

Study examines straight men and their sexual attraction to transgender women

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Credit: UCR/Photo illustration by Victor Perry

Some straight men said they sexually desire transgender women because of the women's supposed hyper-feminine traits.

Brandon Andrew Robinson, an associate professor with UC Riverside's Gender and Sexuality Department analyzed over 200 online Reddit discussion posts during a three-month period that revealed the complexities surrounding relationships: love, sexuality, attraction, and [gender norms](#). Results were published in the journal *Men and Masculinities*.

Robinson also found a common theme among the men on Reddit who are attracted to [transgender women](#): misogyny.

Robinson found that Reddit commenters continuously asserted their masculinity and their desire to sexually dominate both trans [women](#) and cis women. Robinson generated over 100 codes in their data analysis that included posts, threads, and posts called subreddits. Several of the subreddits had no comments, others had over 10,000 comments.

"As I weed through all these terms, what I'm trying to show here is that misogyny is an action that is about controlling the behavior of women," said Robinson, who in this research introduces the concept "transamorous misogyny." The term is intended to capture the paradox in how cisgender heterosexual men claim they desire trans women, but disrespect cisgender women through comparisons, reaffirming their own masculinity.

"The analysis showed men wanting to control women's behavior and make women behave submissively, upholding men as the dominant one," Robinson said.

Objectifying trans women is a societal issue, Robinson indicates in the paper. One such example Robinson uses is that [medical professionals](#), psychologists, sociologists and other [social scientists](#) expected trans women to be hyper-feminine or "120% woman" to obtain access to medical treatments or interventions.

"This hyper-femininity expected of trans women can shape cis men's desire as well," said Robinson, chair of UCR's Gender and Sexuality Department, who is currently working on their next book about trans women's dating and hookup lives.

Robinson chose to analyze Reddit discussion boards because Reddit is a

free digital platform, open to the public, and is also one of the top 10 most-used social networks in the United States. Robinson examined conversations from April through June 2021 and completed the analysis in 2022. Some threads were from 2021, others from five years prior.

In the conversations, Robinson found that the men partly expanded ideas around [sexual identity](#) to include desiring a woman's feminine expressions.

Robinson noted one Reddit poster commented: "I like women and still do but in recent years I started finding trans women attractive as well. Thought I was turning gay for liking a girl with a penis... I think it's just the feminine form that does it for me. Penis or no penis."

However, the men also continuously asserted their masculinity through listing comparisons. For instance, men wrote things such as "trans women are more submissive than cis women," and that connecting with a trans woman means having a relationship "without all the female courtship rituals and complications."

As Robinson explains, this type of constant comparison places cisgender women in a box and also puts trans women in a comparison rubric based on cisgender norms around femininity and womanhood.

"Ultimately, we need new ways of relating and desiring one another that do not rely on the reproduction of gender difference and on the erotic attachment to gender inequality," Robinson said.

More information: Brandon Andrew Robinson, *Transamorous Misogyny: Masculinity, Heterosexuality, and Cis Men's Sexist Desires for Trans Women*, *Men and Masculinities* (2022). [DOI: 10.1177/1097184X221148208](https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X221148208)

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