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**LOVE OF ONESELF AS A WOMAN:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SEXUALITY
OF
TRANSEXUAL AND OTHER WOMEN**

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ABSTRACT

This study compared the sexuality of male-to-female transsexuals (TS) with other (biological) females. From its beginnings in the early 20th century, there has been a tradition of categorising TS into different *types* based on their sexual orientation. However, among the TS community there is mixed reaction to being categorised. Most especially, there has been debate over a theory proposed by Blanchard (1989b) that categorises TS as either sexually attracted to males or sexually attracted to themselves as women (autogynephilic). To resolve some of this debate, this research measured a number of aspects of sexuality among TS and biological females: sexual orientation, childhood gender identity, autogynephilia, fetishism, masochism, sexual attraction to themes found in erotic transgender fiction, and aspects of sexuality that are relevant to evolutionary theory. These variables were measured on an online or paper questionnaire completed by 209 TS and 127 biological females. The results showed that TS tended to prefer younger sexual partners, and have lower levels of masochism than biological females. For the remainder of the sexuality variables measured, TS and biological females did not differ, with the exception of those TS who acknowledged a history of autogynephilia. These TS scored significantly higher on measures of autogynephilia, Attraction to Femininity in Males, Attraction to Transgender Fiction, Interest in Visual Sexual Stimuli, and Importance of Partner's Physical Attractiveness. Factor analysis of the scale totals revealed four factors, with autogynephilia accounting for about 12% of the questionnaire variance in scores. Autogynephilia was reported by 47% of TS participants; however it manifested in a less predictable way than was proposed by Blanchard (1989b). A further finding was the tendency of participants to report sexual arousal to a diverse range of sexual stimuli that were considered to be not conforming to cultural norms; this accounted for a large amount of the questionnaire variance (56.44%). Implications of these results were put forward in the discussion: clinicians are warned against restricting TS by categorising them; instead they should allow for the diversity and complexity of individual cases. An alternative theory of the development of cross-gender identity in biological males is proposed: this theory is based on the early development of a cross-gender identity and whether defense mechanisms are used to suppress this identity. In concluding, the limitations and suggestions for further research are discussed. A major limitation of this research is the large proportion of highly educated, higher socio-economic participants.

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