

Arthur Guilleminot

Becoming a hamlet fish

The quest of the matching pattern

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Prologue

I have been dressing like a man for conformity. I have been dressing like a woman for eccentricity. I have been trying to dress in-between to define my identity.

I wondered why getting dressed has been so difficult and important to me. This fascination and attraction for different clothing started as a young kid. The more I was defining and building my identity, the more disappointed I was in the choices of garments. Clothing is a way of expression, an intimate choice, a sneak peak of who you are that you share with the public. Article 19 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states :*"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression"*⁽¹⁾, but could it be that I lack the medium of expressing my identity ? I wish to express my opinions through my clothes, but I feel the paucity of available tools to do so. This is maybe the main reason that pushed me to choose this topic. I have questions that stayed unanswered for too long now, and this text is the attempt to have some closure.

Ready-to-wear fashion has been constantly changing and driving the human body towards having more and more possibilities and styles to choose from. I will focus upon the gendered perspective, and we will study the revolution that happened in the 1960's and 70's: the invention of Unisex fashion. Trying to blur or cross the gender lines, the fad got lost till the last decade but still fascinates me. Born with the Generation X in the 60's, it fast became a trend of the Generation Z today. By booming these last years, unisex clothing attempts to help the new bodies, to define their identity, to be able to express their inner self. What were the consequences of the unisex trend of the 60's on nowadays fashion ? Can current trends get inspired by a trend, that 50 years ago disappeared suddenly? Gender identities have shifted towards a full free expression of any kind of personalities. In 2016, the city of New York legally recognised 31 new gender status while in 1960, gender was solely male and female, the sad binary of gender I fight. This obvious fact pushes me to question and investigate the agendered fashion of today and also its connection to new gender theories, that speculate about the future of human with or without gender.

In this text, I want to understand what are the inspirations of today's unisex trend and its aspiration for the fashion of tomorrow. To do so it is important to grasp the reason and the concept behind the revolution of cross-gendering popular clothes in the 1960's. Historically, this will take us to the creation of pants for women, the sexual liberation movements, the standardisation of attires and its stigmatisation, towards a new future of gender, of wardrobes and mean of expression.

We will study unisex fashion and its drive to fill the gap between one's identity and one's apparel. To discuss this trend, one needs of course to 'penetrate' the idea of gender. Initially used to describe the social and cultural expressions of biological sex, it became a far more complex subject. It seems important to explore the modern sense of it and its new theories.

Last but not least, I want to give my own vision of the future. I want to grab the concept of today that will maybe build the society of tomorrow. I guess this travel will take you, and I, through historical facts, contemporary revolutions, new society definitions and speculative designs. Together, we will try to scout the dilemmas that appeared between clothing and the "*Gender Trouble*"⁽²⁾ of this new generation.

Peacock revolution

I am one of those that think clothing as a part of myself: a second synthetic skin on a genetic natural body. Clothing defines several aspects of my individual self, but if we observe the old idea of apparel, we can sum it up in three words, according to the writer Franz Kiener⁽³⁾: protection, decency and finery. Garments were conceived for these reasons only in old times, then, the notion became a cultural meaning and a sign of social condition. It seems the attire to be a simple extension of your body. It is a coverage for several parts of the body (head, bust, hips, legs,...) on a purely anatomic level. Although I found some naivety in believing of such a simple conception of what you wear, I tend to think that clothes are not only for protection or beautify but also to exchange informations, a 'gagged' communication. Pushing the concept of this interaction, we could possibly conclude that clothing is a sort of language, merely visual rather than spoken.

Since a long time, apparels have been also fulfilling a social need: identification of yourself and of others. Freud stated :*" When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is 'male or female'? and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty"*. Clothes are made to help humankind

differentiating biological sexes. It is one of the first historical function of fashion for the society.

I see an obvious connection between clothing and our own expression, as a way of communicating important signals to members of the community. Since I got to choose my own clothes, I developed this connection further, and wish to question in which contexts is this idea true. Forged by the years, the clothing history went through a lot of restrictions to fulfil the expectations of a rigid and normative society. Apparels were linked to the work you were entitled to, said the old customs. From the lustrous garments of the Kings of Renaissance to the fine dresses of Victorian era, the clothes over your shoulders were vitrines of your life to the **society**. At the dawn of the industrial era and the soon to come world wars, the women clothing was to change drastically for the most simple reason: Women's position within the society was shifting, from domesticity to industry.

It is interesting to question why 'dress'¹ had to ever be gendered. Several scholars seem to disagree with the connection between apparels and biological sex, and as Jo Paoletti⁽⁴⁾ mentioned : *"Until we are locked in one room and forced to arrive at a unified theory of gender expression, there won't be a definitive answer to why clothing styles persists in being gendered as male or female, even in the face of economic, social, and political equality."*

In past centuries, outfits came from being a simple border between our body and the external world to be a tool of stigmatisation,

1 Dress as clothing, apparel, garb

a visual belonging to a society or a cage restraining minorities to their dues towards the community. The relation between clothing, individual and daily activities started to be relevant at the advent of the industrial era. Fashion needed to get practical, and saw its first flashpoint bursting into the world in the 1920's, when individuals revolted to the socially called "correct" dress code. Women, pushed by the newly capitalism and consumerism activities, were in need of more practical clothing, closer to the menswear of the time. Female trousers became a revolution. History saw the first gender related fashion **crisis**. There started a chain reaction in the history of apparel. The injection of female pants into popular culture **started**. Shortly after, the WWII obliged women to adopt pants by necessity, firstly because of the rationing of apparels and secondly because women had to work in the industry during this time. Once peace was achieved, the men were back at home, feeding the gender stereotyping in the 1950's and jerking some feminine rebel minds.

It all started in the 1960's, time for the post-war consequences to hit the face of the world and reshape a new born society. Three forces began to interact during this period of time: Post-war baby boom injected millions of teenagers to the consumer marketplace; the sexual revolution emerged mainly from the uncoupling of sex and procreation, an important point for female liberty and the right to contraceptives. This shift was helped by scholars writing about their dream of sexual freedom; last but not least, a huge civil rights movement focused on individual rights, and through the decades emancipated african americans, freeing the youth and women of all race and later on the LG community.

I want to focus now on these years. The erection of the LG rights is deeply related to my work, and these connections push me to understand how, at the time, the unisex fashion appeared and propagated on the clothing industry.

The root of unisex fashion goes back to 1790, with the birth of the dandy movement. At this time, gender stereotyping pushed male to wear chic clothes but yet simple to match their activities. The rigid dress code of the society urged these men to imitate aristocratic ways of dressing to elevate their **social status**. Throughout the years, dandyism was redefined and readjusted, until it fell in the eyes of the society as a possible sign of deviances (especially with the frivolous style of Oscar Wilde). Dandyism died, stained by suspicions of homosexuality but also, because fast, it was taken over by women in the 30's.

As referred, the gender crisis appeared in the 1950's, where gender was to describe the social and cultural expression of biological sex. Ten years later, society was divided between thinking the gender genetical or nurtured. Is gender rooted in the DNA of every human or is gender nurtured, a learned pattern of behaviours socially constructed?

The crisis raised when popular believes generalised the idea of cultural mismatch of gender. Is gender role predefined by the biological sex ? Scholars studied and discussed the subject, thinking a new approach to gender, theoretically. Fashion, reacting to this question, was pushed to create an alternative to the gender binaries in everyday life, practically. This reaction appeared, to me, to be the creation of unisex trend in the fashion world.

In the 60's, the unisex movement grown from a new style, the "Space age". The characteristics of these apparels were sleek, simple silhouette, graphic patterns and new synthetic fabrics with no relation to gender at all. Take the work of Rudi Gernreich, a visionary master of unisex fashion for example. As reaction against the prudish nazi edicts against nudity, he thought naked bodies (female or male alike) to be beautiful. From this concept, he invented clothing such as the **no-bra bra** to emancipate women's bodies. He also wanted to make the male figure a "**sexual object**". These two creations showcase two segments of the gender revolution at the **end of the 60's**. One is focused on the liberation of the "natural" bodies. The second, completely opposed to the first, a futuristic vision of an egalitarian world, minimising and trying to erase sex differences with fabric and silhouette that covers the curves and even facial features. He created, later on, collections of dresses, **caftans** or skirts for men. Unisex was at this point a trend split in several segments on the market.

In the 1960's, by definition, unisex refers to any style that purposely blur or cross gender lines. Later on, the trend peaked and affected clothing for men, women, but for the first time also boys and girls. I love that unisex fashion included different fads and ways of challenging the gender rules: Some of the styles were best described as "androgynous", combining elements of masculine and feminine styling; the second approach, is the "gender neutral" style, devoid of any masculine or feminine elements. The last approach of the style is "cross-dressing", on

which both sexes wouldn't be equal to the **eye of the law**. I find the segment of cross-dressing in unisex fad, not the most creative for the clothing industry but rather useful in the case of the liberation movements. We still contemplate these cases of people fighting for the right to dress the way they want and its rigid opposition from some governments or normative societies.

At this point, we understood how the unisex trend was born and its beginning. I want to now dive into the gender revolution and the liberation of sexuality. These two historical facts seem to be relevant to grasp how this trend shifted hereafter.

Sex, sex, sex

Unisex fashion during the 60's and 70's is culturally fascinating. The movement came from two shifts of the role and place of women and men in the society. Happening on two different segments of the fashion industry, the male and female trends both pushed clothing towards a unique same direction: apparels that blur the sexes and the genders - unisex. From nowadays perspective, I found it fetishistic that a unisex, agendered new vision actually came from two separated sexes' crisis.

During this decade, women's desire for equal political and social status combined to a sexualization of their being, pushed the clothing industry to shift towards a sexual and androgynous - or unisex- apparel playing with the roles of men and women. The unisex trend relates always closely to femininity, feminism and **sexual liberation**. Females are in need of a new source of self-actualisation and feeling of fulfilment. The domestic boredom and the eagerness of more, pushed women to become openly fascinated by sex, literally aroused. Sex is in the books, sex is in

the films, sexuality was a new horizon for the female population, especially after the fear of pregnancy was dissociated from procreation.

As I explained previously, men's exclusive right to trousers was challenged by the first wave feminism and put an end to the **previous centuries' restrictive laws**. It became such a popular item, that trousers became no longer masculine, but neutral. At the end of the decade of the 70's, fashion trends pushed trousers to be more sexy and feminine, a new ode to the female body. One of the most obvious first agender popular item, which served as a foundation to the unisex trend, was the **jeans**.

I will conclude that the creation of unisex fashion followed this pattern: women would appropriate menswear, feminise them before the apparel would no longer be considered masculine. The consequences of this phenomenon were a huge sexualization of clothing and a freedom from the old rules of normative female dress-codes.

Just as we saw, unisex clothing for women balanced between being sexy and liberal. The male unisex clothing tried to balance between expressiveness and effeminacy. In the 30's, menswear could be summed up to one item: a **blend grey suit**. Initiated for leisure use, it became the fashion symbol of bureaucracy and capitalistic society. Seeing the clothes of women shifting towards something modern, innovative and interesting, menswear started to crave for novelty. Oppressed by the omnipresence of the suit, innovation started on ties pattern and generalised to the all outfit. Colours, patterns, graphic compositions brought a

new life to the workplace. Men's mentality and attitude towards clothing started to change. Modelled on women's new identity in society, men, at the end of the 70's, would dress accordingly to their personality and more options were available for them to do so. Throughout this decade, men simply got sexier. The jeans and other pants were worn tight on the hips, exhibiting the curves of the male body and shirts were worn front open, often accessorised with a golden chain. From this sexualization, came the unisex trend for men, yet more controlled than the women's one. Most of the unisex apparels for gentleman were purely the same piece of clothing that could be worn by both sexes. The genderless 'dress' were exhibited mostly in magazines with both male and female models, side by side, holding hands or looking like a couple. Yes, men were to be sexier, more attractive, but it was highly underscored : attractive to women, sexy in the heteronormative way.

This point connects to me personally, and connects to the next chapter of this text - the moment you grasp that unisex clothing was trying to blur gender and sexual lines in a very normative society. Even though the 60's and 70's were all about liberation of sexes, fashion innovation, and entirely turned to the future, the context was nonetheless outdated, restrictive and standardised. Often, men's fashion revolution is restrained for the ambiguous message it can bring. As it was for the dandy movement, unisex trend became dangerous for some men as well. The role of a male kept on being the one of the 50's -if a male was to be alone after 30 he would be, or judged immature to not seek relationship, or homosexual and dubious behaviours were to be repressed.

Men got inspired by the consequences of the feminist revolution and benefitted from it. The sexual revolution for women pushed for more diverse sexualities. Bisexuality became "*in*" for a moment and anal sex, cunnilingus and fellatio, highly related to homosexuality, became popular in the **straight community**. The new openness of the society made it easier for people who saw themselves as sexually liberated to adopt unisex, androgynous or ambiguous fashions.

It has been almost sixty years since the confluence of youth culture, sexual revolution and civil rights activism set the culture war in motion. I want to know which new unisex/ agender trend flourishes nowadays. Is it the echo of the previous sexual revolution? Is it the sign of a current one? Why and how is this trend spreading on the popular clothing market? Is this fashion reflective of the evolution of views about gender in our society?

He, She, Ze

Nowadays, fashion evolves and changes every season. These last years, dismantling gender norms in fashion has been quite trendy. Initially worked by underground or young designers, it fast became an icon of the Generation Z². The popular clothes market, inspired by the famous runway shows, now works to usher the gender equality. This subject has been a central change in the society of this last decade and it appears once again that fashion and gender revolution answer fast social changes. Yet, questions stay unanswered and, for us (the misfit), more than just clothing is on the line. I can easily feel the struggle of the ill-fitted individuals and I want to investigate: Where does gender nonconforming people fit in the illusion of a progressive post gender fashion world, when many of them experience violence and harassment. It seems clear that the society we are in does not make the unisex trend fulfil the hopes of this new generation.

2 Generation Z (also known as Post-Millennials, the iGeneration, Founders, Plurals, or the Homeland Generation) is the demographic cohort after the Millennials.

As much as it failed in the 70's, this second attempt shows us that genderless fashion is in the future. It can only flourish in a society without old prejudices or norms and where gender and its related mode of dressing would be obsolete.

As it happened in the 60's with the first unisex trend, the current one is linked to a generation, promoting the dissolution of the gender binary in the society. A current study made by J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group⁽⁹⁾, surveyed 500 individuals about their **vision of gender**. The study of the crisis within this generation shows us that once again Unisex/Agender fashion was awakened by a current crisis in the gender normalisation of the society. Nowadays, the fashion world pressure and promote visibility of the new gender identities. The new generation assume to lead a fight against the gender norms of the previous standardised society. As we know, the 60's unisex trend was extolling liberation of sexes and gender, as consequences of a normalised vision of society. Is History just repeating once again ?

This last year, our society has seen major changes in the gender equality, acceptance of new identities and same rights of minorities. All of this components show a big development of the community. If we should embrace different identities, why does society pushes for sameness and homogeneity (offering the same rights than the heteronormative model)?

In my mind, we should fight oppressive apparatuses and systems instead of conforming to the "*normal*". Fashion defends the same ideas but the solutions appear to fall short compared to the gender non-conforming hopes. The couture and runway

shows skirts for men and exuberant genderless garments, but the major retail brands show agenda collections made of white t-shirts, oversized denim, simply clothes that couples or friends could swap. Agendered fashion is doomed to be based on great vision of a new society but its execution and the choices available to the masses are poor. In our western consumerist society, we tend to go to the shopping places to literally materialise our lives. Clothing and accessory manufacturers can not provide every variation of one piece, they restrict themselves to what statistically they will best profit from. If you feel comfortable or not, depends only on how well do you fit the customer model, imagined by the manufacturer. Advertising and branding are supposed to help us identifying ourselves within the imaginary customer vision, to my mind. From this, two possibilities are offered you as individual part of the society. If you do not feel any friction between your desires and the ideal lifestyles depicted in popular media, you are likely to be satisfied with the clothing options available on the market. If you do not see yourself in the magazine or the common fantasy they promote, like me, you might be more inclined to understand where our society seems to disfunction.

The Ungendered³ collection of Zara showcases only basic apparel models that do not show any gender specification. The advertisement of the collection shows always a men and a women wearing the exact same clothes. The Ungendered simply means that two different biological sexes can wear these apparels, but it does promote the normative vision of society. Some brands have

3 Released in March 2016

made huge mistakes thinking the agender trend as a marketing tool, and the gap between their target audience and the clothes they produce is bigger than ever. GUESS was highly criticised for their collection *HIS+HERS*, a line named after the gender binary the garments are supposed to detach themselves from. For some brands, unisex garments just meant it could be sold to twice as many people. In the capitalistic marketplace, money seems to be the only reason for manufacturers to do new apparels. They sell their garments promoting the new possibilities of this new niche in theory, but practically fail the expectations of a whole generation. Someone outside of the gender binary needs, on a day to day basis, to navigate with their body in a phobic public sphere that denies the social rights recently educated by higher instances. In 2015, USA showed the highest rate of murder of female transexuals ever seen. To that, the fashion industry is selling the dissolution of gender as a future fantasy, a blueprint of a post-gender civilisation, in a society that is still very violent about this subject. After analysis, it seems clear that unisex fashion of nowadays do not understand the struggle we are experiencing. The gender non conforming community is just another wallet for the ready-to-wear market.

Since the cradle of civilisation, the gender binary have shaped the human condition, causing us to see the world through basic binary categories from metaphysics to our own language. Previous century's societies thought of gender as a binary possibility, male or female. These last years, legal recognition of several other genders show us that language is updating to

the new reality. The dictionary evolved to welcome more than a hundred new definitions of non binary genders. Are you a pansexual, or a cisgender, maybe gender-fluid too, why not be neutrois, maybe agender? All this new vocabulary is helping the new generation defining their gender identities far from the simple normative old fashioned manner. This is the perfect example of the switch that is happening in society and the need for changes within the root of our civilisation. Language is the base of human communication and its changes show a derivation of our mores. Reflecting on the situation of transsexuality, we can not describe the subject in transformation as a "woman" or a "man", but we must approach the idea through active verbs that actually present the constant transformation. The in-betweenness questions can not be described only from the binary point of view. Along this idea, new pronouns appeared in our lexicon. Inspired by the **Swedish language**, english grammar welcomed ze and hir. Ze is pronounced /zi:/, also spelled zie or xe, and replace he/she/they. Hir is pronounced /hiə(j)/ and replaces her/hers/him/his/them/theirs.

I notice that our society tries to embrace these new personas. Are non gender conforming individuals having less difficulties in identifying and legally taking part in our community? Efforts are made (wrongly justified for the mass market agendered fashion) but the main question remains: Is today's society ready for the post gender next step ? The Unisex trend failed in the 60's due to a wrong context, today, the agendered fashion is failing because of wrong reasons. High institutions are theoretically opening to all the new subjectivities and their rights, their language, and their available tools to help growing their identity

are increasing. All these elements seem to pave a perfect way for the next generation to blossom fully in a society that do not perceive gender as one's personality. On the other hand, all these theoretical innovations have not yet reflected on everyday's life and all the unfitting suffer no longer to identify himself, but for the other to recognise himself as such. The way to a new post gender society is maybe impossible for now, maybe even impossible for a long time to come. Will we always be born male or female? I believe in a different future, where technology and science will show the path for social changes. Maybe as Freud said, human were naturally "polymorphously perverse", until they were conditioned to normative heterosexual genital sex. Maybe it is time to free the perverse identity inside of us.

Gendered brain

Some scientific researches have suggested that gender identity is written in our genes. According to it, the gendering of the brain in-utero often have influences upon our gender identities, our behaviours and sexual preferences. Yet, scientists agreed that these characteristics change according to the environment and the socialisation of the individual. Our body hormones lead the path to our gender identity, through our brain at birth and later by its development. What if our brain has a gender? What if we were pushed to think as a male or a female? We can't deny that our education is linked to our sex, but can we imagine a scientific method to push the brain to forget about its own gender, and therefore bring every single individual to a common agendered mind.

Neuroscience proved numerous implications of gender on our body and brain. Women are twice likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, or eating and post-stress disorders⁽¹¹⁾. Similarly, men are prone to autism or attention deficit disorders⁽¹²⁾. These specifications are connected to the serotonin regulation for women⁽¹³⁾ and the testosterone level for men⁽¹⁴⁾.

Today, science thinks we can make the brain **androgynous**. Psychopharmacology will give us higher control over the gendered emotions, cognition and behaviour. From the treatments of sexual paraphilia and dysfunctions, new neurochemicals have been identified to stimulate **erotic desire, infatuation and trust**⁽¹⁶⁾. This new understanding of the brain opens the doors to a brand new field. We can imagine a future where medications come with relationship. A future where sexual boredom or flagging attraction would be treated by neurochemical supplement. We could shape the brain to be only stimulated by the opposite sex, or by the same sex, or even to one and only specific person. The possibilities of this technology are raising ethical questions. We stand nowadays on this very slippery slope, that could lead to the chemical control of human brain. If we can change the idea of gender in our own brain, it seems possible to change it in our society.

In nowadays society, gender is still a label, attached to our body, at the time of our birth and for the rest of your life. Post gender theories do not ask for the suppression of gender but they rather raise the idea of being able to choose it. Bodies and personalities should, in the future, not be constrained and circumscribed by gender traits but should embrace the palette of diverse self-expressions. I believe in a future, where labelling people at birth as "male" or "female" will be considered just as unfair as stamping "black" or "white" on people's ID card. Not seeing the gender as simply binary started in the 1970's with the constructivist feminist movement. Sandra Bem was the first to propose a scientific study (BSRI: Bem Sex Role Inventory⁽¹⁷⁾) and concluded that gender

is a continuum rather than a binary choice. From this research, ze ends by stating that androgynous individuals are the most mentally fitted and present more self esteem, psychological well-being and **emotional intelligence**. Androgyny and other identities started to be recognised through the years and some visionaries are pushing the innovation further. Martine Rothblatt is the first transgendered attorney and legal theorist in the USA. In 1995, ze argued in *The Apartheid of Sex: Manifesto on the Freedom of Gender*¹⁸⁾, the complete **elimination of gender** in laws. As we saw about neuroscience, the legal path towards the elimination of gender in our society seems closer and closer. These last years, we have been witnessing a wind of revolutions. The spread of legal gay marriage in Europe, and its slower implementation in the USA, has accelerated the recognition of legal marriage as an **arbitrary contract**, rather than a religious, heterosexual, binary institution. This is the beginning of a chain reaction, that mainly shook the world coming from very open and **liberal countries**.

As we saw, fashion, language, science, social and legal changes are currently happening and they all push our society in a new direction where gender is less important that it used to be. Less important doesn't mean irrelevant and I aspire to imagine a future without gender, where all of the previously quoted fields, do not make gender insignificant, but simply erase it from our minds, bodies and communities. To really grasp the full concept of the post gender society, I will conclude by analysing what happened yesterday, what is happening today and what will happen tomorrow.

Since the Enlightenment movement, humanism pushed human potential always further and, little by little, rigid gender binary seemed to enter in conflict with positive evolution. In the last two hundred years, I see that our western society slowly tried to demolish the heritage of patriarchal power, culture and way of thinking. Since the 60's, post-industrial production, contraception and abortion have totally broke the gender roles and hierarchy from the previous societies. We started to understand that transcending gender can only be achieved, by social and political means, if only completed by technological means. Nowadays post-genderists conceive gender the same way humanists would: an arbitrary limitation of human potential. Are we, at the beginning of the second millennium, slowly perverting our views of on gender ? If yes, what would it be in the third millennium ? Technology plays a complex role in our society and the consequences on our sexuality starts to appear more and more. The virtualisation of sex has been fast these last years and the use of porn, phone sex, video-interactive sex, sex in virtual worlds, teledildonics, use of tactile equipment used from afar, started shaping a **new age of sexuality**, gender, and minds.

The future will transcend essentialism and social constructivism by giving freedom of gender, only possible through social reforms and biotechnologies. Although anthropological studies showed variation of gender in some communities and the existence of **third genders**, it has still never recorded a gender free society. It seems obvious that all the efforts to create a genderless society have been constrained by the limits of biological gender. I like to think that, with biotechnologies, neurotechnologies and

information technologies, we can achieve the idea of freeing human from patriarchy and the constraints of binary gender. I wish to put an end to static biological and sexual self-identification. I wish for everyone to choose for themselves their own psychological and biological identity.

After reflecting on how the gender revolution influenced the fashion and how the post genders are pushing our society towards a bright new future, I now want to imagine this future, you and I. Are you ready to transcend your gendered brain ? Are you ready to get rid of your normative sexuality ? To experienced new ones ? If we are going to change our bodies, what would we be wearing? Which identities would we relate with? Would my (expected) death of gender transform our world in a better place? or worse ?

Welcome to hir brand new world

The extrapolation of our society lies in nowadays's science. These last years, science have pushed the biomimic to new horizons. Indeed, nature is leading the way and showing the meaning for our technology to evolve and be responsible towards the environment. Through bio-design, bio-textiles, biotechnology, humans take the organic world as reference to evolve towards a new and healthier civilisation. Mostly focused on technologies, the trend seems to now touch various fields. Anthropologists, psychoanalysts and other scholars start thinking new human behaviours inspired from models present in the wildlife. In order to save our society from the rise of individualism, extremism and nationalism, visionaries come together around the idea of erecting a new civilisation, similar to some symbiosis of organisms.

Martine Rothblatt, Phd in medical ethics and founder of biotechnology company, *United Therapeutics*, is researching the field of xenotransplantation⁴. Ze presents a new idea of human

4 xenotransplantation is the transplantation of living cells, tissues or organs from one species to another.

sexuality and its species' gendering. Ze focused his researches around a few specific wildlife social and sexual patterns. Soon, we will be able to transpose the sexuality of organism, such as the slipper shell to human body. This would induce that every human will, at birth, present a female sexuality and metabolism. Then throughout the life, the metabolism and genitals will undergo transformations towards presenting male sexuality and genitals in later ages.

If humanity's sexual and reproductive behaviour would be following that model, we will be facing a total questioning of the notion of gender within our society. By being able, throughout our life, to experience both biological sexes and a **moment of transformation**, gender would not be relevant anymore. The dynamics leading to reproduction would be instinctively depending on your aging and not on your gender per se.

I want to highlight the idea that society may have been built on a tyrannic status-quo framing our sexuality and, rethinking it through the wildlife, should inspire us to break the normative system.

Another possibility for a soon to come sexuality, would be to copy the hamlet's reproductive behaviour. This specie is the only one in the world to be **life hermaphrodite**, meaning that they constantly have male and female functional genitals. This reproductive and sexual system, if applied to human will represent the full deletion of genders and biological sexes in our society. By constantly experiencing both genitals and sexual behaviour, every human would be closer to the idea of being a common entity, far from

binary of gender, part of a whole, Humanity.

I believe in the transcendence of our sexuality and reproductive systems. I believe, by freeing our specie from the heteronormative model, established by the previous conservative societies, we could achieve the vision of a post gender civilisation. Nowadays, the exacerbation of individualism by our capitalistic society is pushing communities to work together to compete with the leading industries. In art, especially in these last years, I have noticed the increase of collaboration and sharing communities to answer the current crisis. To face standardisation, we lead the way towards a collaborative society. By transcending the sexual and reproductive human metabolism, we would free the full potential of every individual and take down the obsolete walls that bring gender binary, normative sexuality and patriarchal hierarchies. Though, I would have to question if this vision would fully fulfil my hopes for this post gender society. I question if mankind would ever be ready to step into this innovation. I believe that transcending our body is possible, if and only if, the human brain is conditioned to receive such transformations.

To built a perfect and utopian post gender society, mankind needs to forget the notion of gender. We can easily conclude that, in order to progress, humanity needs to evolve beyond any idea of gender, destroying any old norms and cliches that we know. To do so, I want to emphasise one concept, quoted before: neurotechnology. This would allow humanity to feel and think as every gender, and therefore embrace all possible identities as one continuum psyche. This would be the first step for mankind to erase the notion of gender from our lives. Humans

could finally change the fatality of what is predicted in its own DNA concerning gender. To finally become a full and unique agendered being, we also need to change our environment. As Paoletti referred in his book⁽⁴⁾: "the potential to alter the future is in the way children learn about gender".

Having a manly gendered brain and being educated in this obsolete society, I hope that the current generation Z will be pushing their successor towards a gender free education, as it is starting in some countries. We need to understand that our current generation, shaped to think gender the way it is, needs to disappear to let the next post gender society blossom.

The utopian post gender society that I envision can only exist if all, you, me, his, can transcend the artificial and destructive barriers between races, sexes, genders, nations and, drifting away, even the mortality barrier that denies human indefinite life extension. By getting rid of genders, we could spend more efforts confronting important subjects such as offering humanity the path to overcome the obstacles to technological immortality, the ultimate digital transcendence of human psyche.

Fashion is dead, long live fashion; Epilogue

If humanity manage to transcend its being gender wise the way I hope, fashion will undergo an incredible change. Indeed, if mankind would forget the notion of gender, clothing as presented today would not be relevant for such a society. What would happen to fashion if we enter the post gender era ?

A century ago, individuals were fighting against the "correct" way of dressing. At the dawn of the 2020's, the fashion world is in a precarious situation in the eye of the public opinion. We can only witness demonstrations from populations to fight, to change our capitalistic society and culture that fail more and more its individuals, on various topics that include fashion and gender. Because culture is an inarticulate and invisible frame of rules and boundaries, it also shows if an individual belongs or differs within the society, and therefore culture determines the rewards for fitting in and the consequences for flouting. I desire a society of individuals, where each feels empowered to achieve their full potential, and for that we would need to create a culture that

recognises human diversity, offers options and respect choices. Is fashion culture that liberal ? Did you ever feel stared at, just because you decided to dress differently ? The dystopian society we live in, has been built on the rise of individualism, connected to the culture that ties human identity to consumption, and fashion sadly mimics this system.

We are at the edge of major changes in fashion. The clothing mass market never failed as much as now, and more and more individuals are opposing themselves to it. The popular opinion about the dominant companies in fashion is incredibly low, especially after the recognising of the fashion industry as the second biggest polluter after oil industries⁽²⁰⁾. Our economical structures are falling and so does the fast fashion industry. From this disappointment in the mass market, a new generation of makers raises. Increasingly, individuals are sharing, learning and helping to create each and everyone's own garment, a true representation of himself.

Upon reflection, the future of fashion lays, in my opinion, on an underground culture able to 'colonise' the industry, beyond the standardisation of the suit. The market of clothing would change drastically, have a deeper connection to DIY. The future outcome would be eccentric as a reaction to the sameness of apparels. The options of clothing would be finally unlimited and will allow everyone to identify and be identified accurately as such.

I see a future where the garments are made of computerised yarn and textiles, a garment that could emit sound waves, light, or could carry medical or defensive equipment. A new apparel that will push the human body to its full potential and yet could be friendly to the environment. Clothes will become unique,

handcrafted, and a personal social element.

I imagine a future where apparels would be supporting the fresh and the perfected modelled human mind; protect and cover the newly hermaphrodite human body and could also enhance our surrounding, our communities and our world.

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