

Speculative Realities and the New Normal:
Genderless Society and a Call for a New
Social Order

(by MARIA MARKIEWICZ)

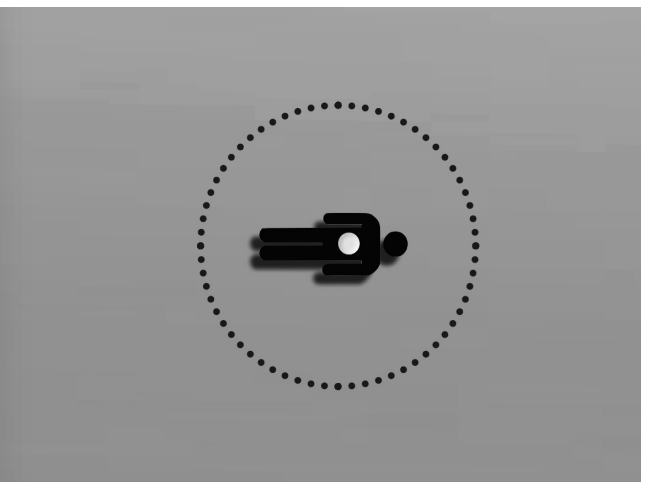


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□ Speculative Realities and the New Normal: Genderless Society and a Call for a New Social Order

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If we are to speculate on the future of our global societies, we can assume that one day they will become genderless. Of course, there will still be gender differences, but gender as a concept in itself, as one of the main factors dividing society, will become completely meaningless. What we can observe now is a fascination with the idea of genderlessness, a fixation over breaking the gender rules, and blurring the lines. This curiosity is fully justified, because we are all guilty of this – we are in charge of our gender and what we decide to do with it. As Judith Butler has already argued, we are all actors in our own theatre, playing a part in the greatest play of all time – gender constitution. Because “gender identity is a performative accomplishment”, that we create, shape, and institute⁽¹⁾. Our gender is not something that makes us who we are. Rather, it is something that we can create ourselves – a sort of an alter ego.

The idea of a genderless society has already been explored by some of the greatest minds of all time, such as Shulamith Firestone and Donna Haraway, but gender and sex distinction here must not be misunderstood. Whereas sex relates to the person’s biological sex, gender refers to personal identification of one’s own gender and will be used as such herein. Firestone, in her landmark *Dialectic of Sex*, argued that the end goal of feminist revolution must be the end of the gender distinction itself, meaning that gender differences would no longer matter culturally⁽²⁾. Haraway, on the other hand, wrote that women, in order to achieve true liberation, have to free from their biological restraints⁽³⁾. This view is shared by postgenderism, a social, political and cultural movement, which states that the erosion of binary gender will be

Liberatory. Is a genderless society possible or is it only a speculation taken from a postgenderist, speculative fiction novel? Can future technologies liberate us from gender constraints?

George Dvorsky and James

Hughes define postgenderism as

“an extrapolation of ways that technology is eroding the biological, psychological and social role of gender”^[4]. They coined the term and popularised it, making what was earlier perceived as science-fiction – simply science. As the world faces drastic changes to its normal functioning and the questions about its future and whether there is a future for us at all are becoming inevitable, I decided to explore our possible futures from a genderist perspective. Because our new normal is nowhere near to the old one and no one knows what the future holds.

When I was starting to write this text, I really wanted to run away from our current problems and the new reality we all have to face, day by day. But it seems impossible to do. When reality became more surreal than the most surreal figment of imagination, we are forced to reflect on certain matters. What is the post-COVID-19 world going to look like?

Is it going to stay the same? Slavoj Žižek for example, who argues that the pandemic is a byproduct of global capitalism, calls for “some kind of reinvented communism”^[5]. We already know that the current system has failed us. So why don't we take this revolution one step further?

Let us speculate on a future where everyone is equal and race and gender differences are no longer important, because they are non-existent.

According to some sociologists, as Peter Singer, an egalitarian theorist, has controversially put it, “there is a biologically rooted tendency towards selfishness and hierarchy in human nature which has defeated attempts at egalitarian social reform”^[6]. If the Left program of social reform is to succeed, Singer argues, we must employ the new genetic and neurological sciences to identify and modify the aspects of human nature that cause

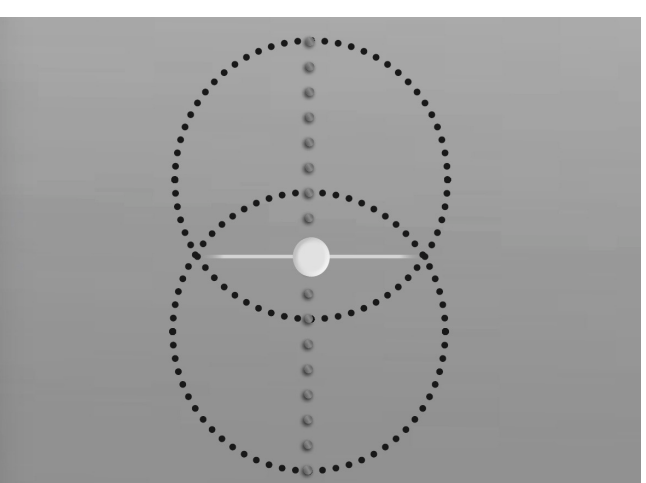


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conflict and competition. One of these aspects is of course gender.

In this new, degendered world, gender would be completely eliminated from the recognition in law. People would fall in love based on their interests, intellects and personalities, and children would not be sexed at birth. Their names and clothing would not be chosen in relevance to their genitalia. Children at schools would no longer be organised by sex, but rather by their talents, skills, and abilities. There would not be so much hatred and violence, which are often used by men to subordinate women. Everyone would be free and equal, and women would not have to bear children anymore – technology would be fully responsible for reproduction.

According to Firestone, the ability of women to give birth determined the gendering power in society. It is the relations of procreation, rather than production – as Marx and Engels would say, that constitute the base of society. Therefore, the primary class division is that between women and men.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us all to rethink the existing world order. It has shown us that capitalism and the economy-first approach did not work. Many have noted its potential and called for a revolution. For Žižek, that revolution means “reinvented communism”, for Berardi “reset” and “reprogramming”^[7]. Either way, we must rethink and redefine our world anew. We must not only abolish capitalism, but also those gender stereotypes and constraints, that are its consequences. “Normality must not return”.

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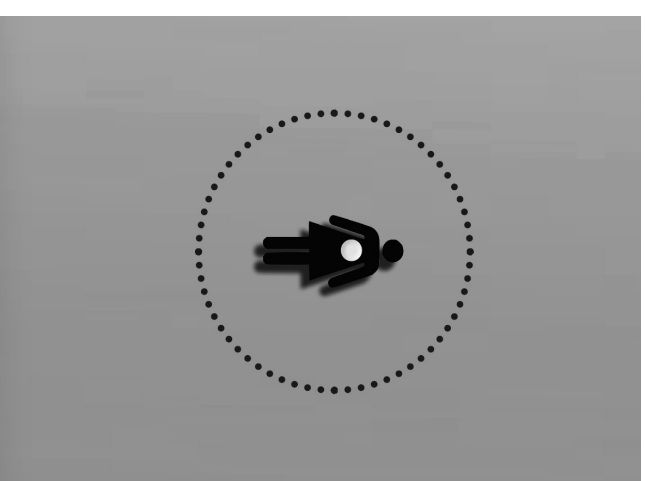


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