

# Chapter 11

## Narratives by Nontranssexual Autogynephiles

### Transsexual and Nontranssexual Autogynephiles Resemble Each Other

As noted in Chap. 3, some individuals who submitted narratives about autogynephilia were either nontranssexual or not demonstrably transsexual. I had originally intended to collect narratives only from informants who were recognizably transsexual; I felt it was important to document that autogynephilia was experienced not only by the fetishistic transvestites with whom it had traditionally been associated but also by recognizably transsexual persons. I knew, however, that attempting to draw a definitive line between autogynephilic transsexuals and nontranssexual autogynephiles was a difficult if not an impossible exercise, even though I believed there were legitimate reasons for trying to do so. Consequently, I was not surprised to find that the narratives by transsexual and nontranssexual (or not demonstrably transsexual) informants resembled each other in many respects: Transsexual and nontranssexual informants provided similar descriptions of their reactions to learning about autogynephilia, developmental histories, sexual attractions to women and men, and other sexual attitudes and behaviors.

The principal differences between the two sets of narratives were that those by nontranssexual informants were less likely to describe severe gender dysphoria, anatomic autogynephilia, or the desire to live full-time as a woman. Interestingly, attempts to downplay the meaning and significance of autogynephilic arousal were also conspicuously absent in the narratives by nontranssexuals: Unlike their transsexual counterparts, the nontranssexual informants did not make any noticeable effort to describe autogynephilia as an effect rather than a cause of their cross-gender expression, as a nonsexual phenomenon that had become secondarily sexualized, as an epiphenomenon, or as a normal element of female sexuality. I speculate that nontranssexual informants may have been more willing to interpret their autogynephilic feelings as unambiguously erotic because, unlike their transsexual counterparts, they did not have well developed, highly valued identities as women that

could potentially be discredited or compromised if they acknowledged that their desire to be female was associated with paraphilic erotic arousal.

Given the similarities between the narratives submitted by the transsexual and nontranssexual informants, one might wonder why it would be useful to consider the latter narratives at all. There are at least three reasons. First, documenting the similarities between the two sets of narratives provides a further demonstration that autogynephilic transsexualism and less severe autogynephilic conditions are closely related clinical entities that exist on a continuum of symptomatology. Second, some of the narratives by nontranssexual informants contain informative descriptions of conditions that are closely related to autogynephilic transsexualism, such as partial autogynephilia. Third, some nontranssexual informants submitted unusually insightful or eloquent narratives that offer a more nuanced understanding of autogynephilia as it occurs in both transsexual and nontranssexual autogynephiles.

## **Representative Narrative by a Nontranssexual Autogynephile**

The following account by a nontranssexual informant illustrates many of the similarities and key differences between the typical narratives submitted by transsexual and nontranssexual autogynephiles. Like many of the transsexual informants, this individual reported the onset of cross-gender wishes at an early age, feelings of envy and lust toward women, and overt erotic arousal with cross-dressing—arousal that diminished with time but never completely disappeared. In this and subsequent narratives by nontranssexual autogynephiles, I will identify informants by the parenthesized letters “NTS” (for nontranssexual) and a two-digit number.

I am 65 years old, happily married, and father of two children. My life, however, has been complicated since about age 5 by a strong desire to be female. My earliest memories are of going past the girls' department in a store and wanting to wear the dresses and to be accepted as a girl. I also have early memories of being envious of the girls next door and wishing I could have long hair, polish my nails and wear pretty clothes. In middle school, when the girls were starting to become women, I began to feel cheated that they were becoming women and I was not. I envied the fact that they wore bras and nylons, dresses and heels. I wanted to be invited to their sleepovers. I, too, wanted to become a young woman, not to attract boys, but because I thought it would just feel really good to be a girl.

This desire became so strong that I started trying on my mother's clothes. I would often dress fully and imagine what it would be like to be a woman. I do not believe that there was a conscious sexual component to my activities. I would also frequently dream that my mother or older female cousins would allow me to dress as a woman and permit me to be one of the girls. By high school, however, my dressing had taken on a strong erotic component and would usually end with an orgasm and a profound feeling of shame and self-loathing. By that time, I knew that there was such a thing as a transvestite, a type of pervert, and that I was one of them. At the same time, I actively dated and outwardly appeared to be a typical high school boy.

In college, I had the freedom to pursue my interest in being feminine. Within a month, I bought my first pair of panties, which I would wear to bed and often under my male clothing. By my sophomore year, I was involved in a serious, physically and emotionally

intimate relationship. This gave me the courage to buy lingerie for my lover and sometimes myself. After a time, she would often permit me to wear her intimate items in the bedroom and on some level to be treated by her as a woman. Within a short time, I had accumulated a full feminine outfit, was exploring makeup, and was experimenting with trying to present as a woman.

After I finished professional school and moved to a large city to begin my professional career, my interest in dressing as a woman continued. Often, in the evening or on weekends I would fully dress with makeup and try to imagine myself as a woman. Within a year, I was beginning to go out to gay clubs dressed as a woman. It gave me a sense of well-being; I felt relaxed, as though on some level that was how I was meant to live.

After I married, my wife had no knowledge of my desires. I would keep my outfits hidden in storage and would from time to time take off for the evening, rent a hotel room, and explore going out as a woman. I began to work with a professional makeup artist on makeup application. I began to thin my brows, and I also started working with a woman who gave instructions in how to present as a woman: how to walk, how to move, and how to use the ladies' room. The better my feminine presentation became, the better I felt. By this time, I was going out to local clubs that catered to cross-dressers. I met other cross-dressers, which encouraged me even more.

By the mid-1990s, I was becoming reasonably comfortable going out for the day as a woman. During that period, I married for the second time, to a woman who was a clinical psychologist. Shortly after our marriage, she learned of my proclivity and was willing to accommodate my feminine pursuits. She would shop with me as a girlfriend and would assist me in purchasing clothing and makeup. I was free to accumulate a feminine wardrobe.

Over the past 10 years, I have become more comfortable spending time as a woman. It has become who I am. I regularly spend the day as a woman. I sometimes traveled as a woman, leaving home en femme and returning days later. I have found, however, that after three or four days, I need to get out of my feminine outfit and go back to my life as a man. For this reason, and in spite of my thoughts about living full-time, I don't think that it is reasonable for me.

Thinking honestly about my desire to be feminine, I admit that there is an erotic part to it. I get turned on by what I see in the mirror, and I do get aroused, but this is only a minor part of what is going on. The major part is my desire to be acknowledged as female and to "be one of the girls." I am probably most happy being out with other women, being treated as one of the girls. It relaxes me and somehow makes me feel that I am not pretending to be anything other than what I am. (NTS 01)

Unlike many transsexual informants, this individual did not report that he disliked his male secondary sex characteristics or was unhappy about being male. He did not describe any attempts to feminize his body, except for thinning his eyebrows. Although he enjoyed living part-time in a feminine gender role, he had no desire to do so for longer than a few days. He also did not report any fantasies of having sex with men, a manifestation of behavioral autogynephilia that is significantly more prevalent in nonhomosexual MtF transsexuals than in non-transsexual cross-dressers (Docter & Fleming, 2001; Doorn et al., 1994).

At first glance, this informant would seem to provide a textbook example of the ICD-10 diagnosis of *dual-role transvestism* (WHO, 1992), which is defined as:

The wearing of clothes of the opposite sex for part of the individual's existence in order to enjoy the temporary experience of membership of the opposite sex, but without any desire for a more permanent sex change or associated surgical reassignment, and *without sexual excitement accompanying the cross-dressing* [emphasis added]. (p. 365)

A clinician who was treating a client with a history like that of the above informant and who did not elicit any admission of erotic arousal accompanying the client's desire to present himself as a woman might mistakenly conclude that the ICD-10 diagnosis of dual-role transvestism was applicable. In fact, I believe this diagnosis is rarely, if ever, applicable to nonhomosexual transgender men.

## **Nontranssexuals' Identification with the Concept of Autogynephilia**

Many nontranssexual informants, like their transsexual counterparts, regarded the concept of autogynephilia as a revelation and believed that it accurately described their feelings and experiences. Here are two representative examples:

I'm a normal male, married with three children. I have a career as an engineer, a decidedly male-typical job. My sexual orientation is completely heterosexual. And yet, since I reached puberty, I have had almost exclusively sexual fantasies about looking like, dressing like, or being transformed into a woman. The description of autogynephilia was the first time I've read something that seemed to fit what I was experiencing. (NTS 02)

I was completely overwhelmed by the information on autogynephilia. I have been searching for so long, not so much for a label, but for an answer to many questions that have plagued my life for almost 40 years. Transsexual, transvestic, transgendered, androgynous? The premises of autogynephilia are so in-tune with me that it almost makes me want to shout in joyful wonderment at this discovery. (NTS 03)

Nontranssexual informants suggested that the value of the concept of autogynephilia did not so much lie in providing a name for their condition as in offering an explanatory framework within which to make sense of their otherwise inexplicable feelings and behaviors.

## **Early Childhood Onset of Cross-dressing and Associated Arousal**

Like their transsexual counterparts, several nontranssexual informants reported that they had experienced penile erections or definite erotic arousal in association with cross-dressing or cross-gender fantasies in early childhood:

In one of your essays, you wrote of two cases of boys younger than age 3 who expressed a desire to cross-dress and became aroused when they did so. I found it odd that there were only two reported cases. I was around the same age when I cross-dressed for the first time. I was highly attracted to my mother's nylon stockings and I felt uncontrollably compelled to wear them. I have a very distinct memory of stealing a pair of stockings from my Mom's dresser and retreating to my room to try them on. I could not have been more than 3 or

4 years old, at the very most. It was a wonderful feeling to wear her hose, and I distinctly remember experiencing an erection. Wearing her stockings made me feel like a girl, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. (NTS 04)

I used to watch my mother comb and braid my female cousin's long beautiful hair when she was staying with us. I was age 5 then and remember having strong erotic and sexual urges. I use to secretly want to wake up and be a girl; I so wanted my hair long. (NTS 05)

Other nontranssexual informants also described the onset of cross-dressing in early childhood but did not recall this activity as being definitely erotic until puberty. Here is a representative account:

I am a 55-year-old cross-dresser. Another cross-dresser told me about autogynephilia, and it seems to fit me like a glove. I have distinct memories of dressing in my sister's clothes at probably about age 4; I cannot recall if it was sexually charged. There was no further activity until I was about age 12, and this time it was definitely erotic. From ages 12 to 17, I actively dressed in my sister's and mother's clothes. I have had rare moments when I felt like I would like to just remain a woman. I have always admired pretty women and feel like life in general might be easier as a girl. Probably 95% of the time, though, it's about the erotic aspect for me. (NTS 06)

Note that this informant reported a very early onset of cross-dressing, even though the subsequent manifestations of his autogynephilic orientation were almost entirely erotic. This illustrates that the onset of cross-dressing in early childhood is not necessarily predictive of a developmental course in which cross-dressing in adulthood has little or no erotic motivation.

## **Fantasizing Being Female During Cross-dressing**

As discussed in Chap. 6, autogynephilic persons, transsexual and nontranssexual, typically cross-dress in order to create or facilitate the thought or image of themselves as female. This rationale was explicitly described by one nontranssexual informant:

At age 40, I began to see myself as a heterosexual cross-dresser. I did not find that the sexual arousal associated with cross-dressing gradually went away with time, as Virginia Prince and others claimed. The gender aspects of cross-dressing and going out cross-dressed are an important part of my life, but so is the sexual aspect. And it is not clothing itself that is the primary source of my sexual arousal, but the perception of my body as being female. Even though I am fully male anatomically, in my mind I see myself having all the female parts. What the female garments, makeup, wig, jewelry, fragrance, etc. do for me is to enhance this feeling of myself as physically female. If I had been born later and found the social support I needed, I might eventually have sought SRS. Should I still call myself a heterosexual cross-dresser? Or am I a non-operative transsexual? (NTS 07)

This narrative also illustrates that the dividing line between heterosexual cross-dressing and autogynephilic transsexualism is often indistinct: This informant believed that he might have sought sex reassignment if his circumstances had been slightly different.

## Comfort and Prolonged Erotic Arousal with Cross-dressing

The nontranssexual informant whose narrative appeared first in this chapter reported that he felt relaxed when he cross-dressed, just as some of the transsexual informants whose narratives appeared in Chap. 6 had reported. Other nontranssexual informants expressed similar feelings. One reported that he valued the comfort that cross-dressing provided more than any associated erotic arousal:

I am not on the transsexual side of the transgender scale; I identify as a cross-dressing male, and becoming a woman was never a goal of mine. I do not believe that transitioning is something I need to pursue. I am simply a man who enjoys dressing in what is culturally considered to be feminine attire. Yes, there is an erotic component to this at times, but the reality is that, more often, sexual excitement is not the desired goal or even the end result. I simply find that I am comfortable dressed as a woman. This goes deeper than simply a sexual release or outlet. (NTS 08)

As discussed in Chap. 6, the relaxation and comfort that autogynephiles sometimes experience in association with cross-dressing might be analogous to the feelings of comfort and emotional security that men sometimes experience in long-term romantic relationships. Alternatively, these feelings might represent low intensity sexual arousal that is not always recognized or interpreted as such (Docter, 1988). Consistent with the latter interpretation, two other nontranssexual informants reported that they experienced and enjoyed the low intensity, long duration sexual arousal that resulted from extended periods of cross-dressing without orgasmic release:

I wear very tight panties, 24/7; this controls penile erection and extends the time limits of sexual arousal. This never actually results in a full orgasm, allowing the dressing to go on a long time. Just to dress and masturbate is somewhat self-defeating. (NTS 09)

I don't identify as transsexual, as I do not feel a need to transition fully. But I certainly recognize the strong presence within me of autogynephilic motivations. As a child, I experienced vaguely erotic feelings with the thought of wearing girl's clothes; with adolescence, these became very clearly erotic. In my 30s, it became more important to me to experience not an episodic and orgasmic eroticism, but a low level, long lasting "erotic buzz" from wearing something feminine secretly all day long. With increasing years (I'm now in my 40s), this changed into a desire to express myself as being feminine for others to see, with no (or very little) evident eroticism at all—but I still enjoy erotic fantasies of the old type at night. (NTS 10)

The low level, long lasting "erotic buzz" described by the latter informant may be a good example of what Docter (1988) was referring to when he observed that "transvestism and transsexualism are, in part, mood altering behavioral strategies. They generate pleasurable excitement and a sense of well-being" (p. 118).

## Autogynephilic Fantasies Are Necessary for Orgasm

Several nontranssexual informants, like many of their transsexual counterparts whose narratives appeared in previous chapters, reported that autogynephilic fantasies were often or always necessary to achieve arousal or orgasm during masturbation or partnered sexual activity. Here are a few examples:

I'm a 29-year-old male who's had autogynephilia since about 12 years old. I have always been strongly attracted to women and have absolutely no attraction to males. I have wanted so badly to live a normal guy's life, but I cannot enjoy sex with a woman unless I fantasize about being one. (NTS 11)

Briefly, I am an autogynephilic man and always was. I can feel sexually excited only by imagining that I am a woman and doing something feminine. But I don't feel like a classically understood transsexual. I would like to be a woman only in sexual things. In all the rest of nonsexual human activity, I am a man and there is nothing feminine about me. (NTS 12)

I am a university student in Denmark. Reading about autogynephilia concretized and made plain a number of things of which I had been aware but which I had been unable to express in so clear and lucid a manner. While having sex with my partner, I found it often necessary to fantasize about being a woman having lesbian sex with her in order to achieve orgasm. (NTS 13)

These narratives provide further support for the idea that autogynephilia operates as a sexual orientation in some autogynephilic nontranssexual men as well as in autogynephilic transsexuals.

## Competition with Heterosexual Attraction

A few nontranssexual informants discussed competition between their autogynephilic feelings and their attraction to women. One observed that, whereas making love with women was exciting, imagining being a woman oneself was even more exciting:

I loved dating and making love with girls, and I was highly aroused by their lovely bodies. But I especially loved that closeness with girls helped me to learn more about them and made my own feminine feelings more authentic. One night, making out with a girlfriend and undressing her, I noticed a large damp spot in her panties. I had a feeling of overwhelming excitement to put her panties on, to feel from the dampness the exact location of a girl's vagina on my body. Instead of making love with her at that point, I picked up her panties and faked a sudden need for the bathroom, so I could put them on and imagine I had a vagina and feel the dampness between my legs. This was one of the most exciting sexual experiences I had ever had. I didn't masturbate, but I made love to the girl fantasizing that I was her. After I married, I secretly collected a stash of women's clothes, lingerie, breast forms, shoes, and a wig. When I had the opportunity, I would dress up for the ultimate sexual experience. Feeling like a woman was far more exciting erotically than making love with one, and to this day I feel the same way. (NTS 14)

This informant's description of his eagerness to interrupt the progress of heterosexual intercourse in order to put on his partner's panties and imagine himself having her anatomic features suggests something of the power of autogynephilic eroticism relative to ordinary heterosexual attraction. Women's bodies are exciting, but imagining having a woman's body oneself is even more exciting.

## Sex with Men

As discussed in Chap. 8, autogynephilic transsexuals sometimes engage in sex with men and often fantasize about doing so, even though they are not genuinely attracted to men's bodies. Some nontranssexual autogynephiles reported similar experiences; here is one representative example:

I'm a 49-year-old male. I've lacked a good way of describing myself, but the concept of autogynephilia really describes me well. I am attracted to females as a male, but I fantasize intensely about engaging in sex with men with me being a woman or at least a highly feminized version of myself. Male-to-male contact as such is something I find especially unsexy. I've been with more than a dozen females and three males sexually; with the men, I made a point of appearing and feeling feminized or it would have been a total turn-off for me. I masturbate to fantasies about being way more feminized than now, and being with a man who is paying me for sex and is enthusiastically having sex with me from behind. (NTS 15)

As previously noted in Chap. 1, Blanchard (1989b) suggested that "bisexual gender dysphorics' interest in male sexual partners is mediated by a particularly strong desire to have their physical attractiveness as women validated by others" (p. 622). In the informant's fantasy, this validation of physical attractiveness is suggested by the imagined male partner's willingness to pay for sex and by his enthusiastic performance.

## Specificity of Autogynephilic Arousal

Some autogynephilic persons fantasize about being women with certain specific features or characteristics, rather than simply fantasizing about being generic women. These specific characteristics are typically the same ones they find most appealing in the women to whom they are sexually attracted. Chap. 9 contained a good example of this kind of specificity of autogynephilic arousal: a narrative by an MtF transsexual who was specifically attracted to women who wore leg braces and who wanted to be a woman who wore leg braces. A few informants in Chap. 7 similarly reported that, when they were especially attracted to a particular girl or woman, they had sexual fantasies about looking exactly like her or wearing her hairstyle or clothing.

One nontranssexual informant described his specific attraction to women of a different ethnicity than his own and his erotic fantasies about being a woman of that same ethnicity:

I have self-diagnosed autogynephilia. I fit all the autogynephilic criteria (transvestic fetishism, etc.), but it is not the only way for me to get aroused. I can remember fantasies of becoming a girl or wearing women's clothing before the age of 10. I have not seriously considered undergoing sex reassignment surgery, although I can appreciate the strong, albeit sexual, motivation to undergo such an operation. My experience of autogynephilia may further validate the theory that this paraphilia is a projection of one's object of desire onto oneself. I am an Asian male, but I do not fantasize about being an Asian woman, but rather a Caucasian woman, because I prefer and am most sexually attracted to Caucasian women. Thus, autogynephilia may not simply be the fantasy of being a woman, but the fantasy of being one's desired sexual object. (NTS 16)



In my clinical practice, I have sometimes had autogynephilic transsexual clients who stated that their most intense heterosexual attraction was directed toward women with a specific physical appearance or somatic type. Not surprisingly, the cross-gender identifications that these clients displayed were often specific in exactly the same way. One of my autogynephilic transsexual clients, for example, was particularly attracted to female bodybuilders and fantasized about becoming a female bodybuilder herself.

## **Autogynephilia and Female Beauty**

One nontranssexual informant stated that he considered autogynephilia to be an emotional experience as well as an erotic one; he seemed to connect the emotional aspect of autogynephilia with his appreciation of female beauty and his interest in representing it through art. He also reported that, whereas he felt some sexual attraction to both women and men, he was only romantically attracted to women.

Your explication and elaboration of the concept of autogynephilia resonated deeply with me and helped me to identify and admit the feelings I was having. I cross-dressed for the first time at age 13. I found it very arousing. For me, autogynephilia is a sexual experience, but it is also an emotional experience. I am fascinated by female beauty. I am an artist, and I have been drawing and painting beautiful women since puberty. I've never felt strongly motivated to draw the nude male body. At age 19, I discovered that I was bisexual. Yet, the percentage of males I have any interest in is very small, and I don't think I could ever have a romantic relationship with a male. My homosexual fantasies mostly just revolve around a penis penetrating me, rather than being about a complete man. When I am fantasizing about women, however, even imaginary ones, I will be thinking about the female form in its totality. (NTS 17)

In explicitly raising the issue of the appeal of female beauty, this informant touched on an important but infrequently discussed aspect of the cross-gender wishes we autogynephilic persons experience: our desire to turn our bodies into facsimiles of what we find beautiful—indeed, what we find more beautiful than anything else on earth. As John Updike (1991) perceptively observed, “A naked woman is, for most men, the most beautiful thing they will ever see; on this planet, the female body is the prime aesthetic object” (p. 5). We autogynephiles desire to become facsimiles of the most beautiful things on this planet.

## **Desire to Eliminate or Control Autogynephilic Feelings**

Some nontranssexual informants believed that they would never be able to actualize their autogynephilic desires, because doing so would mean abandoning their obligations to their families. Consequently, they wanted to eliminate or control their autogynephilic desires, in order to feel less tormented by them.

The article on autogynephilia hit the nail on the head with me. I am a 37-year-old male with a wife and two children. I have been having thoughts about being a girl that sexually excited me since I was 4 years old. I remember in nursery school that there was a ballerina's outfit I used to put on. I look at beautiful women and do get aroused; however, I cannot climax unless I think about becoming a woman. When I have sex with my wife, I have to think about becoming a woman in order to climax. Is SRS the cure? I hope there can be another cure. I couldn't go through transition and SRS in my situation; it would destroy my whole family. I wish there were something I could do that could cure this inner demon. (NTS 18)

I'm in my early 40s and am quite masculine in appearance and manner. I have had physical and behavioral autogynephilic fantasies since puberty. Autogynephilic thoughts and images now dominate my mind much, if not all, of the time. The obsessive fantasy of being physically feminized using hormones, surgery, shaving, electrolysis, permanent cosmetics, etc., pretty much describes my sexual landscape. If I'm not thinking about it, I'm looking for porn about it or writing porn about it myself.

Despite the urges, which are very intense at times, I've avoided acting on anything physically or behaviorally autogynephilic so far, for several reasons. First, I would never come even close to passing as a woman, and I'd be letting my sexuality lead me into an ostracized lifestyle and throwing away a lucrative, hard-won career. I don't see that as a path to greater happiness. Also, acting on my autogynephilic urges would not be faithful to the family responsibilities I've taken on.

At this point, I'm seeking counseling and want to get on a course of antiandrogens to turn down the testosterone-induced heat on the autogynephilic fires. But it's also true that the thought of the feminization that will accompany the hormones is a source of excitement in and of itself. I suppose that, technically, some would then view me as a pre-op or non-op MtF transsexual, but I just consider myself a person with autogynephilia who is working to balance his sexual and nonsexual urges while trying to live a good life. (NTS 19)

These narratives are in some ways reminiscent of a few in Chap. 6 that were submitted by nominally transsexual informants who wanted to undergo SRS but live as men afterwards or who had successfully carried out such a plan. In both sets of narratives, the informants had decided that living full time as women was impossible or impractical, but they differed in the solution that they desired (or achieved): either attempting to suppress their cross-gender wishes or attempting to express those wishes to the extent that seemed feasible by undergoing SRS but not undertaking a gender role transition.

## Wide-Ranging Autogynephilic Interests

A few nontranssexual informants provided narratives that described a wide range of autogynephilic fantasies and behaviors in great detail. One such informant reported that he experienced all four major types of autogynephilia (transvestic, behavioral, physiologic, and anatomic):

I have all four varieties of autogynephilia. My desire to crossdress is intense and continual. I have all these beautiful angora dresses, sweaters, hats, muffs, bonnets, scarves, gloves, purses, slippers, etc. When I am dressed up, the erotic intensity is beyond words. I have an intense desire to wear certain female clothing items, ballet dresses (tutus) being the most significant. I have spontaneously ejaculated with no masturbation over many of these items.

I love being with big groups of women and doing women's things, like my knitting. I have done this in the past wearing women's clothes and it was a great high. I have major fantasies about breast feeding, dressing as a lady pushing a baby carriage, and having periods. I have worn a Kotex belt and pad under my skirts and dresses. Fourthly, I fantasize about having a woman's body. I love wearing fuzzy dresses with silicone breast forms and a muff (made out of a wig) and hiking my skirt up and running my hands over my breasts and down over my muff, imagining myself as a woman. (NTS 20)

Another informant's narrative provided a detailed description of autogynephilic fantasies involving an imagined girlhood:

I think of myself as a heterosexual male. However, I fantasize about being a woman. In this fantasy, I am bisexual and very sexually active. I also like to imagine performing other female activities: buying clothes, grooming myself, dating men and women, keeping house, having a period, having a baby, and getting married. Some of my favorite sexual fantasies include: being the submissive partner to a masculine lesbian, being swept off my feet by a gentleman, being a glamour model, being a housewife, and being a whore. I also find the idea of being raped as a woman very exciting. When I am sexually aroused, I get turned on by female things, not just sex as a woman. I think about what I would have been like as a little girl: my bedroom, school uniform, toys, being called "daddy's best girl," and having my first period. Even as I write this, I have an erection, thinking about getting dolls for Christmas, buying my first bra, having a boyfriend and letting him touch me inside my knickers. I could even get turned on by thoughts of having a Pap smear test or taking the pill. The idea of being a girl, of being treated like a girl, and of doing girls things is what I crave. (NTS 21)

This informant's final fantasy images, which eroticize Pap smears and oral contraceptive use, offer yet another illustration that virtually any aspect of women's experience can act as the basis of an autogynephilic fantasy.

## Partial Anatomic Autogynephilia

Blanchard (1993b) used the term *partial autogynephilia* to describe "autogynephiles whose erotic self-images include a mixture of male and female anatomic features, most often women's breasts and men's genitals" (p. 71). As noted in Chap. 3, I decided for the sake of consistency to categorize as nontranssexual those informants with partial autogynephilia who reported the desire to have women's breasts but did not report any desire for SRS. Some informants who wanted women's breasts never expressed an opinion about SRS; those who did usually seemed to regard SRS as unnecessary rather than undesirable. In contrast to the cases of partial autogynephilia described by Blanchard (1993b), none of the informants with partial autogynephilia who wanted women's breasts emphasized that possession of male genitalia was an essential element of their desired sexual self-image. Here are several representative narratives by informants with partial autogynephilia who desired to have women's breasts:

I can relate to most autogynephilic feelings, but I'm especially into breasts. I was jealous on seeing a woman with a large chest or a young girl who was beginning to develop. I bought breast forms to wear at home. A few years later I began to take hormones. They grew to the

point of having enough weight and volume to become bouncy; then I realized what I had always needed was having to wear a bra! Having to wear a bra and letting the world see them was such a great feeling. Since then I have had breast augmentation; I'm now a full 38C or baby D. I don't know if I will ever have SRS; that's not really a main goal of mine right now. I now live my fantasy: I now am one of those women I used to see with a large chest. (NTS 22)

I get aroused and excited when wearing women's clothing. I always have loved women with large breasts. However, I have discovered that my feeling for women involving their breasts is the wish that I had them. I have size 38DD breast forms; I wear them all the time now. To feel the way they move, how they get in the way of your movements, and the constant reminder that they are there due to their size, drives me crazy with the desire to have a set of my own. Any inconvenience of having large breasts would be a very small price to pay for the pleasure and feeling they would have for me. If it were possible to take a drug or something and wake up the next morning and be transformed into a woman with large breasts, I would do it in a second. (NTS 23)

The idea of developing breasts has been a strong driving force for me. I've always been jealous of women and their bodies since I was very young. As I got older, I began to cross-dress frequently, first in my mother's clothes, then venturing out to buy my own. My biggest thrill was buying a set of breast forms. This satisfied my urges and desires, at least for a while. The more I wore them, the more I wanted to wear them. My therapist finally directed me to a doctor who prescribed a low dosage of hormones for me. After about 6 months, I began to see some development. I am thrilled to death regarding these changes. It's hard to hide my breasts now, as they have grown to a B cup. I am trying to decide between going forward and living as a woman or just being a man with breasts. (NTS 24)

I am a 36-year-old male. I have cross-dressed ever since I can remember. In my late twenties, I began to focus on breasts: not just physical attraction to a woman's breasts, but to the idea of possessing them myself. I now want to develop breasts through hormone therapy or undergo surgery to augment my breasts. My whole arousal emanates from having breasts. My goal is to find a doctor who will prescribe hormones for me to develop breasts or a plastic surgeon to perform breast augmentation on me. Whatever the other effects on my body, it would relieve the frustration I feel now. (NTS 25)

I am a male in my mid-60s. I have had a fascination with breasts as long as I can remember. As a teen, I wore my mother's bra when no one was home and masturbated, fantasizing that the breasts were my own. This is the only physical change I want. If I had breasts, nothing would change towards the outer world. It would be my secret and fulfilled desire. My sexuality wouldn't change, except that feeling them grow and being able to play with them would bring me close to an orgasm. (NTS 26)

I am a heterosexual male in my late 20s. I first started fantasizing about what it would be like having very large breasts after I was intrigued by big-breasted pornographic models. I purchased very large breast forms and have worn them at least 5 hours a day when by myself. Typically I masturbate at least three times a day wearing them. The feel of having the weight on my chest is very erotic to me. I fantasize about getting breast augmentation, but I know I couldn't get them as large as I would like them. (NTS 27)

I am an autogynephilic person. I have a very strong desire to grow and augment my breasts. The desire is so strong that I have been taking hormones to enhance my bust, and I am also using breast pumps to get larger feminine nipples. I have no desire to do full SRS, as I only want large breasts and to appear feminine for sexual gratification. (NTS 28)

I am a 45-year-old straight male. I have a strong, unstoppable desire to develop female breasts. I have invested unbelievable amounts of time and energy over the last 17 years to develop them. But I have no desire to be anything other than a heterosexual male (with breasts).

I have very little interest in cross-dressing and none whatsoever in presenting myself as a woman in public. I believe the existence of anatomic autogynephilia in heterosexual males should be recognized. I think it is possible that the inability of men like me to fulfill our unrelenting desire to have breasts may push many of us toward full SRS. I don't want to go that far. I like who I am, the way I am. I just want to hide a pair of breasts under my shirt and go about my life as usual. (NTS 29)

In my opinion, the concern expressed by the last informant—that the desire to have women's breasts might push some partial autogynephiles toward seeking SRS when they don't actually want it—is probably overstated. Nevertheless, he is correct in observing that there has been little recognition of the phenomenon of partial anatomic autogynephilia and little attention directed toward helping persons who experience the paraphilic desire to feminize their bodies but would be content with (or would prefer) something short of complete gender role transition and SRS. I discuss this issue in greater detail in Chap. 12.

## Co-occurring Paraphilias

As discussed in Chap. 9, paraphilias tend to co-occur, and autogynephilic persons often report one or more other paraphilias in addition to autogynephilia. Several nontranssexual informants reported other concurrent paraphilias, including sexual masochism, amputation-related paraphilias, gynemimetophilia and gynandromorphophilia, and unspecified paraphilias.

### *Sexual Masochism*

The following narratives expand on the masochistic themes described by the transsexual informants in Chap. 9. One nontranssexual autogynephile described masochistic fantasies and behaviors involving self-inflicted humiliation achieved by identifying himself as a feminized man or transvestite to strangers or casual acquaintances in public places:

I have major fantasies of being dominated, feminized, dressed by women and laughed at and being humiliated by them. I love to dress outrageously and go out in public for the shock value and laughter it creates. I can go to a shopping mall for hours with a fake story for every clerk in every store that usually gets laughter or humiliation. I will tell women I need clothes for a sex change operation, or ask in front of a bunch of ladies if I can shop dressed as a lady, or ask if transvestites are welcome to shop here. I will say I am getting maternity clothes so I can host a baby shower, or buying purses or hats for a ladies' garden party, or buying dresses so my mother and I can doll up together. I will relate how my mother and friends caught me in my mother's clothes, or how my Auntie first dolled me up, or my career as a female impersonator, or my career as a dancing girl, or how much I love to dress as a ballerina and dance. I love going to beauty parlors and having the women make me up as a girl and laugh when I come out in some silly outfit. I love going to have my nails done, dressed as a lady. I see it as a paraphilia and feel that looking for laughter, humiliation, etc. is a form of masochism. (NTS 20)

Another nontranssexual informant reported masochistic fantasies involving both feminization and other traditional or stereotypic elements of sexual masochism, including bondage or loss of freedom, objectification, and sexual victimization:

I believe I am an autogynepiliac, not a classical transsexual. I come from a fairly macho, Latin culture, and I'm aroused by the thought of being a submissive female having sex with an aggressive, macho man. There is always an element in my fantasies of being treated as an object, of being used in different ways. My fantasies often involve humiliation.

I sometimes fantasize being a sexual slave. This generally involves kidnapping and bondage. The fantasies sometimes involve gradual feminization; in such cases, the first step is always getting my legs shaved and being forced to dress as a female. The scenarios sometimes involve prostitution. A recurring image is that I awake, not knowing where I am, and I'm gagged, blindfolded and bound to a bed, facing down, my hips raised by a couple of pillows. As I try to move, I realize I've been dressed as a female; my outfit always includes a bra, panties and skirt. A man climbs onto the bed, and, as he fondles my legs, I realize they've been shaven. As he positions himself for penetration, I feel his legs against mine; his are muscular and, importantly, hairy. Always, he lifts up my skirt and pulls down my panties before vigorously penetrating me. If he speaks, it is always to humiliate me.

I also fantasize myself as an ultra-traditional wife. In these fantasies, it's like waking up in a parallel universe where I have always been female. My life revolves around sexually pleasing my husband, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. I only fantasize about the relationship with my husband in strictly sexual terms. The wedding itself isn't part of the fantasy, except for losing my virginity on my wedding night. The fantasy usually starts with fantasizing about experiencing female puberty. These fantasies are generally not taking place in my culture but in even more traditional ones, with arranged marriages. (NTS 30)

Yet another informant's most exciting masochistic fantasies originally involved being tortured and killed, albeit not specifically as a female. These fantasies gradually morphed into the fantasy of being a young female rape victim:

I seem to fall pretty squarely into the group Blanchard calls autogynepilic. I have been married once, and all my sexual partners have been female. Starting when I was about three years old, I became conscious of an extremely pleasurable sensation from fantasies of sadomasochism. I found delight in the thought of being brutalized, humiliated, tied up, slashed, dismembered, and killed. At first, my imagined persona might be man, woman, child, or animal. After about age seven or eight, however, I usually liked to be a pretty young woman being tortured to death by a psycho. My fantasy would almost always end in being stabbed to death with a knife in the belly, which I found exquisitely satisfying and powerfully compelling. Shortly after I turned 14, one of these fantasies produced penile contractions and I soon discovered the concept of sex. I abandoned my longstanding childhood fantasy of being a pretty young woman being tortured to death and replaced it with the fantasy of being a pretty young woman being forcibly raped. Since that time, variations on the rape fantasy have always been my most compelling source of sexual excitement. These fantasies presume that I am a biological woman. Less commonly, but with increasing frequency in recent years, I have also enjoyed fantasies of being turned into a woman. These fantasies are less exciting than the rape fantasies. (NTS 31)

This narrative provides another example of the phenomenon of "paraphilic substitution." This is the term I introduced in Chap. 9 to describe the process by which very disturbing or unacceptable paraphilic fantasies sometimes become replaced by less distressing, more acceptable ones. Autogynepilic fantasies, even those involving rape, are probably less distressing than many other paraphilic fantasies (e.g., those involving being tortured to death). Consequently, it is not

surprising that autogynephilic fantasies might take a prominent role in paraphilic substitution in individuals who experienced some autogynephilic erotic interest.

### ***Acrotomophilia and Apotemnophilia (Amputation Paraphilia)***

A paraphilic erotic interest in amputees as sexual or romantic partners is called *acrotomophilia* (Money, 1986). A paraphilic erotic interest in being an amputee oneself is called *apotemnophilia* (Money et al., 1977). In a review article (Lawrence, 2006), I proposed that apotemnophilia probably reflects an erotic target location error in men who are sexually attracted to amputees (i.e., who are acrotomophilic), just as autogynephilia represents an erotic target location error in men who are sexually attracted to women.

One nontranssexual autogynephile described experiencing both acrotomophilia and apotemnophilia. The colloquial terms *devotee* and *wannabe*, used by this informant in the narrative below, are commonly employed by acrotomophilic and apotemnophilic persons in reference to themselves (Bruno, 1997).

I remember from my early development being turned-on at the idea of being a woman, but it was never all-consuming. What had been an overriding force was acrotomophilia and apotemnophilia, a blend of devotee and wannabe tendencies. As I understood it, the traditional notion of “woman trapped in a man’s body” was generally something people were aware of from an early age. While there were signs I can see now, I missed them until a few months ago. With the apotemnophilic and acrotomophilic side of things, that’s not the case. I was aware of odd feelings about amputees from a very young age, possibly as early as 4 or 5 years old.

My earliest memory of anything to do with amputees was first noticing a couple of amputees while traveling with my parents; even at the time, it prompted an odd feeling. An occasional interest that triggered inexplicable feelings at that young age somehow became more important with the onset of puberty (i.e., I became turned-on). Seeing images of amputees, thinking about them, and sitting in certain positions that reminded me of them seemed to trigger the same sort of feelings as thinking about girls or seeing images of scantily clad women. I remember the first time I ever actually came was while sitting with both legs folded underneath me, as if I were a double above-the-knee amputee. That has to be an important moment for any teenage boy. I liked girls and the idea of amputees, so I guess it follows that amputee girls would be like a holy grail for me. That was true, but there was also something about the process of such extreme, generally involuntary, body modification that was fascinating.

At college there were plenty of girls, so the amputee side of things took a back seat for a while. It was still there, though, and I started to collect a few images from the Internet. More importantly, I realized that I wasn’t the only one who felt like this. In the past, I’d considered the idea of engineering a situation where I lost one or both legs, but I realized that the practicality was probably vastly different from the fantasy. While the permanence was part of the turn-on, I knew enough about myself to realize it was probably a bad idea. So, I stuck with pretending.

A few months back, I started experimenting with cross-dressing. Somehow, I went from amputee pretending and some experimentation with a set of breast forms I’d bought earlier to trying on a dress to go with them. Soon I had some boots and a couple of wigs. I took several photos and I saw myself like I never had before. I actually liked the image; I couldn’t stop

looking at the pictures. Realizing that I'd had autogynephilic tendencies in the past, I figured that I might have been suppressing this side of me the whole time. Of my two erotic targets, girls and amputees, at least one of them was looking viable. I realized that this was something significant and was reeling at the possibilities. Was I a transvestite or did I actually want SRS too? With time and reflection, I realized that I didn't want a full sex change but did want to go at least part of the way. I'd have breast augmentation tomorrow, given half a chance.

My apotemnophilia is still there, but it's not the overriding drive that it was before. I feel like the destructive force of wanting to become an amputee has been quelled to a large extent and replaced with a more positive notion of becoming something I love: me. I don't think I can expect the apotemnophilic feelings to just disappear, but now they are not the driving force. (NTS 32)

This narrative offers yet another example of the phenomenon of paraphilic substitution. The informant's intense but unacceptable paraphilia, apotemnophilia, was eventually superseded by a paraphilia that the informant considered more acceptable or benign, autogynephilia.

### *Gynemimetophilia and Gynandromorphophilia*

As noted in Chap. 9, gynemimetophilia and gynandromorphophilia are closely related, partially overlapping terms that describe the paraphilic interest some persons have in transvestites, she-males, or MtF transsexuals as sexual or romantic partners. Two nontranssexual autogynephiles reported a specific sexual attraction to persons in these categories; the first of the informants offered this account:

I'm 31 years old. I was married for ten years and have two children. I'm now in a very loving relationship with a transsexual woman. I have fantasies of dressing and acting as a woman, but I've never had the desire to act on those fantasies; I'm primarily aroused by the *idea* of presenting myself as a woman. I'm also extremely attracted to cross-dressing males, whether they be drag queens or transsexuals. I have discussed this with my girlfriend, the MtF transsexual, and it's clear that we are very different. I'm not a transsexual like she is. But I'm extremely aroused by the thought of dressing like a woman and doing womanly things.

I definitely want to have sex with attractive drag queens or transsexuals when I see them. When I met my current girlfriend, I had no idea she was a man, and I found her extremely attractive. I emailed her right away and asked for a date. It was after that that one of my friends told me she was a transsexual, and I was even more attracted to her then. This was before her gender reassignment, and we enjoyed a few very good sexual experiences before her surgery. I still find her just as attractive and just as exciting after her surgery, but we haven't been sexually active yet. (NTS 33)

Although this informant had experienced extremely arousing erotic fantasies about dressing like or being a woman, he had never actualized these fantasies; instead, he dated and had sex with an MtF transsexual who had actualized her own desire to be a woman. This informant's narrative would seem to provide an excellent example of Person's (1995) observation, previously quoted in Chap. 7, that "fantasy may be gratified through bonding with someone who has already actualized one's own fantasy .... The identification process allows us to enjoy our fantasies vicariously, that is, at one remove, without suffering guilt or anxiety." (p. 131).



The second informant, a nontranssexual autogynephile who explicitly identified as gynandromorphophilic, provided this statement:

Thanks for your 1997 paper on sexual attraction between autogynephilic transsexual women. You were way ahead of your time on this topic, based on the misinformation I hear from so many transsexual women. Based upon my own experiences and those of other gynandromorphophilic males, it seems painfully clear that we prefer as partners transsexual women with strong autogynephilic tendencies. To be more precise, we prefer men who are trapped in the bodies of fully transitioned pre-op transsexual women. I hope you can appreciate the distinction I have drawn from your own title “men trapped in the bodies of men.” (NTS 34)

This individual was referring to one of my earliest conference presentations (Lawrence, 1997), in which I offered the following hypothesis:

Could it be that some of us find other transsexuals especially desirable as partners because they exemplify the autogynephilia at the core of our desire? Because they mirror our own minds, are our own fantasies made flesh? Attending to our internal autogynephilic imagery, many of us metaphorically “make love to ourselves,” whether we are by ourselves or with another. And when this feels too lonely, what partner could be better—and less distracting—than one who is essentially a clone of ourselves? (para. 22)

There is evidence that many gynandromorphophiles are themselves cross-dressers (i.e., transvestites or she-males) and are putatively autogynephilic. Blanchard and Collins (1993) studied personal advertisements placed by 88 gynandromorphophilic men who sought transvestites, she-males, or other cross-dressing men as sexual or romantic partners; of these, 37 (42%) described themselves as cross-dressers in their advertisements. The phenomenon of gynandromorphophilic men who are also autogynephilic is widely recognized within the MtF transsexual community: One of my MtF transsexual clients said of the gynandromorphophiles she had encountered, “They can’t decide whether they want to have sex with us or be us.”

### *Other Paraphilias*

Another informant reported experiencing autogynephilia, sadomasochism, and several other unspecified paraphilias. He described his hope that putting greater emphasis on his sadomasochistic paraphilic interests might result in less pressure to act out his autogynephilic fantasies:

I’ve never seen a more accurate description of my own inner struggle than the information you’ve published explaining physiologic autogynephilia. About 3 years ago, I figured out that I had a cluster of paraphilias—legal ones only, thank God. I noticed a distinctive pattern in the “forced-feminization” stories that I’m drawn to reading and writing. I just turned 40 and have reached a stage at which my interest in paraphilias has nearly crowded out interests in “vanilla” sexuality entirely. I find myself uninterested in relations with my wife and only novelty inspires an interest in nonparaphilic sexuality. I don’t know where I’ll go with all this; I’m in a politically sensitive field, public speaking is a large part of my job, and I’m not a great candidate for passing as female. Since about half of my paraphilias are sadomasochism-related and still spark interest, I’m considering moving back into that community, in the hope that satisfying the nonautogynephilic paraphilias will render the autogynephilic urges less urgent. (NTS 35)

This narrative once again describes the phenomenon of paraphilic substitution, here in the form of a deliberate strategy. After concluding that acting out his autogynephilic desires might lead to the loss of his job, and realizing that he would not make a very passable woman, this informant was considering putting greater emphasis on expressing his sadomasochistic paraphilic interests, in the belief that the pressure to express his autogynephilic fantasies might diminish accordingly.

## **Concluding Thoughts about Narratives by Nontranssexual Autogynephiles**

Not surprisingly, the narratives submitted by the nontranssexual (or not demonstrably transsexual) informants were similar in content to those submitted by their transsexual counterparts. This is consistent with the idea that autogynephilic transsexualism and less severe manifestations of autogynephilia are part of a spectrum or continuum of symptomatology. Nevertheless, there were a few intriguing differences between the two sets of narratives.

The most interesting difference, in my opinion, was that the nontranssexual informants made no discernable effort to conceptualize autogynephilia as anything other than a paraphilic erotic phenomenon. They did not theorize that it was an effect rather than a cause of their fantasies of being female or suggest that it was originally a nonsexual phenomenon that had somehow accidentally become eroticized. They did not characterize it as unimportant, as an epiphenomenon, or as a manifestation of normal female sexuality. One could argue, of course, that autogynephilia in transsexuals and in nontranssexuals are actually two qualitatively different phenomena that only superficially resemble each other and that this accounts for the differences in the ways the two sets of informants thought about their feelings and experiences. Alternatively, one could argue that autogynephilia is the same phenomenon in both groups but that the transsexual informants had simply been motivated to reflect more deeply on their feelings and had arrived at a level of understanding that had escaped their nontranssexual counterparts. I'm confident that the opponents of Blanchard's theory will propose one or both of these explanations after this book is published.

I believe that the more likely explanation, however, is that the nontranssexual informants simply felt less incentive to make excuses for their autogynephilic feelings. Unlike their transsexual counterparts, they were not in the position of trying to justify their desires to undergo sex reassignment (or their past decisions to do so) in the face of the still widely accepted message that anyone who has been erotically aroused by the idea of being a female cannot be a "real" MtF transsexual. This message was ubiquitous in the older psychiatric literature and is still touted on some Internet websites run by MtF transsexuals who deny that they are autogynephilic. More recently, this same message has been circulating in an updated, amended form: A person who has been erotically aroused by the idea of being a female can be a "real" MtF transsexual, as long as that erotic arousal *doesn't really mean*

*anything*: if it is accidental or is an effect rather than a cause of one's gender dysphoria or is just something that normal women experience. Thus, it is easy to understand why some of the transsexual informants in the current study were eager to insist that their autogynephilic arousal did not really mean anything.

The nontranssexual informants seemingly could afford to be more clear-eyed and candid: They were able to recognize autogynephilic arousal for the paraphilic phenomenon it genuinely is and acknowledge this without equivocation. Could more transsexuals who experience autogynephilia eventually achieve this same level of clear-eyed self-recognition and candor? I will address this possibility in Chap. 12.