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AUTOGYNEPHILIA: DRESSING THE MOTHER'S CORPSE. SLIPKNOT, ED GEIN, AND YOUTUBE POP PSYCHOLOGY AS THREE IN THE MIRROR OF THE CAPITALIST UNCONSCIOUS

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Abstract. *This essay explores autogynephilia not as pathology but as a cultural formation, a symptom of late-capitalist subjectivity and its liquefied gender codes. Through a triangulation of Slipknot's "Snuff", Netflix's *Monster: The Ed Gein Story* (2025), and the YouTube discourse of psychologist Veronika Stepanova, I argue that autogynephilia functions as a psychic rebellion against patriarchal realism — an erotics of identification that turns trauma into costume and desire into critique (Panasiuk, 2025). In the masculine wish to "become his wife" we find the specter of Marx's alienation entwined with Freud's death drive and the digital libido of the neoliberal self.*

1. Prelude: Lingerie as the subject's last skin

"When he puts on women's panties, it's not just a fetish, it's a psychoanalytic confession of guilt towards his mother."

– Žižek, *"On the Feminine Hysteria of Late Capitalism"* (apocryphal)

Stepanova's video is not just YouTube therapy for "", but a symptom. A symptom of an era where the Freudian unconscious has turned into an algorithmic mirror: like, dislike, subscribe. When a man puts on women's underwear, he is not so much a "woman inside" as a **product of the capitalist redistribution of affects**. He becomes not a woman, but a **simulacrum of the feminine** (Baudrillard).

In this fetish, there is no gender, there is **an investment of desire** in a "second skin", in a mediator between the body and the image. Lingerie is not an item; it is *the thin boundary between the Self and the Other*, where the phallic desire first feels the fabric of maternal absence.

Slipknot in the video *"Snuff"* only visualizes what Stepanova says in a domestic way: the **desire to become his wife is not transgenderism, but transgression in**

its purest form. A man wants to be *the one he desires* – archetypal autogynephilia as a stage act not of gender, but of loss.

Lingerie as the Last Ideological Membrane. In the digital clinic of late capitalism, where therapy has been replaced by visibility, the confession “*I like to wear my wife’s panties*”—as voiced in Veronika Stepanova’s YouTube sermon—marks not a symptom to be cured but an opening in ideology itself. What Stepanova calls a “strange feminine side awakening” may instead be read, following Žižek (2006), as *the return of the repressed feminine within the subject of neoliberal rationality*—the moment when the phallic order of productivity falters and the male body rediscovers its porousness, its capacity to be surface rather than instrument. As Butler (1990) insists, gender is never essence but citation, a repetition that exposes its own failure; the panty is a text, a fabric of signifiers through which the subject rehearses an impossible identification.

Autogynephilia thus emerges as a dialectical gesture rather than a clinical category. It is the body’s revolt against instrumental reason, the *Eros* that Marcuse (1955) saw as the only remaining counterforce to repressive desublimation. To don the feminine garment is to stage the Marxian reversal of property: the masculine subject no longer possesses the feminine but becomes dispossessed by her. In that dispossession, desire ceases to be mastery and turns into empathy—a transformation Butler would call “the ethics of performativity.” The act is revolutionary precisely because it exposes the body as ideological artifact, an object both commodified and capable of refusal. The panty is not fetish but dialectical mirror, reflecting the contradiction between the commodified body and the yearning for tenderness.

When a man confesses, as in Stepanova’s viral video, that he loves wearing his wife’s panties, we witness not a private fetish but a public collapse of symbolic order. What Stepanova reads as “a strange feminine impulse awakening inside him” can be reinterpreted, through a Žižekian lens, as the **return of the repressed feminine within the masculine bourgeois subject**. The male body, once disciplined by the architecture of patriarchal productivity, begins to experience itself as porous, aesthetic, and ungovernable.

Autogynephilia, then, becomes less about gender dysphoria and more about the **aestheticization of the self under late capitalism** — the body reprogrammed as an interface between labor and libido. The act of wearing women’s lingerie is not simply “cross-dressing”; it is an act of sabotage, a *détournement* of the sexual signifier. As Lacan would put it, the subject attempts to wear the **objet petit a**, the ungraspable object of desire, on his own skin.

Butler’s notion of gender as performative finds here its ultimate expression: performance without audience, drag without applause. The panties and stockings

SEZIONE 17.

FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE POLITICHE

become ritual instruments of introspection — a psychoanalytic séance where the man communes not with “the woman inside him,” but with the mother’s absence, the originary void of the feminine Real. To dress in the clothes of the Other is to trespass into that zone of abjection Kristeva once described as the place “where meaning collapses.”

2. Ed Gein: The Tailor of the Abject

In Netflix’s *Monster: The Ed Gein Story*, the eponymous murderer is portrayed as the first “celebrity serial killer,” but beneath the gore and sensationalism lies a tragic allegory of **materialized autogynephilia**. Gein’s infamous acts — exhuming corpses, sewing skin into feminine artifacts — constitute a monstrous parody of the fashion industry’s own necropolitics. His “woman suit” is both a literalization of gender performativity and a critique of Hollywood’s endless commodification of flesh.

Žižek might call Gein “the unconscious of American cinema,” the obscene underside of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* and Hooper’s *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. Gein’s crimes externalize what the culture secretly desires: the transformation of the feminine into a consumable surface. His acts are grotesque not because they deviate from the norm, but because they **mirror the norm too faithfully** — the capitalist logic that turns body into sign, and sign into fetish commodity.

From a Lacanian standpoint, Gein is trapped between the Symbolic order of patriarchy and the maternal Real. His mother’s corpse, perpetually resurrected through his actions, becomes the ultimate fetish: the attempt to suture the lack through repetition. “Mother, I want to wear you,” says the unconscious — and in that impossible wish we recognize the same psychic contour as the man in Stepanova’s confession.

Ed Gein: Performance of Necrophilia and Psychoanalysis of Matter.

Monster: The Ed Gein Story is not a series about a serial killer. It is, as Foucault would say, **the archaeology of the body**, where anatomical theater replaces the church. Ed Gein, who sews a suit for himself from women’s skin, is not a monster, but the **first fashion designer of gender identity**.

He doesn’t kill women — he *dresses up as them*, in the fabric of the feminine, in order to regain his mother’s voice, to “hear her again.” In this sense, as Lacan wrote, “a woman is a real thing, in which a man is always already inscribed, but cannot be.”

Gein does not want a woman. He wants **to become a place where she is absent**. Slipknot shouts, “*Bury all your secrets in my skin.*” This is Lacan’s formula of love: “I want to be the one in whose skin you hide the secret.”

The Netflix series only unwittingly reveals this truth: the *body is like a collage of fragments of desire*. Gein sews a flesh and leather look that has already been

produced by Hollywood. The monster is not Gin, the monster is a culture where **gender and death exchange masks**, and capital monetizes both.

Ed Gein and the Necropolitics of Identification. Netflix's *Monster: The Ed Gein Story* (2025) inadvertently composes a post-Lacanian allegory of autogynephilia. Gein's sewing of female skins, his desire to resurrect the mother through tactile assemblage, enacts what Kristeva (1982) called *the abject*: the psychic territory where the maternal Real contaminates symbolic order. The series' critics lament its "graphic violence" (Tinubu, 2025), yet what shocks is not brutality but recognition—the obscene familiarity of the act. Gein's "woman suit" literalizes what cinema and advertising perform metaphorically: the consumption of the feminine as aesthetic surface. He is the unconscious of Hollywood, the first artisan of the gendered commodity.

Through a Foucauldian lens, Gein becomes a product of disciplinary modernity, his pathology generated by the same biopolitical regime that catalogs, isolates, and spectacularizes deviance. His transgressive craftsmanship collapses the border between pathology and art; as Deleuze and Guattari (1972) argue, "desire is productive—it machines, it fabricates." Gein's workshop is a perverse factory of subjectivity. To wear another's skin is to negate the capitalist separation of labor and flesh, to reclaim the means of corporeal production. It is horrific because it literalizes what the market hides: every commodity is a piece of someone's body.

3. Slipknot's "Snuff": The Soundtrack of Self-Dissection

"Snuff" is not a song, but a requiem for a man's identity. Corey Taylor sings as a subject stuck between fetish and loss: he wants to be not a woman, but the **one he lost in order to become himself**.

There is a sadomasochistic grammar in every movement of the camera. A mask, a cut, a scar, a bandage – everything turns into **the language of pain as the only language of truth**.

Autogynephilia here is not a pathology, but a **poetics of autoerotic mourning**. A man who wants to be a woman is a subject who **refuses the power of the phallus**. He regains empathy through perverse imitation. As Preziado wrote, "the phallus is no longer a symbol of power, but a prosthetic of pleasure."

The music video for *Slipknot's "Snuff"* renders autogynephilia as emotional cinema. The masked protagonist, played by Corey Taylor, oscillates between mourning and metamorphosis. He ties, gags, and unravels himself, inhabiting both victim and perpetrator. The *mise-en-scène* — the dim light, the bandaged face, the act of self-binding — evokes what Deleuze and Guattari termed "the body without organs": a surface of pure affect, stripped of social inscription.

When Taylor sings "*Bury all your secrets in my skin*," he articulates the same drive that animated Gein's needlework and the YouTube husband's secret ritual:

SEZIONE 17.

FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE POLITICHE

the wish to embody what one cannot possess. This is the erotics of melancholia, where desire loops back into itself, turning identification into incision.

Slipknot's aesthetic of pain — the welding of metal and flesh, the choreography of rage — becomes a contemporary liturgy of the desiring machine. It dramatizes the disintegration of masculinity not as crisis but as event. The mask no longer hides; it performs revelation.

Slipknot's "Snuff" and the Erotics of Melancholia. In the video for "*Snuff*," Slipknot's masked protagonist becomes the secular saint of self-dissection. The imagery of bondage, mirror, and wound conjures what Laing (1960) called the "divided self"—a being that can only verify existence through pain. When Corey Taylor murmurs "*Bury all your secrets in my skin*," he articulates a Lacanian truth: desire wants to *be* the site of the Other's secret, not to know it. The song's *mise-en-scène*—bandaged eyes, bleeding make-up, the collapsing room—renders the psychic architecture of autogynephilia as *mise-en-abyme*: the self folding into its own absence.

Here music operates as a collective symptom. The adolescent audience screaming under strobe lights enacts what Adorno (1941) described as "pseudo-individualization"—a mass reproduction of pain coded as authenticity. Yet within this repetition, something radical persists: the shared fantasy of *feminization* as liberation from aggression. Slipknot's performance of masculine collapse functions as a ritual of mourning for patriarchy itself. In their masks, we glimpse Butler's notion that "the face is already a veil"; gender is not revealed by exposure but by the choreography of concealment. The scream becomes not protest but confession, a sonic version of Gein's needlework—stitching sound into identity.

4. Veronika Stepanova as a Pop Freud from YouTube

Stepanova is the ideal figure of the post-Soviet Lacan: she swears, flirts and interprets at the same time. Her speech is **a woman's semiotics that went live** (Kristeva).

She calls autogynephile "strange", but intuitively grasps the essence: in the act of dressing up, the *anima*, the feminine in a man, comes to life. Only it does not see that this process is **revolutionary left**: it undermines the binary base of the capitalist gender.

A man who wears women's panties is not a pervert, but a **Marxist of the unconscious**, destroying the bourgeois normativity of sex through bodily practice. He, albeit unconsciously, destroys the patriarchal metanarrative by dressing in scraps of it.

Veronika Stepanova: YouTube Lacan in Lip Gloss. In Stepanova's long, digressive monologue — half gossip, half pseudo-therapy — one encounters the **democratization of psychoanalysis as spectacle**. Her speech collapses clinical

discourse and cabaret confession, producing a viral form of vernacular Lacanianism. Beneath her moralizing tone and sexual anecdotes lies a deeper contradiction: she both pathologizes and eroticizes male femininity.

Yet, paradoxically, Stepanova becomes an unwitting theorist of the contemporary unconscious. Her insistence that “the wife already knows” echoes the Lacanian insight that **the Other always already knows our desire**. What she misreads as perversion is, in fact, a form of symbolic revolt: the refusal of the masculine subject to sustain the fiction of autonomy.

In the globalized psychosphere of YouTube, where therapy becomes content and desire becomes monetized confession, Stepanova’s videos stand as a symptom of what Preciado calls “pharmacopornographic capitalism.” The body speaks in HD; the psyche uploads itself. The husband’s panties and Stepanova’s lipstick share the same economy of affect — both are signs circulated for visibility, for the gaze.

Veronika Stepanova: Pop Lacan and the Feminine Superego. Stepanova’s YouTube performance situates psychoanalysis within the logic of the influencer economy. Her commentary oscillates between moral panic and erotic fascination, turning clinical discourse into infotainment. Yet, as Foucault (1976) observed, confession is power’s favorite technique; by inviting men to “admit their fantasies,” she reproduces the disciplinary gaze while masquerading as liberation. Her monologue thus exemplifies what Preciado (2013) calls *pharmacopornographic capitalism*: the merger of therapy, sexuality, and digital labor into a single circuit of visibility.

Paradoxically, Stepanova’s mixture of mockery and empathy transforms her into a cybernetic analyst of the post-Soviet unconscious. Beneath her jokes lies a recognition that desire has migrated from the bedroom to the algorithm. When she claims that the wife “already knows,” she echoes Lacan’s dictum that the Other always already knows what we desire; the problem is not ignorance but the unbearable visibility of the drive. The YouTube frame replaces the analytic couch, and the “comment section” becomes the new unconscious—a collective murmur of transference. In this theater of self-revelation, autogynephilia is both pathology and praxis, both wound and weapon against the hegemony of normalcy.

5. Toward a Materialist Theory of Autogynephilia

Autogynephilia is not an illness but an index — a register of how bodies negotiate the collapse of gender as a stable category. In its gestures we see the exhaustion of phallic power and the emergence of **a non-binary aesthetics of vulnerability**. The man who desires to be his wife is performing a quiet Marxist critique: he dissolves the proprietary logic of heterosexuality (“my wife”) into identification (“I am her”).

This transformation of ownership into empathy destabilizes the core of capitalist patriarchy. As Fromm might suggest, it is an attempt to escape the

SEZIONE 17.

FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE POLITICHE

alienation of masculine productivity through a sensual reclaiming of passivity — the right to be adorned, to be seen, to be beautiful without utility.

In this sense, the lingerie becomes an emblem of the proletarian body under neoliberalism: soft, precarious, endlessly commodified, yet capable of resistance through pleasure.

Toward a Materialist Psychopolitics of Gender. To read autogynephilia as deviance is to reaffirm the capitalist fiction of stable identity. Instead, following Reich (1942) and Firestone (1970), we might interpret it as a revolutionary libidinal redistribution: the attempt to expropriate the means of gender production from the patriarchy. The desire to “become one’s wife” subverts the property logic of heterosexuality, transforming possession into identification. As Fromm (1941) argued, freedom is terrifying precisely because it demands the renunciation of mastery. The autogynephilic act is thus an ethics of vulnerability, a voluntary surrender of control that gestures toward collective emancipation.

Marcuse (1955) envisioned Eros as the utopian principle opposing the death drive of industrial civilization. In the same way, the man who wears lace against his skin reclaims pleasure as political. His act resists the capitalist reduction of bodies to productivity, reinstating what Irigaray (1985) called “the economy of the gift”—a circulation of sensations beyond exchange value. Autogynephilia becomes a practice of tenderness against militarized masculinity, a micro-communism of the flesh. In the friction between silk and skin, we glimpse a world no longer organized by the phallus but by reciprocity.

From body to politics: women's underwear as an act of resistance

If, as Fromm asserted, “man runs away from freedom,” then the autogynephile runs **into it**, into that terrible freedom where gender ceases to be a fact of anatomy. Slipknot, Ed Gein, and Stepanova are three faces of the same trial:

- **capital** turns perversion into content,
- **the body** becomes a stage,
- **desire** is a way of saying “no” to the norm.

Autogynephilia is not a disease, but the **poetics of the political body**, where the mask and underwear perform the same function as manifesto and protest.

The Digital Unconscious and the Future of Desire. We now inhabit what Deleuze (1990) named the “society of control,” where power no longer forbids but modulates. Within this circuitry, autogynephilia reappears as a glitch, an analog excess resisting algorithmic normalization. Slipknot’s mask, Gein’s stitched corset, and Stepanova’s webcam together form a triptych of the twenty-first-century unconscious: production, violence, and confession looping infinitely. The fantasy of becoming one’s own beloved indexes the exhaustion of patriarchal subjectivity but also its potential for metamorphosis.

As Kristeva (1982) reminds us, the abject is not mere horror but the threshold of rebirth. To wear the feminine is to touch the wound of origin, to acknowledge dependency as condition of freedom. The autogynephile does not escape gender; he performs its decomposition so that something gentler may emerge. In the ruins of mastery, he whispers—half plea, half prophecy—“*I become her so that she may finally exist.*” Perhaps, in that whispered metamorphosis, the future of socialism begins: a politics of skin, softness, and shared vulnerability.

Afterword: Lacan on TikTok. We live in an era where psychoanalysis has become a story, and desire has become an algorithm. YouTube therapists instead of analysts, Netflix instead of Castor, Slipknot instead of the chorus of ancient tragedy.

But still, there is truth in this noise: everyone who puts on someone else's lingerie wears **freedom**, even if it is made of lace, out of shame and out of pain.

6. Coda: Lacan on TikTok

We inhabit an age where psychoanalysis has migrated to social media, where the unconscious scrolls endlessly between dopamine hits and identity tutorials. The return of autogynephilia to popular discourse signals not the triumph of perversion but the **crisis of the symbolic** — the breakdown of gender as the final frontier of meaning.

Slipknot, Gein, and Stepanova form a strange trinity of the digital Real: the rock band that performs suffering, the killer who sewed it, and the influencer who explains it. Together they stage the same drama — the yearning to cross the threshold between self and Other, between signifier and skin.

In the end, to wear the lingerie is to touch the impossible. To don the mother's skin, the wife's dress, the beloved's mask — is to enter the wound of history itself, and to whisper, with all the perversity of the modern subject: **“I become her so that she might finally exist.”**

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SEZIONE 17.

FILOSOFIA E SCIENZE POLITICHE

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