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# FEMINIST THOUGHT IN BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

**Abstract**: The Bible, considered by many a normative and patriarchal text, poses a serious challenge to feminism. Feminist theology offers alternative interpretation and aims to restore female dignity and social prestige to the biblical text through its translation. This article presents selected examples of the feminist interpretation of the Bible. It also analyses English and German translations to comment on inclusive language as the principle of feminist translation, now part of the mainstream biblical studies. Moreover, non-feminist inclusive translations into English and Polish are discussed.

**Keywords**: feminist translation, feminist theology, Bible, Bible translation, inclusive language

For feminist thought, the Bible is – to resort to the imagery of the Book itself – a *skandalon*. The term, used in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians 1:23, denotes a cause for indignation or an impediment. And indeed: for feminism, the Bible is both. It is a cause for indignation as it belittles women. Starting with Eve the temptress, through devious Delilah, who was Samson's downfall, right up to Salome, dancing shamelessly before Herod or holding a plate with John the Baptist's head – the Biblical negative campaigning against half of humanity fills most European art galleries. And then there was also Putifar's wife, trying to seduce Joseph in Egypt; there was Jezebel, Ahab's wife and mortal enemy of Elijah, the greatest of the prophets; or, for that matter, any attractive woman against whom a young man had to be warned by the authors of the Sapiential Books.

The Bible is an impediment, too, which women find very difficult to bypass, a hostile text over which whole generations have stumbled, a text whose misogyny has legitimized not only the legal order but also – the theory of translation. As late as 1862, in a divorce case where a wife ac-

cused her spouse of domestic violence, an American court used the following argument to justify the rough-mannered husband:

> Unto the woman it is said: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee," Genesis 3:16. It follows that the law gives the husband power to use such a degree of force as is necessary to make the wife behave herself and know her place (Korsak 2002: 142).

Thomas Drant, a sixteenth-century translator of Horace, refers to Deuteronomy 21:12 to justify his approach to the original text:

> First I have now done as the people of God were commanded to do with their captive women that were handsome and beautiful: I have shaved off his hair and pared off his nails, that is, I have wiped away all his vanity and superfluity of matter (Chamberlain 2000: 318).

## The Bible and feminism: a historical overview

An attempt to come to grips with the Bible was undertaken already by the first-wave feminism, with the 1895–1898 publication of *The Woman's Bible* (Stanton 2002): a collection of Elizabeth Stanton's commentaries to those Biblical passages which served as a traditional reservoir of arguments for supporters of patriarchalism. The commentaries suggested an interpretation different from the traditional one, a reading which could form the basis for a Bible translation which would not depreciate women. Actually, even before Stanton's book, in 1876, there appeared the first Bible translation authored by a woman, Julia Smith, but due to its poor quality and literalness, it soon fell into oblivion (Metzger 2001: 96–98). Although it was not a feminist translation, it was embraced by Stanton and her colleagues in advocating women's emancipation (von Flotow 2000: 13). After all, it was a breakthrough enterprise: the first case in which a woman ventured into a territory penetrated exclusively by men, who gave accounts of it in their translations.

The second wave of feminism came at a time when Western Christianity was undergoing great changes that led to a strong and diverse movement of feminist theology, accompanied by the appearance of female Biblicists competent in Bible interpretation and translation, and ready to transplant the tenets of secular feminism onto the field of religion.

The work of contemporary female Biblicists is of two kinds. First, Bible hermeneutics has developed three distinct, though interconnected, approaches: Biblical texts presenting women negatively are used to expose and discredit patriarchalism; Biblical texts talking positively about women are given prominence as a counterbalance to texts which slander female figures; the stories of women described in the Bible are studied to outline similarities between the patriarchal world of the Book and the patriarchal modern world (Tate 2006: 132–133). These three types of interpretation are accompanied by elements of translation: drawing from a meticulous analysis of the original text, female authors suggest readings different from the traditional ones and demonstrate that many, if not all, existing Bible translations are intentionally or unintentionally androcentric. Thus they assist translation proper.

The second type of feminist Biblicists' activity is the preparation of new translations of the whole Bible or of its particular books – a deliberate undertaking performed from feminist standpoints. Although, according to Sherry Simon, there does not exist one single feminist approach to the Bible which would produce a definitively new text (1996: 133), it seems that what different feminist Bible translations have in common is the prerequisite of inclusive language, a language which does not depreciate women. Interestingly, with time this prerequisite began to appear also in the works of translators who do not identify themselves with feminism; as such, it deserves a separate note.

## Feminist Bible interpretation as prolegomena to translation

The most advanced critical analysis of the Bible, together with a revision of traditional translations, is to be found in the English-language literature, for example, in the works of Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (1994) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992, 1993, 1994), who offer a thorough analysis of Biblical passages and of theologically significant notions. Their interpretation and proper translation are essential to the status of women and to feminist claims; moreover, they constitute a necessary first step in feminist translation. A classic work demonstrating the way in which Bible translation, obscuring the subtleties of the original meaning, can depreciate women, is Mollenkott's analysis, which elicits from the Biblical concep-

tualizations of God their female aspects, often absent from the translated text (1994). Their disclosure deepens the insight into the original and often significantly changes the target text, introducing connotations lost in earlier versions.

Let us take a closer look at three selected terms discussed by Mollenkott: *El Shaddai*, "the breast of Jesus" and *Sofia*.

*El Shaddai* is one of God's names in the Hebrew Bible, usually translated as "the Almighty," though its etymology remains unclear. The translators of the Septuagint (and authors of most later translations that followed in their footsteps) trace this name back to the verb *shadad* ("to destroy," "to defeat"), but it might just as well stem from the dual form of the noun *shad*, denoting a mountain or a breast. Referring to the latter etymology, Mollenkott speaks of "the God with Breasts" (1994: 57) and suggests a conceptualization which does not emphasize God's power over the world, but rather highlights the feeder of the world, not an image of a god of sword, but instead a god of fertility, feminine rather than masculine.

Reinforcing her interpretation of the term *El Shaddai* based on an etymology taking into account feminine connotations, Mollenkott bridges the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, writing about the "breast of Jesus":

> According to John 7:37, Jesus cried out, "If any man [or woman] is thirsty, let him [or her] come to me!/ Let the man [or woman] come and drink who believes in me!" And John comments, "As scripture says, from his breast shall flow fountains of living water" (John 7:38). Although a masculine pronoun is utilized, clearly the breast that gives living water is the breast of God, with which Jesus identifies himself by inviting believers to come and drink *from his very body*. The word used here in John 7:38 is *Koilia*, which means "a hollow place" and is used to refer to the upper part of the body cavity; so the word can properly be translated as "breast" (1994: 23; original emphasis).

In a substantial majority of modern translations of the Bible, this interpretational thread is not taken up, as it involves a risky reading of the Greek *koilia*, which means "belly" or occasionally "womb" (Kittel, Friedrich 2003: 446). On the other hand, Mollenkott's suggestion is not entirely unfounded, since in Christian writing, from Clement of Alexandria through the Middle Ages to Teresa of Ávila, there recurs the conceptualization of God as a mother breast-feeding the world and the faithful (1994: 22).

Especially interesting is Mollenkott's conceptualization of God as Wisdom (Hebr. *hokmah*, Gr. *sofia*). In both Hebrew and Greek, the noun "wisdom" is feminine. Mollenkott focuses particularly on the fact that in

English, where the grammatical gender is practically non-existent, the gender marking of the original disappears, together with its feminine connotations, activated also in those Biblical passages where the noun is used with reference to God (1994: 97–105). The significance of this small detail to feminist theology is testified by Elizabeth Johnson's *She Who Is* (1999). Inspired by the feminine understanding of God as Wisdom, the American feminist theologian develops a new feminist interpretation of the trinitarian understanding of God in Christianity. Mollenkott's example also shows that some feminist issues depend on the language in which they are verbalized. (In Polish, and certainly in some other languages with gender markers, the feminist interpretation of "wisdom" is more easily noticed: the Polish equivalent *mądrość* is feminine.)

Another systematic and comprehensive feminist reinterpretation of the Bible is offered by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Her strategy comprises four steps: "a hermeneutics of suspicion," "a hermeneutics of proclamation," "a hermeneutics of remembrance" "theoretical assessment" and "a hermeneutics of creative actualization" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1995: 15). The strategy itself is preceded by the assumption that

> *all* biblical texts are articulated in grammatically masculine language – a language which is embedded in a patriarchal culture, religion, and society, and which is canonized, interpreted, and proclaimed by a long line of men. Without doubt the *Bible* is a *male-centered* book! (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992: 53; original emphasis).

Only once this fact has been recognized can the deconstruction of the Biblical text begin to elicit its liberating sense.

Applying her "hermeneutics of suspicion," Fiorenza argues that confronted with the same Biblical text, a man and a woman read in fact two different texts. A man reads a text which reassures him in the vision of the world advocated by his religion and often also by his social environment. A woman, reading the same Biblical text, must remain suspicious or else she accepts the inferior role in the community of faith the text wants to give her, which sometimes may lead to the exclusion from the Biblical narrative. To bring women out of the abyss of Biblical absence, Fiorenza introduces a historical reconstruction, aimed at restoring to women their true place in Biblical history, as subjects who used to create and shape it, although, as time went by, they were superseded by men, who recorded this history. The historical reconstruction of women's presence in the Bible and the history of Christianity constitutes Friorenza's "discipleship of equals"

(1998), that is, the hypothesis that at the dawn of Christianity women and men who accepted the faith in Jesus used to form a community of equals and it was only later on that Christianity took over the ancient-world patriarchal patterns. To express anew what was removed from the heritage of original Christianity, "a hermeneutics of proclamation" is needed in order to free Bible interpretation and translation from anything that may impede the emancipation of women and other marginalized social groups: "Like a health inspector, a hermeneutics of proclamation, for the sake of life and well-being, ethically evaluates and theologically assesses all canonical texts to determine how much they engender patriarchal oppression and/or empower us in the struggle for liberation" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992: 54).

Therefore, the Book is no longer considered the ultimate point of reference, the source of moral principles or the model for social life. What the text says is accepted on condition it agrees with the moral principles and norms of social coexistence adopted by the readers. The objective of the last step, the "creative imagination," is to dramatize the Biblical texts in a new, different way, which in practice means a radical re-writing: either supplementing it with what the feminist reader thinks it should contain or deleting elements contrary to feminist theology. The following passage is the opening of Lk 10: 38–42, "reconstructed" during a feminist Biblical workshop:

> I am Martha the founder of the church in Bethany and the sister of Mary, the evangelist. All kinds of men are writing down the stories about Jesus but they don't get it right. Some use even our very own name to argue against women's leadership in the movement. Our great-great granddaughters need to know our true stories if the discipleship of equals is to continue. They had been travelling for a long time when they finally came to our village. I invited them to join my sister Mary and me. Jesus and the disciples with him sat down and began talking. (…) By the time the teacher finished this story, evening had approached and it was time for sharing the meal. I asked Jesus if he would stay to eat with us. He said yes, and added: "Martha don't go to a lot of trouble. Whatever you were going to have will be fine. Let me help you" (Schüssler Fiorenza 1992: 74–75).

The feminist Bible hermeneutics with kernels of translation is a topic encompassing many proposals and solutions, which cannot be presented here in detail (for more details, see Walsh 1999, Schüssler Fiorenza 1993, 1994; Brenner, Fontaine 2001; Schroer, Bietenhard 2003). It is so mature a field of study that even the Roman Catholic Church has recognized it as

one of the authorized ways of interpreting the Holy Scripture in Catholicism (Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993: 30).

## Feminist Bible translation

There are not many feminist Bible translations prepared by teams of translators for whom the claims of feminism were the main inspiration. The only translations of the whole Bible published so far are the German *Bibel in gerechter Sprache* (2006) and the English *Inclusive Bible. The First Egalitarian Translation* (2009). There also exist translations of single books, prepared by translators working alone, and mainly into English, for instance, Mary Phil Korsak's translation of Genesis and the Gospel According to Mark (1993, 2010), Marica Falk's *Song of Songs* (2004) and Joann Haugerud's rendering of the Paul's Gospel and two epistles (1977). Feminist translations of the New Testament are discussed by Castelli (1990).

Korsak's Genesis is interesting not only because of its feminist approach, but also due to the translator's strategy of word-for-word rendition, where her literalness (unlike Smith's, which results from lack of professional skills) assists the translation of the homonymic Hebrew terms (Korsak 1993: 136–138). To some extent, Korsak's project can thus be seen similar to the translation of the Hebrew Bible by Buber and Rosenzweig, who stretched the German language on the torture rack of the Hebrew tongue, trying to convey the subtleties of the original (*Die Shrift* 1992).

Korsak presents her own solution to the well-known problem: the translation of the Hebrew term *adam*. According to the Biblical etymology, *adam* is related to *adamah*, that is, "ground" (cf. Gen 2:7) and in the opening parts of Genesis the word means a human being, not a man in the masculine sense (hence the problem with "man" used as the equivalent of *adam* in numerous English translations despite the fact that the noun has now lost its "unisex" sense). To preserve the gender neutrality of the original term and to demonstrate in the translation the folk etymology of the word, Korsak renders *adam* as *groundling* (1993: 138). Inclusive in character, such a rendition does not rely on the hierarchy of sexes legitimized by the androcentric translation of the Bible, which suggests that the man was created first and the woman only later, from his rib. Moreover, one should rather acknowledge that the second description of the creation of the human being (Gen 2: 4–25), which is better embedded in culture thanks to its

vivid narration, presents first an androgynous creature (Simon 1996: 119) and only then the separation of the sexes.[1]

Even though Korsak translated only one book of the Hebrew Bible, her work deals with issues important for feminism and hence it is discussed in detail by authors writing about the problems of feminist translation (Simon 1996: 119–121, von Flotow 1991). In her translation of the second canonical gospel, which she entitled *Glad News from Mark* (2010), Korsak in turn tries to rejuvenate the text by removing from it the hard crust of time-sanctioned translatory solutions, usually corresponding to a particular theological function. Instead of John the Baptist, for example, her translation features John the Washer, since the Greek original indeed allows for such an equivalent. Similarly, in the scene where Jesus is sentenced to death, rather than using the verb "crucify," the translator goes somewhat against the original and comes up with *put him on the cross,* an expression new to readers acquainted with the Bible (Korsak 2010). In her translation of this book, Korsak does not resort to radical solutions reflecting the principles of feminist theology, as do the translators of the German *Bibel in gerechter Sprache* (see below); on the other hand, her work fits in with the tradition of translating Mark in a more "secular" way, his Gospel being probably the first one and written in a rather crude Greek. In Poland, such translations, untrammelled by theological connotations, were prepared by Witwicki (1958) and Węcławski: *Dobra nowina według św. Marka* (Good News According to St Mark, 1999).

An interesting case of feminist translation is the English version of the *Song of Songs* by Marcia Falk, a feminist and a poet brought up in the tradition of Judaism, a speaker of Hebrew. As is very well known, the *Song of Songs* is a poetic dialogue of two lovers, in which – what is of particular importance – the woman speaks in the first person. Due to the erotic nature of the book and the fact that God's name does not appear in it even once, the *Song of Songs* has been looked upon suspiciously even in the Jewish

[1] Adam's androgynous character is visible also in the Polish *Biblia Poznańska* (The Poznań Bible). The lessons of Gen 2:18 are radically different here (and both versions have the imprimatur!); *Biblia Tysiąclecia* (The Millennium Bible) reads: *Potem Pan Bóg rzekł: Nie jest dobrze, żeby* ***mężczyzna*** *był sam; uczynię mu zatem odpowiednią dla niego pomoc* (Then Lord God said, "It is not good for **the man** to be alone; hence I shall make him a helper fit for him."), *Biblia Poznańska*: *I rzekł Jahwe-Bóg: "Niedobrze, by* ***człowiek*** *był sam; uczynię mu pomoc, jak gdyby jego odpowiednik*" (And Jehovah God said, "It is not good for **a human** to be alone; I shall make him a helper, as if his equivalent."; trans. and emphasis A.G.).

tradition, and today is still interpreted, both in Judaism and Christianity, as an allegorical representation of God's love for his people, with its literal meanings hidden away. Falk breaks with this approach already in the very title of her translation: *Song of Songs. Love Lyrics from the Bible*, presenting us not with an allegory but with a sensual dialogue of two equal lovers. In this version, the relationship between the man and the woman is based on mutuality.

*The Inclusive New Testament* (2006; henceforth INT) is a translation of the whole Bible: over twenty years in the making, it was prepared by a team of translators who aimed to systematically introduce the principles of feminism into the Holy Scripture. Following the claims of Schüssler Fiorenza, whose works are quoted in the introduction (INT 2006: xiii), the translators focus above all on making women visible in the text, supplementing the target text with female names wherever it exhibits a patriarchal overtone (e.g. in John 8:30–59, where the original mentions Abraham several times, the INT speaks of Abraham and Sarah; similarly in Mat 1:1–17).

The INT uses not only horizontal inclusive language, employed with reference to people, but also vertical inclusive language, describing God in a gender-neutral manner. The word "Son," traditionally used with reference to Jesus in the Gospels, especially in John, has been replaced by *the Only Begotten* (which solves the problem in English, but would not work in Polish, where gender is encoded in the past participle form). One of Jesus's Messianic names, *huios tou anthropōu*, is traditionally translated into English as *Son of Man*; in this translation, it is replaced by *the Chosen One*. At times, the changes go even further: in the famous scene with the adulteress, where the International Standard Version (2008) gives *But the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery* (John 8:3), the INT team suggests the following lesson: *A couple had been caught in the act of adultery, though the scribes and Pharisees brought only the woman*. Instead of *Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is appropriate for those who belong to the Lord* (Col 3:18, ISV), the INT reads: *You who are in committed relationships, be submissive to each other.* Let us note that such a translation can serve as a moral lesson not only for traditional marriages but also for same-sex relationships.

The title of the German feminist Bible translation *Bibel in gerechter Sprache* would best translate not as "The Bible in a just [fair] language" but rather, as a major Polish feminist theologian Elżbieta Adamiak notes in her discussion of this translation, as "The Bible in a language doing

justice (to women)" (2007; trans. A.G.). As in INT, the translation employs horizontal inclusive language. Thus, instead of "sons of Aaron," "Aaron's sons" or "Aaron and his sons" (Lv 6:8 passim), we have gender neutral "Aaron's offspring." The "disciples" following Jesus in the original are accompanied in the translation also by their female equivalents (with a feminine ending of the German noun). What is more, in the German translation the lesson of Mk 14:17 has the following form: *Als es Abend geworden war, gesellte er sich mit dem Zwölf zu den Jüngerinnen und Jüngern hinzu, die das Pessachmahl vorbereitet haben* (When evening came, together with the Twelve he joined the disciplesses and disciples who prepared the Passover supper), which radically changes the theological sense of the text, widening the circle of the participants of the Last Supper (Adamiak 2007). Vertical inclusive language is used as well, for example in Gen 1:27: *da schuf Gott Adam, die Menschen, als göttliches Bild, als Bild Gottes wurden sie geschaffen, männlich und weiblich hat er, hat sie, hat Gott sie geschaffen* (And God created Adam, the people, in a Godly image, in the image of God they were created, masculine and feminine, He, She, God created them; qtd. after Adamiak 2007; trans. A.G.). The German translators go beyond the usual requirements of inclusivism and emphasise the unspeakability of the name of God. Thus, whenever in the text there appears an expression denoting God, the translation gives the equivalent preferred by the translator of the book in question, alongside other possible translation choices (Adamiak 2007).

## Inclusive language in Bible translation

Inclusive language is often considered as a component of feminist translation only, even though nowadays it is often found in Bible translations created by translators who do not identify themselves with feminism. Therefore, we may say that some feminist claims were so convincing that they were deemed right even in a domain as conservative as Bible translation. Moreover, in the context of Bible translation, the notion of feminist translation should be defined with care. Is feminist translation limited to translation performed by those who identify themselves with feminism as a socio-cultural and political phenomenon? Or is a translation involving selected feminist demands, such as, for instance, the use of inclusive language, a feminist translation as well?

I believe that a feminist translation of the Bible is a translation undertaken from a feminist standpoint, implementing all possible feminist claims in the Biblical translation practice. The most important of such translations have been presented above. In my opinion, the sole presence of inclusive language is not sufficient to make a given translation feminist. Nevertheless, non-feminist translations employing inclusive language deserve our attention as evidence of a considerable influence of feminist thought on Biblical translation. Still, there are some circles in Christianity which do not see the difference presented above and which criticize, sometimes viciously, translations which are inclusive, though by no means feminist. This has often happened among English-speaking Evangelical Christians (Carson 1998). Needless to add, the feminist translation proper stirs among many Christians an even greater controversy. Apart from feminist translations, inclusive language appears in Bible translations in two varieties: as a revision of an existing translation and as an element of the translation strategy adopted by translators who do not identify themselves with feminism.

The inclusivization of the text as a revision of an already existing translation, prepared by somebody else, is a particularly interesting phenomenon. As we know, the work of a translator implies authorship and, unless special circumstances (such as the ageing of a translation accompanied by the lapse of copyright) speak for it, nobody except the translator him- or herself should interfere with the integrity of the target text by making any changes. Yet the inclusivization of an existing translation means just that: introducing changes. This is what happened to two English translations: *An Inclusive Language Lectionary* (an inclusive version of the *Revised Standard Version* 1985; ILL) and *The New Testament and Psalms. An Inclusive Version* (an amended version of the *New Revised Standard Version* 1995; NTPI), even though the *New Revised Standard Version* itself is considered by many critics as largely fulfilling the requirement of horizontal inclusivity (France 2000: 162).

In the new, inclusive, versions the translators – acting upon the demands of feminism – add the names of women in all instances where the original and translation only mention men. For example, instead of *the God of Jacob* (Is 2:3), there is *the God of Jacob, Rachel and Leah* (ILL); where the New Testament mentions Abraham (e.g. Mat 1:2, Luke 17:24, Gen 4:1, Heb 11:8), the NTPI adds Sarah. Like the translators of *Bibel in gerechter Sprache*, the teams developing inclusive versions of earlier

translations employ both horizontal and vertical inclusivism. ILL renders the Greek noun denoting "father" and used with reference to God as *Father [and Mother]*, placing the female equivalent in parentheses as an option, while instead of the *Son of Man* (the equivalent of *huios tou anthropōu*), there appears *The Human One* (NTPI), which indicates an intention similar to that of the INT translators. Although the inclusive versions of previously existing translations cannot be called independent and coherent translations, they can be seen as attempts to achieve clearly determined ideological goals through translation manipulations, so as to reach a predefined target group of readers.

Inclusive language is used in a distinctly different way by Bible translators who do not identify themselves with feminism. This difference can be noticed in *Today's New International Version* (2005; TNIV), a translation prepared by American Evangelical Christians, which was considered highly controversial but in the end won the favours of many English-speaking Christian communities (Strauss 1998). In this translation, it is very apparent how the translators try to eliminate androcentrism from the target text, for instance when dealing with the terms: *anthropos*, *aner*, *adelphos*/*adelphoi*. *Anthropos* in Greek means usually "a human," occasionally "man". Recalling old English translations, the adversaries of inclusivism postulate that this term should only be translated with the noun "man." Translators who take into account the feminist claims pointing to the semantic narrowing of "man" in modern English suggest other equivalents, such as *human being/s*, *mortal*, *humankind* or employ solutions which omit the noun. In the case of the expression *huios tou anthropōu*, however, tradition and theological matters have priority, hence the translators choose *Son of Man*, which clearly distinguishes their solution from the feminist versions.

Translating the term *anthropos* so as to avoid the word "man" is an example of adaptation to the requirements of modern English. The inclusive character of INIV is more apparent in instances where the translators use words free of any gender marking, translating for example the noun *aner* (man) by means of neutral pronouns *those* or *they* (Jk 1:12 ff), or rendering *adelphos*/*adelphoi* (brother/brothers) as *brothers and sisters*.

The above examples, particularly "man," clearly show that the feminist principles of gender neutrality cannot be mechanically applied in all languages. What happens in English does not necessarily take place in Polish. As the Polish language has the noun *człowiek* (a human being) directly cor-

responding to the Greek *anthropos*, this term does not pose any challenge for Polish translators of the Holy Scripture. This does not mean, however, that Polish translators are not aware of the linguistic exclusion of women in the existing translations of the Bible. They are, but they do not declare their awareness openly – a topic that should be addressed by sociology, not linguistics. The evidence can be provided by the latest translation of the Bible into Polish, known as Biblia Paulińska (The Pauline Bible, 2008), where, contrary to the original, the translators render *aner* as *człowiek* (a human; Jam 1:12, passim). In the key verse of the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal 4: 6–7), in turn, the Pauline Bible tells us that we are *dzieci* (children) of God, not His *synowie* (sons), as in the Millennium Bible, although the original states *huioi* (sons), not *tekna* (children). It follows that Polish translation of the Catholic Bible is not blind to the claims of inclusive language stemming from feminism, although they are ushered through the back door. Let us not forget, however, that in the instruction *Liturgiam authenticam*, the Catholic Church officially banned the use of inclusive language in the translations of liturgical texts (Majewski 2005: 189–213).

## Conclusion

For Bible translators, feminist thought became a basis for reflection and a challenge. The feminist Bible hermeneutics offered a new perspective on the Scripture; it also inspired the creation of new, feminist translations. These translations feature the characteristics identified by von Flotow in her analysis of the feminist translation, for example text supplementation or the addition of comments and footnotes (1991: 74–77). At the same time, feminist translation of the Bible reflects and reinforces a new, different understanding of the Bible in the community of faith and a new approach to the principles of its translation. Whereas for centuries the content of the Holy Scripture constituted a *norma Normans*, the ultimate authority to which the translator should be subservient, in feminist translation the centre of gravity is shifted from the text onto the readers' expectations, since norms have been exposed as non-transparent and serving the patriarchal world order. The influence of feminist thought on Bible studies is in turn supported by the fact that the use of inclusive language, one of the major feminist tenets, has been accepted by a considerable majority of Bible translators. Let us hope that both inclusive and feminist translations of

the Bible will be created also in languages other than English and German, for example in Portuguese, Spanish, Italian or Polish.

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