

Dissertation Abstract

Nationalism and Mystery:

The Visions of Masculinities in Prose of Roman Dmowski

The subject of my dissertation is the analysis of male socio-cultural constructs in the prose of Roman Dmowski. In this dissertation, I analyze Dmowski's short stories and interwar novels. The concepts presented in Dmowski's prose works are in contrast to the official interpretation of the ND ideology contained in his political writings.

At the beginning of the first part of the dissertation, I present the customs in which Dmowski's novels were written. Citing numerous events that took place in a short space of time in the areas inhabited by Polish communities, I refer to the first decades of the 20th century as the "sexual revolution" and clarify the scope of its impact on individual social backgrounds of the Second Republic of Poland. In the next chapter, I describe the perception of eroticism and friendship at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, with particular emphasis on this issue in nationalist circles. The perception of these categories in Poland contrasts with the status of analogous issues in neighboring countries (primarily abroad). (These issues constitute an extremely important point of reference for the proper reading of the motives related to sexuality present in the work of Dmowski, who, on the one hand, as a conservative, followed the changes in customs in Poland, and on the other - as a traveler and polyglot, he was aware of the changes that had already taken place in the West). To explain the above phenomena, I use the category of homosocial. The next chapter discusses the "forms of masculinity" – dominant in the culture of the second half of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century – which Dmowski encountered throughout his life, and which he transferred to the characterization of the heroes of his novels. The main concepts used in these considerations are "modern masculinity" and "economic man". The next chapter concerns nationalism, and above all - the interpretation of this idea in the fundamental texts by Dmowski.

The second part of the dissertation concerns mainly genealogical issues and Dmowski's literary self-awareness. In this segment, I present such issues as the perception of the mission of a writer, artistry and writing for the motherland in Dmowski's journalism and the use of these

visions in writing practice. I also try to describe Dmowski's novel genologically, using such concepts as: nationalist mystery novel, political novel, Polish nationalist novel of the interwar period. This part also includes a detailed analysis of Dmowski's first short prose works published in the 1890s. I close this part with a presentation of issues related to literary self-creation, the circumstances of the publication of the novel, and the mystification of Dmowski's literature.

In the last part of the dissertation, I analyze the key themes of Dmowski's novel – *W połowie drogi* and *Dziedzictwo* - concerning the constructs of masculinity he designs, usually in the context of his literary works. At the beginning, I present the specificity of the world presented in both works, also relating it to the nationalist vision of the political realities of the Second Polish Republic. Then I analyze the characteristic system of relations of the leading characters, using the formula of the “national triangle”. In the next two chapters, I deal with the novel's anti-Semitic themes and how they affect the characters' forms of masculinity. Then I focus on showing masculinity in the climactic (and in particular - culminating for the ideological layer of the works) scenes of *W połowie drogi* and *Dziedzictwo*. Then I describe the novel's critical moment for the male community, taking into account the key intertextual elements. Then I analyze the issue of the functioning of the “secret” in the analyzed works. In the next chapter, I discuss the role of women in the “male” world presented in both works. I end the third part with a concise Ending and an additional chapter on Dmowski's work (above all - the concepts analyzed in this dissertation) after his death. The theories that I use in my dissertation come from the writings of Hans Blüher, Maria Janion, Pierre Bourdieu, Klaus Theweleit and Slavoj Žižek. It is also worth emphasizing that the important issue of the last part is the contrasting of the relevant concepts of the National Democratic ideology and specific theses functioning in the state of research (concerning the overall work of Dmowski) with Dmowski's literary practice, and through the practice of close reading, analysis and interpretation of fictionalized prose works published by him.

The aim of my dissertation is therefore to examine the masculinity of Dmowski's prose works in the light of gender theories and categories oscillating around masculinity studies. This work, therefore, seeks to track, select, and then - study the gaps, concealments or cracks in the sphere of sexuality, socio-cultural gender and other dimensions of identity that Dmowski exposes in his novels. From a series of analyzes focusing on selected, critical aspects, scenes or motifs of Dmowski's works, the image of the world he imagines emerges - a vision of the

nation, identity, sexuality, and social relations between people of the same sex as well as different ones.

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