Since the second half of the 20th century, and mainly influenced by the development of feminist theories, the issue of sex/gender diversity has become the topic of broader interest. Available publications on this subject however, are mostly limited to the one field represented by the researcher, whether it is biology/medicine, psychology/psychoanalysis or sociology/anthropology. The work of Renata Zieminska is unique in this respect – it includes combined disciplines approach to the subject.

The author in very clear, orderly, though not simplifying way, presents and explains complicated issues related to sex/gender diversity. In her book she refers to the latest medical, biological, psychological, legal and the other works. Apart from the references to published researches results, she also uses her own research, conducted at the University of

1 In the English language, due to the double meaning of the term "sex", the term "gender" became commonly used instead, while the term "sex" is reserved for the strictly biological/medical issues. In Polish the problem doesn’t occur, and the choice of the terms depends on the author of the text. In this review, because of Zieminska complex understanding of the subject of her book, I use combined term: “sex/gender”

Leads, and the University of Chicago, during the years 2015–2017. Particularly valuable and interesting is her proposition of a new conceptualization and categorization of the sex/gender phenomenon.

The main intention of the author of the work is to scientifically demonstrate the inadequacy of stereotypical binary sex/gender division, which despite the undeniable findings, still dominates in the social consciousness. The most vivid evidence to deny the prevailing opinions is the existence of relatively large group of people who do not fall within the division. Their status, history and experience are still treated as marginal, "unnatural" and in need of psychological intervention or radical medical correction. Scientific analyses regarding those issues however, are published in strictly professional journals, intended for a group of specialists, and do not reach a wider audience. In the consequence, lack of adequate knowledge leads to the perpetuation of dangerous, because hurtful, opinions and reactions.

The book has been divided into five chapters. In the first chapter Zieminska presents seven basic layers of sex/gender differentiations, including five regarding biological
Zieminska introduces, initiated by Miranda
injustice of witnessing
(i.e. still as a mental disorder), although APA has
Book review: “Non-binary and multilayered concept of sex”
When presenting the practices of treating
sociological research) a concept of “
reproductive roles, sexual orientations, as well
Fricker. A useful research tool as well as con-
or hybrid nature of the human brain, she does
the incompatibility between their sex/gender
the non-binary category includes people from
characteristics and two psychological.
Reproductive roles, sexual orientations, as well
as linguistic issues, as not necessary conditions
for sex/gender, though closely related, the
author describes as secondary layers. And be-
because of the already detailed and demonstrat-
ed in scientific researches findings of mosaic,
or hybrid nature of the human brain, she does
don't include this indicator (sex of the brain) in
her list of layers of sex/gender differences.

The second chapter discusses the issues of
intersex people. In the medical language until
recently such people were called DSD (disor-
ders of sex development), however, according
to the author, in response to numeric protests
coming from the directly interested persons,
in 2017 the American Academy of Pediatrics
issued a statement in which the term “differ-
ences” was used in the place of “disorders”.
When presenting the practices of treating
people with unusual sexual characteristics
Zieminska introduces, initiated by Miranda
Fricker. A useful research tool as well as con-
ceptual framework (mainly for feminist and
research) a concept of “epistemic injury”. According to the Fricker, this phenom-
emon affects many people due to the multiple
racial, gender and age differences, be it in the
form of undermining the credibility of their
words because of prejudices of the listeners
(“injustice of witnessing”), or by ignoring informa-
tion about their life and experience (“hermeneu-
tic injustice”) depriving those people in this way
of their rightful place in culture.

The third chapter has been devoted to the
transsexual persons, that is those who feel
the incompatibility between their sex/gender
identity and the sex/gender assigned to them
at birth. This condition in medical terminology
is referred to as GID, gender identity disorders,
(i.e. still as a mental disorder), although APA has
already deleted GID from the list of disorders
and in DMSN-5 in its place a less stigmatizing
term has been adopted: GD (gender dysphoria).

The particularly vital, thought debatable
due to its irreversible consequences, is the surgi-
cal correction of sex (reassignment). Such treat-
ments, which are mainly a consequence of
adopter stereotypical sexual/gender division,
have currently strong supporters as well as
strong opponents. Presented by Zieminska the
history of sex correction practices in infants
and young children gives us a deeper insight
into the problematic nature of such interven-
tions undertaken in different countries, both at
the explicit request of the child’s parents and
only on the basis of doctors’ assessment.

The fourth chapter discusses sex exams of
women in sport, and the history of segrega-
tion of players in this respect. New technolo-
gies and methods of testing did not provide the
expected unquestionable criteria for es-
tablishing the boundaries between the sexes,
which should also contribute to undermining
the common beliefs in its dichotomy.

In the last chapter prof. Zieminska proposes
her own conceptualization of sex/gender,
which is somehow the realization of Sureja
Monro postulate (2005), and complimentary
to her theory replacing dichotomous division,
by theory of plurality of sex/gender identity.
The author of the reviewed book agrees with
Monro (and with Judith Butler, among others)
that despite of some voices supporting the
“world without gender” model, we still need
the categorization in this sphere, even if for
strategic (political) purposes only.

The poststructuralist feminist/gender theory
of the end of 20th century has created an in-
novative critical position against the tradition
of treating a human being as a natural and
unchangeable being an approach introducing the
model of socially constructed subject (ul-
timately rejecting essentialism and biological
determinism). Focusing on the cultural aspects
however, it ignored the adoption of more
nuanced considerations taking into account
more complex solutions. First of all, it didn’t
pay much attention to the materiality of the
body”, and consequently, didn’t construct any
sex/gender categorization (a sit opposed to
the idea). In spite of the effort made, it did not
lead to changes in general public awareness in
this area as effectively as be expected.

Until the beginning of the 21st century the
biological explanations of gender/transgen-
der was among the feminist questionable
and very unpopular. All references to biology/
nature were considered as a return to already
eliminated (with so much of difficulty) con-
servative philosophical tradition. The result
of such a position was however, omitting or
even disregarding the results of researches in
natural sciences as not being of the interests
of those theoreticians. This situation caused
peculiar lack of communication between the
natural and social sciences. On the other hand,
Zieminska devotes a lot of attention to biologi-
cal findings, closer to the proposals of New
Feminist Materialism.

Zieminska notices the need to build a sex/
gender model that would include its diver-
sion on every level, and not only on the level
of representation and discourse, as was the
case with the feminists’ poststructuralists.
She states that she decided to simplify the
concepts of sex/gender identity pluralism
proposed by Monro to three categories: two
binary – male and female, and one non-bina-
ry – understood as a mix of both. Adopting
Monro’s pluralism, she makes an adjustment
to binary division and includes intersexual
individuals of different varieties. As previously
mentioned, each of three categories has been
divided into layers: seven basics, including five
biological and two psychological and social.
The non-binary category includes people from
the spectrum of masculinity and femininity.
Additionally, typical categories of women and
man have been supplemented by two atypical
ones, justifying and documenting the nature of
the sex/gender phenomenon as process,
spectrum or continuum.

The author achieved the intended goal of
her book. By presenting and explaining the
findings of the latest scientific research, she
documented the inadequacy of the dichoto-
mous, simplification of division of sexes,
groundlessly precluding people who don’t
fulfill typical criteria and social norms in the
area of anatomy or psyche.

Knowledge about the factual human condi-
tion presented in such a substantive, impartial
and reliable manner as it is done by Renata
Zieminska, has a considerable chance to spark
positive changes. For that reason, her work
ought to be placed on the list of obligatory
lectures for secondary schools.

Due to the rich and extensive bibliography,
the engaged reader will find also here the
information about the latest researches in
natural and social sciences.

Zieminska’s work is a valuable position
especially for Polish readers who have for the
last years almost exclusively over simplified
and distorted information on this subject used
for government, (and the Church), political
purposes.

In summary, I highly recommend the pre-
sented book.

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