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ZERO-GENDER IN THE AGE OF NETWORKS

The question of the political body today is acquiring new dimensions of inquiry. War, migration processes, movements for equal rights, and technogenic engineering have expanded the field of the political body in public space and opened new forms of this issue. After the pandemic, during wartime, and in an age of hybrid communication, the body has ceased to be private and has become infrastructural: it serves social systems, economic models, and national narratives. In *Logics of Worlds*, Alain Badiou emphasizes that the body is not a biological given but a form of event manifestation (Badiou, 2009). The body absorbs the world, and through it, the event becomes possible. Thus, the political body is not only an object of power, as in Michel Foucault, but also a place of new ontology where collective thought emerges.

Recalling Badiou's "logic of worlds" and his notion of the body as a form of appearance rather than a biological property of a human being, I would like to offer a reflection – as an observer – on an unpopular form of gender with zero value. It requires further elaboration but may represent an intriguing direction for contemporary scholarly research. In this essay, I will focus on three theses.

Thesis 1. Biopolitical Gender

Thanks to Aristotle (Aristotle, 1905), Agamben (Agamben, 1998), Foucault (Foucault, 2019), and Arendt (Arendt, 1998) the human being has been rethought as a political creature controlled by power. The regime of violence itself is gendered, since control is exercised by people who possess sexual characteristics. However, Agamben's *Homo Sacer* and Foucault's psychiatric institutions exclude femininity and masculinity. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault demonstrated that power operates not through prohibition but through production – it *creates* bodies that it then governs (Foucault, 2019). In such a space of control, sexuality gives way to frigidity. Once a human body is subjected to violence, it loses its signs of sexuality and sex.

American scholar Elaine Scarry, who studies literature and human rights, investigates physical pain and its impact on language. Her work *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* links the physiology of pain to politics and the social taboos of suffering (Scarry, 2002). Studying torture as a mechanism that transforms the body into a voice, Scarry writes about power that, through the observer or executioner turns the body into a weapon against itself. The body becomes a resource of power, a means of control; pain "rewires" its external markers of physicality and makes it resemble other bodies.

For instance, during war, tortured and killed men and women become "bodies". Each side participating in the discourse of exchange, burial, or disappearance uses these bodies to justify its role in war. Their statements almost never employ the notions of "female body" or "male body".

Thus, in war, the body moves from the private to the political dimension: it becomes a carrier of testimony. And this testimony is without gender – it is neither male nor female but bodily and nameless. In the war in Ukraine, images of destroyed bodies are often presented without indication of sex or name. In official protocols, the missing appear as "bodies" or "remains". This is an expression of zero-gender, where violence reduces the human to sexless political material.

Evidence of this: treatment protocols for prisoners of war, bans on publishing photos of the dead, and medical forms without names or gender markings.

Thesis 2. The Collective Whole

Collective action presupposes a shared rhythm, which Henri Lefebvre saw as one of the main features of the public sphere (Lefebvre, 2004). For him, the public field is an interaction of bodies, gestures, sounds, and movements. In today's world, this rhythm is set not only by humans: surveillance cameras, algorithms, cars, and even weather conditions become rhythm-producing agents – raising the question of gender anew.

Philippe Descola's concept of the *collective* replaces the idea of "society" and includes within a single organism not only people but also non-humans – animals, plants, objects, and infrastructures (Descola, 2011; 2015). Public space, in this view, is a single body where social, biological, and technical components merge into a shared sensibility.

To this, Nietzsche's idea of "social prostheses" (Nietzsche, 2023) adds a new dimension – technological extensions of the body through which humans become aware of their vulnerability and dependence on objects. These prostheses become inseparable from the human body, forming a hybrid mode of collective life. Who are they? To what gender do they belong? Do they have nationality or social status? And how do they affect the social practices of people themselves? From this perspective, the "we" loses biological or sexual definition and becomes a multiple body, similar to *Leviathan* – a symbol of a unified political organism where the human and non-human act in a shared rhythm.

Modern cities and spaces are multilayered. Transportation systems, online platforms, even urban architecture increasingly function as "hybrid bodies". They transform humans into parts of a technological rhythm – we all become "homogeneous elements of public movement". This form could be called *Leviathan 2.0*: a political body without a center, where humans, animals, plants, objects, and technologies coexist in rhythmic interaction. In such a body, gender boundaries dissolve because the very notion of "the body" becomes collective. This perspective could be developed toward a theory of political decision-making mechanisms, but it requires deeper research.

Evidence of this: unisex public restrooms, gender-neutral forms of address and rules, and new trends in fashion.

Thesis 3. Digital Androgyny

In iconographic texts, cherubim and seraphim, depicted on religious icons, played significant roles in theological traditions. With six wings, they were meant to contemplate and guard the Church. Seraphim were usually depicted in red, cherubim in blue. Apart from the head and wings, they had almost no body – their images were deliberately devoid of sexual traits. Yet they shaped gender norms within culture.

Today, the digital environment fulfills a similar role. New androgynous icons surround modern humans daily. Digital devices have no sex, yet they impose an aesthetic of gender: color, tone, sounds, and even pauses change according to settings. The gender selection for artificial intelligence also sets new social norms – it constructs modes of interaction, gender roles, and forms of domination.

Moreover, in advertising, inanimate objects are anthropomorphized – they fall in love, sing, and dance. All this may point to both new freedoms and new forms of control. While it has become possible to expand and blur gender boundaries, new mechanisms of surveillance and regulation have emerged – from the authoritarian tone of a voice assistant to the algorithmic monitoring of personal behavior.

Evidence of this: voice settings, choice of names, avatar design, and interface personalization.

Conclusion

According to A. Badiou, the body is fragile and therefore inert, reproducing itself locally and slowly. Real politics, he argues, begins where a new body is born – one capable of sustaining political systems and reforms through its organs. Without organs, the body remains inert.

In studying gender, the focus should not be only on social roles and expressions of identity. Equally important is the analysis of gender mimicry – the ways gender hides and

adapts within the collective whole. Gender becomes not merely a category of identity but a function of interaction between humans and technologies, humans and collectives.

Biopolitical gender, the collective whole, and digital androgyny are consequences of contemporary political and social practices. We speak of “migrants,” “victims,” “witnesses,” thus constructing notions of de-subjectified communities – drawing boundaries between them, concealing problems, or searching for bridges. This perspective opens a path toward a new anthropology of the future, in which questions of power, ethics, and identity are transformed into questions of inner interaction and shared existence.

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