

Zbigniew L. S. (2019). SHE, Intimate Questions. Poland: Wydawnictwo Czarne i Czerwone. 256 pages. ISBN: 9788366219014

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Abstract

Book review of Zbigniew Lew Starowicz (2019). *She, Intimate Questions*, Warsaw, Wydawnictwo Czarne i Czerwone, pp. 256, price approx. 8 USD. Book published in Polish. Discussion on female sexuality and the discursive, and linguistic sexual taboos in Poland. Original Title: ONA, Pytania Intymne.

Keywords

Sexuality, Taboo, Women, Erotic, Society, Culture, Customs, Body Politics, Sociology, Poland.

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Professor Zbigniew Lew - Starowicz is a Polish psychiatrist and psychotherapist, an expert in the field of sexology. He is also a national consultant in this field, a professor of medical sciences.

Since 1994, he has been the National Consultant in the field of sexology. Member of the European Society of Sexual Medicine. In the years 1996–1998, he was the leader of the United Nations sex education program, and in the years 1995–1996, an expert of the Ministry of National Education in the field of sex education. He is the President of the Polish Sexological Society. Author of numerous works in the field of sexology and psychiatry, including popular science.

An interesting popular science book by this author, “*She, Intimate Questions*”, appeared on the horizon of social sciences in 2019. It concerns aspects of the sexuality of Polish women. Professor Lew-Starowicz discusses his research outcomes and speaks on the topics of:

- ✓ Women's excitement and desire,
- ✓ Erotic fantasies,
- ✓ Erogenous places,
- ✓ Describes how the approach of Polish women to sex and their sexuality has changed over the years,
- ✓ How they rate their vagina and how this rating affects their satisfaction with intercourse,
- ✓ Tells you how to reach orgasm and be satisfied with sex,
- ✓ Writes about female masturbation,
- ✓ Mentions the sex of single women - why single women need sex, masturbation, and how the failure to meet their physiological needs affects the health of patients. These problems are largely immersed in the discursive practices of society, which are constantly and gradually changing.

In recent years, we have been dealing with particular changes in social life. Women are becoming more and more liberated, and men are becoming confused and helpless. Their manhood is weakening. Women are open to various ideas, they know what they want, they can take the initiative and propose a relationship. Such an approach was unthinkable several years ago. Men who only care about sex are eager to enter into this type of relationship. The problem arises when casual relationships are to change to more formal. The vision of living with such a woman for many men is controversial.

The period of intense sexual experiences in a woman's life is over. After some time, he looks for stability and a lasting relationship. An extraordinary thing is happening in her consciousness. He forgets or blurs the memories of the period of sexual liberation, defined by Professor Lew-Starowicz as the period of humming. She can act like a virgin to her partner. She forgets her lush sexual past. The professor believes that these behaviors are not fake. Women act as if everything is happening for the first time in their lives. They create a new world in their consciousness. The "liberated me" ceases to exist.

Women began to talk more openly about their sexuality. When asked about masturbation, they no longer feel embarrassed or denied. When asked about the number of sexual partners, they do not understate the number. Greater openness results from the growing social consent to the emancipation of women and the increasingly equal discourse in the field of human sexuality.

According to the cited research by Professor Lew-Starowicz, the number of women with one sexual partner decreased - 31%, and the number of women with 2.3 partners increased. 11% of

women use erotic gadgets. 9% of women watch pornographic films regularly. 24% of women find sex in unusual places enjoyable. Only 7.5% of women find sex irrelevant.

Alkalizing the presented research, the professor notices that over the years, female sexuality has come closer to male sexuality. He takes to account not only the narratives of his patients but also extensive scientific research.

Contraception is still an underestimated problem in Polish consciousness. According to the professor, it is disturbing in the attitude for Polish women. There is still a myth about the effectiveness of intermittent intercourse. Every fifth couple in Poland believes in its effectiveness. Where is it coming from? Insufficient sex education? Discourse. Only 23% of Polish women take hormonal contraception. They are informed that by taking hormonal contraception they will suffer from vaginal dryness, decreased libido, and gain weight. There is a great deal of scope for sex educators in this matter. Access to reliable knowledge is essential.

Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz in his book debunks the discursive myth about the monogamous nature of women. Women, like men, may cheat. The most common reasons for cheating are the monotony of sexual life with a steady partner, curiosity, and the absence of a partner daily.

27% of women believe that situational factors had a little significant impact on the occurrence of betrayal - business trip, integration event. What was surprising to me, cheating women declare that they are satisfied with the emotional bond between her and their regular partner. Despite this bond, romance is not a problem. It was once believed that only a man could live in a triangle. Over the years, it has also turned out to be women. In the office, they often declare, "Doctor, I love their both husband and lover." This is a novelty in the sexual awareness of Polish women. They admit to themselves that betrayal is also about affection. The fact that more and more women can talk about it is associated with social change and breaking the taboo.

In his book, Professor Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz describes the most common types of lovers. He divides women into 4 types, gives them categories, creates a discourse that can accompany the recognition of what type a woman is.

1. Princess type - a woman who draws strength from a man's infatuation or love. Man, he can do a lot for her. He's more in love. Such relationships last a long time. The woman manipulates sex to keep it attached to herself.
2. Amazon type - a woman showing her strength and independence. In sex, it shows that it is not used to support the partner. Amazons consider themselves victims of the opposite sex.
3. The type of Alice in Wonderland - a dreamer, floating in the clouds.
4. Penelope type - available, subordinate, submissive, faithful, waiting.

In the book *She, Intimate Questions*, it is quite important to separate desire from excitement. Both of these states may or may not be compatible. There may be desire but no excitement in the woman. It may also be the other way around. Nevertheless, the awareness of this may be low, due to the absence of social dialogue, the absence of open discourse on this subject in social relations.

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The taboo subject among women is their erotic fantasies. We can speak of a discourse of silence or the lack of open public discourse in this area. "Fantasizing is not a sin, but a bit of a shame." Women are afraid of judging public opinion when their erotic fantasies are revealed. "What people say, what people think." In an office situation - a visit to a sexologist has a sense of security and a guarantee that their secrets will remain in the office. The experience of the sexologist/psychologist also has an impact. They feel that few things can surprise this specialist.

What do women fantasize about and how much they can talk about it openly, to what extent they see social consent to put these fantasies into words.

Why do Polish women not reveal their fantasies to their partners? Perhaps for fear of destroying the idealized image of a woman in the eyes of a man. A woman is considered a subtle, sensitive, monogamous creature. Handing over the fantasy may have later consequences for the relationship. Silence is a kind of discourse here, a discourse of silence.

Another taboo in Polish society is the vagina. Women have an ambivalent attitude towards this part of their body. We rarely see adoring and affectionate statements about the vagina, as is the case with men. When analyzing a woman's development, the vagina has problems. In the early stages of a girl's development, little is said about her. Then the first menstruation and bleeding are associated with pain and discomfort. They experience infections or vaginal discharge. The first intercourse and defloration can be painful. The first experiences with sex are not associated with joy. Pregnancy - numerous tests, vaginal ultrasound. Childbirth - the way out for a newborn baby. Of course, giving birth is a momentous and touching event, but it is also painful. The vagina is equated with trouble. It performs various functions as compared to the member. Therefore, one can have an ambivalent attitude towards it, which is largely rooted in the discursive practices of society, which are slowly changing.

The word matters. How women describe themselves matters. According to the professor, women who talk beautifully about their vagina experience stronger sensations during intercourse. This affects female sexuality. Changes in the perception of the vagina, the author has noticed recently.

Summing up, the topic of female sexuality is extremely important socially, as it influences the shape of partner reactions, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. It affects not only half of society, women themselves, but also men around them. The discourse on women's sexuality is not without significance, it influences how we think about sex.

The sphere of sexuality is treated as a sociological, cultural but also a political issue related to the control of female sexuality, what is allowed and what is not allowed in the opinion of the social opinion that shapes customs and customs, and the moral sphere around women's sexuality. Women internalize patterns of socialization regarding the reproduction of beliefs, inherit them and pass them on to later generations. It is not trivial how our language describes the above issues and what language is used to describe the desired and undesirable behavior. Reliable sexual education and therefore having the linguistic tools to discuss and to reflect, in author's opinion, is important in Polish society, as it will have a positive impact on future generations.