring the active factor of male sperm; this *lack* gives rise to the perception that woman is deficient in some way. Such a point of view implies a negative attitude towards the body in general. The discourse views the body as being of less value than the mind or spirit and also distinct from it. Judith Butler confronts this theory by explaining the term *matter*. She says that in the Latin and Greek languages "matter is clearly defined by a certain power of creation and rationality that is for the most part divested of the more modern empirical deployments

¹¹ Arystoteles, *Dzieła wszystkie* [The Complete Works of Aristotle], t. 5, tłum. T. Siwek, Warszawa 1993, k. II, 732a.

of the term.”¹² This definition negates the perception of matter as non – intelligible and incapable of creating new life or a new entity and puts a different light on the ancient understanding of matter by emphasising its dynamism and power. This could be helpful in creating a better perception of the body, especially the female body which, historically, has been perceived as changeable.

The abandonment of the concept of universal woman or man is visible in the works of another researcher – Julia Kristeva. In her opinion, language is a crucial tool for creating both woman and man. Every subjectivity is created through language, according to the proponent of the *Speaking Subject* theory. Femininity is not the possession of any single subject but a language and that renders it unstable. Therefore, the subject is, for Kristeva, something unclear and fluid.¹³ Kristeva is also the author of the term the *abject* which is closely connected with corporeality. In Kristeva’s theory, *abjection* is defined as a feeling of disgust and rejection. Her definition of the *abject* contains everything that does not have social acceptance and is connected with organic substances which cause feelings of discomfort and disgust. Among those substances there is, undoubtedly, blood, especially the kind of blood which excites controversy, *menstrual blood*. This leads to the conclusion that if menstrual blood is perceived as an *abject*, then womanhood must somehow be marked with *abjection*.

Susan Bordo, an anthropologist and feminist, criticises, masculinised, phallogentric, contemporary culture. According to Bordo, this culture, which followed the idea of cognitive perfection as being abstract, pure and detached from the body, has separated itself from the “female universe.” Symptoms of this situation can be seen in, for example, the discrediting of inter-subjectivity and intuition as credible sources of knowledge. To illustrate this detachment from matters regarding the female body, Bordo, in the *Unbearable Weight* cites a poem by Delmore Schwartz “The heavy bear who goes with me.”¹⁴ The animal is nothing but a metaphor for the woman’s body and is depicted as brutal, violent, irrational and involuntary.

¹² J. Butler, *Bodies that Matter. On the discursive limits of “sex”*, London and New York 1993, pp. 31–32.

¹³ J. Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. M. Waller, New York 1984, pp. 25–26, [in:] E. Hyży, *Kobieta, ciało, tożsamość. Teorie podmiotu w filozofii feministycznej końca XX wieku* [Woman, body, identity. Theories of the subject in feminist philosophy at the end of the twentieth century], Kraków 2003, p. 55.

¹⁴ S. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture and the Body*, Berkeley 1993, pp. 1–2.

The body is a bear – a brute capable of random, chaotic violence and aggression [...] but not of calculated evil. For that would require intelligence and forethought and the bear is, above all else, a creature of instinct, of primitive need. Ruled by orality, by hunger, blindly “mouthing” experience, seeking honey and sugar. [...] The bear – which is also the body – is clumsy, gross, disgusting.¹⁵

Butler criticises the view of the woman’s body as expressed in the quote above, by opting for abandoning the idea of an abstract subject. That which should perish, is the imperialistic, monolithic self. The self which doesn’t accept embodiment and social location, that is – Perspectivism.¹⁶ She resists, as Freud, Marx and Nietzsche did before her, the perception of a subject that is divided, torn between body and mind in which the mind is superior to the body. One possible implication of such a perception is the image of woman as the subject of *abjection*. The *abject* in this case would be all the liquid substances of the female body with menstrual blood being one of the most stigmatised and taboo of *abjects*.

The advocate of the theory of corporal feminism, Elizabeth Grosz, has several aims, one of which is the demonstration of the futility of using binary oppositions such as female/male, body/mind, nature/culture. Those oppositions foster misunderstanding and in consequence, create a dualistic way of thinking about reality. In this dualism, elements are isolated and do not influence each other. Grosz’s aim is to radically reshape the theory of the subject and reassign the position of the body; in her opinion, this would result in a different and improved understanding of themes such as corporeality and human sexuality. Grosz, as a feminist of sexual difference emphasises the embodiment of subjects and the fact that the body is a place of various influences. She notices that:

The philosophical devaluation of the body has its consequences in politics, because women, although theoretically equal to men, are thought to be more corporal, which leads to the conclusion that they are less able in intellectual and social aspects and all but handicapped according to male standards.¹⁷

Corporal feminism is the answer to such perceptions about women and human physicality. In this type of feminism, the body is treated as a factor which creates the biological and cultural existence of a given human being. Grosz also says that the body is generally understood as

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ E. Hyży, op. cit., p. 198.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 22 (translation mine).

a synthesis of culture and nature. This understanding of corporeality is closer to Spinoza's monism and the philosophy of Nietzsche and Foucault. In those philosophies, the body has countless attributes which describe it. The body, understood in this way, is not seen in opposition to the soul or psyche but has the status of being the foundation of human experience.

In her reflections on womanhood, there is also a place for the topic of the *abject*, which has its roots in the concept of the human being as a controllable and stable entity; this view is false according to Grosz. A woman's body is supposed to be a negation of this concept because of physical excretions. Due to the fact that these are never fully controllable, the female body can thus never be compared with the male body. Additionally, because some of those excretions in western tradition are perceived as pollution or as unclean, this aspect of the female body which is entwined with both sexuality and procreation, becomes an *abject*.

Womankind, encased in her liminal body on account of the liquids, which emanate therefrom, appears to be a creature which slips out of the frames of patriarchal society. The female body, which changes in harmony with the cycle of nature is, in male-dominated society, something that must be controlled, tamed and, in a way, purified. Despite the fact that we live in an era of equal rights, the tendency still persists to marginalise women through the perception of her as being less rational and thus less intelligent, as a person. Because of this, feminism, as a social and political movement and feminist researchers, as well as feminist artists have a hostile attitude towards social norms. Nowadays, art no longer struggles with problems of women in the artistic world, but it still touches upon sexuality and the social perception of the woman. Art explores themes which are still uncomfortable and controversial. For this reason, in this article, it is worth showing several pieces of feminist art, which are, in a way, artistic representations of the ideas included in those feminist theories earlier in this paper.

The term *abject* – originally described by Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* – refers to those objects and substances that cross the body's boundaries, for example tears, faeces, urine or menstrual blood.¹⁸ *Abject art*, however, refers to that art which explores themes of transgression and taboo in using those substances. In the limelight of this art is the human body with all its imperfections. Although there is nothing closer or more familiar to the human being than his own body, it can

¹⁸ T. Patin, J. McLerran, *Artwords: A Glossary of Contemporary Art Theory*, Greenwood 1997, p. 1.

become an object of disgust and repulsion. It can even gain some kind of autonomy and exist on its own, as if detached from the self. It can become estranged and unfamiliar. *Abject art* uses this kind of feeling and those aspects of humanity which are denied as *abject*, thus forcing spectators to confront them.

This area of feminist art, which currently fits in with assumptions of *abject art*, undertakes a discussion about menstrual blood. The reason for the use of the theme of menstrual blood in this kind of art is the fact that this special blood is something of an *inexpressible* and one of the aims of feminist art is to delve deep into women's existence, which is unclear, somewhat blurred and even inexpressive. Absent in public discourse and in art, it was introduced by feminist artists as a medium of feminine subjectivity. Feminist artists use menstrual blood as a way of understanding specific reactions to this object, namely, *discomfort* and, in some cases, *disgust*. The revulsion aroused by art is seen here as an element of understanding and acceptance.

In 1972, The Women House was founded – a female artistic society, organised by, among others, Judy Chicago in Los Angeles. They exhibited their works in a house-cum-art gallery. The very exposition had its place in rooms which imitated the kitchen and the bathroom. Artists creating this space lived there at the same time, in order to make the distinction between everyday life and art less visible. Simultaneously, their aim was to show the experience of women, thought to be unworthy of being displayed, as being a topic worthy of deeper reflection. The exhibition consisted of daily necessities – cosmetics, tampons, and underwear.

One part of the exhibition was Judy Chicago's installation entitled *Menstruation Bath*. This was a room painted in red, with a bin, filled with used sanitary pads, placed inside. The pungent smell of blood pervaded the room. Menstrual blood, shown in this way, shocked the spectators. That which should remain covered at all times and that which should never be expressed verbally or in any artistic language, became exposed. This artist dared to show something considered to be one of the most disgusting and embarrassing aspects of being female. Through this piece of art, she also criticised contemporary society and culture, which exclude menstrual blood from all social discourse. Chicago wanted to protest against those artists who deny this experience, unique to women – and who use only the male perspective in their works.

Menstrual blood was also used in a performance staged by the Australian artist Casey Jenkins in the work *Casting off my Womb*, in 2013. The

performance took place in one of the art galleries in Darwin. The woman spent twenty-eight days knitting. What was unusual in the performance was the fact that the wool was placed in the artist's vagina and the timing of the performance was set at the time of the women's period, so she did not stop knitting, even when she was bleeding. The decision to portray this scene was a fully conscious one because Jenkins wanted to tame the most intimate part of the female body and show it in a more neutral way. This piece of art engendered neither the sympathy nor the approval of the spectators on account of all the blood and yet it was the blood itself which was the most important part of the performance! Furthermore – and as if to add insult to injury – the artist was wearing only a white T-shirt, which was viewed as obscene and audacious.

As the artist explained, her performance was about intimate, close contact with her own body, about feeling the body, as well as confronting spectators with what is considered taboo and ultimately removing those taboos about woman's sexual organs. Carolyn Korsmeyer writes about the activity of feminist artists in the following way:

Female artists can turn away from the pleasant and smooth outside to the warm, dark, glutinous inside where there are substances no one ever talks about. This conscious cultivation of that which is not beautiful – but which is crudely physical – shows an image of emancipation which is different from the ordinary, everyday, powerful oppression of the social norms of appearance.¹⁹

The work of Jenkins touches upon a subject that is one of the most powerful taboos in the majority of cultures which is all the stronger because of cultural norms. The theme of blood, where used, is only a method of shocking people in order to evoke a response, even compassion. No images of blood, however, are ever presented in an unprejudiced manner and its depiction always engenders some degree of disgust. Menstrual blood is still something unpleasant, unclean and necessary to eliminate. Any contact with menstrual blood is unwelcome.

Another work worth discussing is a video made by the Polish artist – Hanna Nowicka, entitled *Initiation* (2002). This piece of art raises the issue of the process of female puberty and becoming an adult, as well as the horror which accompanies that first sighting of menstrual blood. The girl appearing in the video is Nowicka's daughter. She is wearing a white dress, standing barefoot on a white square, holding passion-flower fruit

¹⁹ C. Korsmeyer, *Gender and Aesthetics: An Introduction*, New York 2004, p. 146.

in her hands. It is worth mentioning that the Latin term for this fruit is derived from the words *passio*, which means suffering and *flos*, which means flower. The term was developed at the beginning of XVIII century by missionaries in South Africa. In the video, the girl tramples on the fruit. She then brings some more and again, tramples on it. Since the title of the film refers to menstrual blood, the juice from the passion-fruit evokes unambiguous associations with the aforementioned. At the end of the film, both the white square and the girl are daubed in red. In this work, the symbolism of the red is interspersed with the symbolism of the white. White is associated with innocence, purity, and childhood, whereas red symbolises suffering, creation and, of course, blood. The artist was trying to show the emotions accompanying the girl's first period and that the time of becoming an adult is also time of pain and intense feelings. Although her video is not a controversial one, nor one that evokes strong emotions such as disgust or fear, it is one of those pieces of art that is aimed at de-mystifying the phenomenon of menstrual blood. As Jolanta Brach-Czaina in her book *Błony umysłu* writes:

For thousands of years, human imagination has been drinking the blood which has ever accompanied death and has raised slaughter to the level of the highest values. Only this naturally emerging blood was proscribed, hidden and forgotten.²⁰

Getting back to the title of the article, it should be said that whilst discussing theoretical reflections, there is some visible progress concerning the perception of woman; contemporary culture has, as yet, still not become familiar with all elements of womanhood. Although menstrual blood is a natural fluid and its presence is a sign of good health, as well as a necessary condition for new life to be born, it still arouses only negative emotions. The theme of female physicality is, unfortunately, left in limbo. The hope for changing this perspective is the acceptance of a new definition of the subject as fluent, unstable, amenable to change and resistant to oppressive discourse. There is a need for a subject which is flexible in construction rather than rigid, one which changes of itself and evolves. Railing against fallacious discourse is, also, a contemporary feminist art form, which is working to change how women are perceived by society. Using menstrual blood as a topic is a right and proper action, as it perfectly reflects the idea of the fluency of its female subject.

²⁰ J. Brach-Czaina, *Błony umysłu* [Membranes of the mind], Warszawa 2003, p. 127 (translation mine).

Bibliography

1. Arystoteles, *Dzieła wszystkie* [The Complete Works of Aristotle], t. 5, tłum. T. Siwek, Warszawa 1993.
2. de Beauvoir S., *Druga płeć* [The Second Sex], tłum. G. Mycielska, M. Leśniewska, Warszawa 2014.
3. Bordo S., *Unbearable Weight. Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Berkeley 1993.
4. Brach-Czaina J., *Błony umysłu* [Membranes of the mind], Warszawa 2003.
5. Butler J., *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, London and New York 1993.
6. Delumeau J., *Strach w kulturze Zachodu. XIV-XVIII w.* [Sin and Fear: The Emergence of the Western Guilt Culture, 13th–18th Centuries], tłum. A. Szymański, Warszawa 1986.
7. Dźwigoł R., *Polskie ludowe słownictwo mitologiczne* [Lexicon of polish folk mythology], Kraków 2004.
8. Girard R., *Sacrum i przemoc* [Sacrum and violence], tłum. M. i J. Plecińscy, Poznań 1993.
9. Hyży E., *Kobieta, ciało, tożsamość. Teorie podmiotu w filozofii feministycznej końca XX wieku* [Woman, body, identity. Theories of the subject in feminist philosophy at the end of the twentieth century], Kraków 2003.
10. Janion M., *Wampir. Biografia symboliczna* [Vampire. Symbolic biography], Gdańsk 2008.
11. Korsmeyer C., *Gender and Aesthetics: An Introduction*, New York 2004.
12. Kristeva J., *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. M. Waller, New York 1984.
13. Małyszko A., *Bestie i ofiary. Przemoc wobec kobiet w filmie współczesnym* [Beasts and victims. Violence against women in contemporary film], Gdańsk 2013.
14. Petoia E., *Wampiry i wilkołaki* [Vampires and werewolves], tłum. A. Pers et al., Kraków 2003
15. Patin T., McLerran J., *Artwords: A Glossary of Contemporary Art Theory*, Greenwood 1997.
16. Roux J. P., *Krew. Mity, symbole, rzeczywistość* [Blood. Myths, symbols, reality], tłum. M. Perek, Kraków 1994.

