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"I am convinced that men and women are intrinsically so different that nothing we do will obliterate or even reduce the differences. I do not think men have to worry that women will become unsexed or women, that men will. In fact, the freer we become in allowing both sexes to be themselves, the more fundamental and ineradicable differences will show up".

*Jessie Bernard "The Future of Marriage".
New York: World, 1972*

TO BE A WOMAN, TO BE A MAN – INTRODUCTION

Sigmund Freud confessed: "The great question which I have not been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is "What does a woman want?"".

Difficulties in learning the feminine soul that Freud had experienced have been shared by many generations of men now and then. Women face similar problems while trying to understand the men's behaviour. What is the source of all those problems? Are male and female worlds so sharply divided because of some barriers created by fundamental and unavoidable differences in their brains structure? In recent years, studies on biological, psychological and clinical aspects of gender differences have been intensively pursued. The subject of gender differences evokes strong emotions due to its wide social implications. The existence of many not reliable or even false opinions concerning the dissimilarity of the two sexes creates, in our opinion, a great need for a publication based on verified scientific findings that would clarify this issue. This volume of KOSMOS is an attempt to satisfy this need.

The papers published in the present volume of KOSMOS consider the issue of gender

differences from different perspectives. Papers written by S. DULKO, K. KULA and J. D SŁOWIKOWSKA-HILCZER, A. CZARNECKA and A. GRABOWSKA familiarize the reader with biological foundations of human sexuality. The authors discuss not only how the biological and mental sex differentiate but also present the effect of biological factors, especially hormones, on the anatomical and functional organisation of the brain. In papers by Z. LEWSTAROWICZ, S. DULKO, K. KULA and J. SŁOWIKOWSKA-HILCZER the reader can find interesting information on men's and women's sexual life and on the origins of different sexual orientation (homosexuality) and sex identity (transsexuality). Two consecutive papers written by W. CIARKOWSKA and K. RYMARCZYK present the issue of gender differences in cognitive functions and abilities characteristic of the two sexes. A vivid illustration of the described differences is the paper by A. TARNOWSKI, focused on the women's achievements in aviation.

Clinical papers on stroke, alcohol abuse, depression, schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorders by A. CZŁONKOWSKA and KOBAYASHI, A. KASPEROWICZ-DĄBROWIECKA, S. PUŻYŃSKI, A. ARASZKIEWICZ, M. PŁOCKA- LEWAN-

DOWSKA and E. PILACZŃSKA-JODKIEWICZ, create a significant part of this volume of KOSMOS. They have the form of research reports and literature reviews focusing on gender differences in incidence and appearance of those disorders. The list of clinical papers includes also the paper by T. GAŁKOWSKI and E. PISULA which describes the autism disorder.

M. SZAFRAŃSKI discusses the issue of gender differences from the perspective of social psychology. The last paper, written by R. HERZOG, presents the controversial view that the way we do research and the criteria of "being scientific" represent rather male than female way of reasoning and thinking.

We wish to admit that this volume of KOSMOS does not resolve many controversial questions concerning gender differences, but we do believe that the effort made to gain more understanding of these differences may help to overcome barriers between the male and the female worlds.

Many outstanding specialists have participated in preparing this publication. We would like to thank all of them for their share in this work. We hope that readers of KOSMOS will find this issue interesting and stimulating further discussion.

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